
DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 89-93

CHRONOLOGY

- **January 5, 1833** – Revelation, Unpublished; Frederick G. Williams to be a counselor to JS.
- **January 22, 1833** – Priesthood conference; "all the Elders obtained the gift [of tongues.]"
- **January 23, 1833** – First meeting of the School of the Prophets.
- **February 3, 1833** – New Testament translation generally done.
- **February 13, 1833** – Copyright for Book of Commandments secured.
- **February 27, 1833** – Revelation, D&C 89; "Word of Wisdom."
- **March 8, 1833** – Revelation, D&C 90; First Presidency.
- **March 9, 1833** – Revelation, D&C 91; Apocrypha.
- **March 12, 1833** – Council of High Priests select several for missions to the East.
- **March 15, 1833** – Revelation, D&C 92; First Presidency.
- **March 18, 1833** – Frederick G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon ordained as counselor in the Presidency of the High Priesthood.
- **March 23, 1833** – Negotiations to purchase the French Farm for the House of the Lord.
- **circa April** – School of the Prophets closed until the Fall.
- **circa April** – Mob in Independence, MO against the Saints.
- **May 4, 1833** – Building Committee appointed for the House of the Lord.
- **May 6, 1833** – Revelation, D&C 93; Cosmology.

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 89, REVELATION, FEBRUARY 27, 1833

SETTING

Debates around dietary guidelines were prominent in the United States during this time. For example, Samuel Underhill, a prominent member of the Owenite community (a communitarian group related to the Morley family communal farm) preached around Kirtland before JS arrived. One track that he wrote in 1829 included the following text:

Now it came to pass that the sons of men found in the land a certain plant having broad leaves and an acrid taste and it stupified the people.

2. And some burned it and drew the smoke thereof into their mouths & some put it in their mouths and spit forth the juice thereof for it was much & many made it very fine and drew it into their noses...[H]earken unto wisdom & be ye saved.

6. Strong drink is ruin; much wine is an evil, tea is a curse, coffee is injurious, tobaccoes disgustful and poisonous and altogether are a great damnation.

6. [sic] Drink water alone, live on simple diet take due exercise and ye shall be happy.¹

The Morley family farm community apparently didn't eat pork until JS came and said it was okay.² The Shakers also had a dietary code. Moreover, the Temperance movement was by the early 1830s making significant ground, including in Kirtland; for example a whiskey distillery nearby was burned down.³ Later that decade Sylvester Graham (of cracker fame, and who also taught against alcohol, tobacco, coffee and tea) made significant inroads across America as part of his health reform movement.

Additional important context is the early Latter-day Saint affinity for Thomsonian, or botanic, medicine⁴ and their rejection of traditional allopathic medicine until it became clinically viable at the end of the nineteenth century. Frederick G. Williams was a prominent Thomsonian physician in the area when this revelation was dictated by JS.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This revelation was first published on a broadsheet during the winter of 1833-34. It was included in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. Frederick G. Williams copied the earliest extant text into RB2.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS

In 1876 Orson Pratt moved verses 1-3 from the heading to the body of the section. The comma following "used" in verse 13 was added in the 1921 Doctrine and Covenants, and was perhaps a printing error.

COMMENTS

2. ***not by commandment or constraint.*** See following discussing of the history of the Word of Wisdom's implementation.

3. ***adapted to the capacity of the weak.*** Does the Lord do this often?

4. ***conspiring men.*** Does this relate to the revelation on Sacramental beverages?

5. ***only in assembling your sacraments before him.*** Remember the description of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the School of the Prophets. Look forward to the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.

6. ***of your own make.*** Bishop Whitney owned a significant tract of red currents, which he and his wife used for wine production and supplied the Latter-day Saints for most of the early Kirtland period.

¹ Samuel Underhill, "Chronicles, Notes, and Mixims of Dr. Samuel Underhill," quoted in Staker, *Hearken O Ye People*, 110.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 270, 402, 416.

⁴ See Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "The Forms and the Power: The Development of Mormon Ritual Healing to 1847," *Journal of Mormon History* 37 (Summer, 2009): 70-71.

7. **washing of your bodies.** This was a common medical treatment (remember that not only had the weekly bath not yet been invented, but also the winter bath was uncommon). This is an antecedent to the Kirtland Temple liturgy as well.

8. **used with judgement and skill.** Tobacco was commonly employed for medical purposes during this period.

9. **hot drinks.** This has been controversial since it was first dictated. Not all of the earliest Saints thought it applied to coffee and tea, though by Nauvoo it was clear that this was the subject. Some early Saints thought that any hot beverage was to be avoided. Though various church leaders have commented about the relationship of caffeine to the Word of Wisdom, presently there is no Church position regarding caffeinated beverages; though all habit forming substances are discouraged.

10. **wholesome herbs.** Early Saints viewed this to support Thomsonian medicine.

12. **used sparingly.** How are we doing there?

13. **not be used, only.** Does that comma make a difference? Clearly folks like Lorenzo Snow took this seriously.

15. **these.** I.e., the beasts, fowls and animals of vs. 14.

