

SECTION 14 (MODERN D&C 43)

FAITH: Mormonism | TEXT: Doctrine and Covenants | VOLUME: 1835 Edition | AUTHOR: Joseph Smith

OVERVIEW

Given in February 1831 in Kirtland, Ohio, this revelation (canonized as Section 43 in modern editions) addresses a critical crisis of authority within the early Latter-day Saint movement. A convert named Mrs. Hubble was claiming to receive revelations for the church, challenging Joseph Smith's leadership. In response, this text establishes a strict hierarchical polity: only the 'appointed one' (Smith) can receive commandments and laws for the entire body. It introduces a succession protocol where Smith, even if he were to lose his standing, would appoint his successor, thereby closing the door to charismatic uprisings from the laity. The text further instructs the Elders to instruct one another, 'sanctify' themselves through obedience to these laws, and explicitly commands the church to provide 'food and raiment' for Smith. This material support is presented as a prerequisite for the church to receive the 'mysteries of the kingdom.' The revelation concludes with apocalyptic imagery, warning of the 'great day of the Lord,' the binding of Satan, and the necessity of repentance, positioning the acceptance of Smith's revelations as the dividing line between the 'saints' who arise and the 'sinners' who sleep.

KEY FIGURES

Jesus Christ (The Speaker), Joseph Smith, Jr. (The Appointed One), The Elders of the Church (The Audience