17. Note that rye is not good for fowls. This verse should not be read as prescriptive.

17. What "mild drinks" are made from barley and other grain?

18-21. Like other aspects of the School of the Prophets, this revelation should be viewed as a step toward the temple.

WORD OF WISDOM IN MORMON HISTORY

Titles in **brown** text are available for free online.

Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 258-272.

Thomas G. Alexander, "The Word of Wisdom: From Principle to Requirement," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Autumn, 1981): 78-88.

Lester E. Bush Jr., *Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints: Science, Sense, and Scripture* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), esp. 48-59.

Edward L. Kimball, "The History of LDS Temple Admission Standards," *Journal of Mormon History* 24 (Spring, 1998): 135–176.

Paul H. Peterson "An Historical Analysis of the Word of Wisdom" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972).

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 90, REVELATION, MARCH 8, 1833

SETTING

Jesse Gauss, who had been JS counselor as in the presidency of the high priesthood, was excommunicated in absentia in December 1832. A revelation on January 5, 1833 called Frederick G. Williams to be a counselor to JS. One year before, on March 8, 1832, Jesse Gauss and Sidney Rigdon were ordained to the Presidency of the High Priesthood. Both Williams and Rigdon were ordained to the Presidency on March 18, 1833.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Vienna Jacques

Born in Massachusetts in 1787 and baptized near Boston. Directed to consecrate her property (over \$1,400 cash and valuables) and move to Zion. Driven from her property in Missouri. Married before fleeing the state. Endowed in the Nauvoo Temple and died in Salt Lake City in 1884.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

First Published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. Earliest manuscript is a loose document in the hand of Frederick G. Williams. Oliver Cowdery later copied it into RB2.

COMMENTS

2. **keys of the kingdom.** What is the kingdom at this time? See *A Voice of Warning*. What is it in Nauvoo circa 1842?

3. **neither in the world to come.** We begin to see the collapse of heaven and earth.

4-5. **the oracles be given to another, yea, even unto the church.** What are oracles? Does the Church receive them?

6. **equal with thee in holding the keys of this last kingdom.** Not just counselors.

7. **keys.** what are these keys?

8. **That thereby they may be perfected in their ministry.** Who is "they"? Is this the reason for the School of the Prophets? Or is this referring to Williams and Rigdon?

9. **unto the Gentile first, and then...unto the Jews.** See vs. 10

10. heathen nations == house of Joseph?

11. First directions that missionaries were to be ordained and sent forth to teach everyone in their own language. Foreign language speaking missions during JS's lifetime: "Lamanite" missions, Wales and the Society Islands.

12. JS to continue in the Presidency of the High Priesthood. And his jobs to be (some of these shift into plural, so perhaps several are for the entire presidency):

- vs. 13 – finish translating the bible.
- vs. 13 - preside of the School of the Prophets.
- vs. 14 – receive revelations.
- vs. 15 – manage the various churches (branches or wards in today's parlance).
- vs. 15 – Study and become acquainted with good books and various languages and people. (this to a guy that is "translating" the bible!)
- vs. 16 – preside in council (the general governing unit of the Church at this time).
- vs. 17 – be careful not to think that you are too special.

19-21. Williams gets a house and Rigdon, JS Sr and family to be allowed to stay where they are at. Williams had already consecrated his farm and JS Sr. lived there.

22-23. Find somebody rich to bring an influx of capital into the Whitney balance sheet. Why? vs. 19-21 are just scratching the surface.

24. This is a pretty stressful situation. Finances are tough, but be believing and remember the covenant of the United Firm.

25. **let your families be small.** I.e., don't take any more into your households. I imagine that the impulse was to share everything that was received.

28-32. Vienna Jacques to give \$1,400 to the Bishop and go to Zion. She does. After losing everything in MO when the Saints are kicked out just a few months later, JS writes her a letter, from which this is an excerpt:

I have often felt a whispering since I received your letter like this Joseph thou art indebted to thy God for the offering of thy Sister Viana [Vienna Jacques] which proved a savior of life as pertaining to thy pecunary concern therefor she should not be forgotten of thee for the Lord hath done this and thou shouldst remember her in all thy prayers and also by letter for she oftentimes calleth on the Lord saying O Lord inspire thy servant Joseph to communicate by letter some word to thine unworthy handmaid canst thou not speak peaceably unto thine handmaid and say all my sins are forgiven and art thou not content with the chastisement wherewith thou hast chastised thy handmaid yea sister this seems to be the whisperings of a spirit and Judge ye what spirit it is I was sensible, when you left Kirtland that the Lord would chasten you but I pray^{<ed>} fervently in the name of Jesus that you might live to receive your inheritance agreeable to the commandment which was given concerning you I am not at all astonished at what has happened to you neither to what has happened to Zion and I could tell all the whys & wherefores of all these calamities but alas it is in vain to warn and give precepts for all men are naturally disposed to walk in their own paths as they are pointed out by their own fingers and are not willing to consider and walk in the path which is pointed out by another saying this is the way walk ye in it altho he should be an unerring director and the Lord his God sent him nevertheless I do not feel disposed to cast any reflections but I feel to cry mightily unto the Lord that all things

might work together for good which has happened yea I feel to say O Lord let Zion be comforted let her waste places be built up and established an hundred fold⁵

Would that have satisfied you?

32. First Presidency to preside of Zion.

34-35. Those in Zion (MO) must repent.

26. *chasten her*. The chastening was almost too unbearable for me to consider.

⁵ Joseph Smith, Letter to Vienna Jacque, September 4, 1833, Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph Smith Papers Online, Documents, ID: 180.

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 91, REVELATION, MARCH 9, 1833

SETTING

Apocrypha is Greek for "those having been hidden away." Generally it means the books that were included in the Septuagint and Vulgate but that were excluded from Jewish and Protestant cannon. Latter-day Saints also interacted with the "Pseudepigraph," which are other works written by Jewish authors between BC 200 and AD 200, which they didn't distinguish from the Apocrypha. This revelation appears to be in response to questions about these works, their value, and whether they should be translated. For more on the LDS interaction with apocrypha, see *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints*, ed. C. Wilfred Griggs (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1986).

PUBLICATION HISTORY

First published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. The earliest text is in RB2, inscribed by Frederick G. Williams.

COMMENTS

1. ***translated correctly***. What does it mean to be translated correctly? How did Joseph translate?
3. JS not to translate the Apocrypha.
- 4-6. Go by the spirit.

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 92, REVELATION, MARCH 15, 1833

SETTING

Minute Book 1 contains this note for March 15, 1833: "Thirsday received a revelation making known that F.G.W. [Frederick G. Williams] should be received into the United firm in full partnership agreeable to the specification of the bond [see Sections 78 and 82]"⁶

PUBLICATION HISTORY

First published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. Frederick copied the earliest extant copy into RB2.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS

As with other revelations dealing with financial matters, pseudonyms replaced certain names, places and concepts (See notes for section 78). "Order" is one of the few that was not removed in 1981.

⁶ Meeting Minutes, March 15, 1833, Minute Book 1, Joseph Smith Papers Online, Documents, ID:6586.

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 93, REVELATION, MAY 6, 1833

SETTING

JS wrapped up the NT translation in February 1833, but there was some work left to do on the Old Testament, which was finished in July 1833. This revelation emphasizes the importance of that work. Moreover, this is another highly theological or cosmological revelation. It is one of the introductory moves toward a Mormon Christology. Vs. 19 states that "I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship....and in due time receive of his fulness."

PUBLICATION HISTORY

First published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS

The text of the headnote, which was added in 1921, suggests that the document contains part of the record of the Apostle John. However, several early leaders of the Church, including John Taylor and Orson Pratt, believed that it was John the Baptist's.⁷ The interpretation in the headnote likely comes from the similarity of vs. 8 to the Gospel of John. The assignment to the Baptist likely comes from the testimony about the young Jesus, and his baptism.

COMMENTS

1. Who gets to see the face of the Lord?

4. What is the fulness?

9. **the light of men.** Light get's described in this section (see vs. 36).

10. **the Only Begotten of the Father.** Is this true? See 76:23-24 and 93:22.

12-13. **not the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace.** Imitatio Christi.

17. **for [the Father] dwelt in him.** Do follow this same pattern? (what about vs. 20)

18. So far, no luck.

19. Eleven years later, JS preached his famous King Follett Sermon at General Conference. Surely his views were influenced by this revelation. In a very highly corroborated section of the sermon, JS spoke:

The scriptures inform us that this is eternal life to know the onwly wise God & Jesus Christ whom He has sent. If any inquire what kind of a being God is, I would say if you dont know

⁷ Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 195.

God you have not eternal life, go back & find out what kind of a being God is. If I am the man that shows you what kind of a being God is, then let evry man & woman sit in silence and never lift up his hand against me again if I do not do it, I will not make any further pretensions to inspiration or to be a prophet, I would be like the rest of the world, fals teachers, and you would want to take my life.⁸

20. **glorified in me.** We are exalted only by Christ.
21. Christ was beginningless.
22. If we are begotten of Christ, then we receive exaltation.
23. Human's are also beginningless. WHAM! Moses brought us premortal life, now we had no beginging? Creation ex nihilo crashes and burns and we turn Christian cosmology on its head. Abraham takes this up a notch and the JS in Nauvoo runs with it.
24. truth == reality.
25. More or less than a knowledge of reality is wickedness. What does this tell us about the relationship to God and the Universe?
- 27-28. What commandments must we keep in order to receive a fulness?
29. This is not a reference to B. H. Roberts' tripartite spirit cosmology.
30. What does 30 mean in light of vs. 24 and 29?
31. What is agency?
33. **Man is spirit.** See Abraham and Nauvoo JS.
33. Resurrection is the fulness of joy.
36. What is the glory of God?
38. Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning. So God is not responsible for our faults, right? see note about vs. 23.
40. Teach children light and truth. What are those again?
45. Note that during this period, friend also frequently meant family.
46. Servants is KJV for slave.
48. Who wasn't listening to JS at home?
53. Obtain knowledge of what for the salvation of Zion?

⁸ Wilford Woodruff, Joseph Smith Sermon Report, April 7, 1844, in Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 344.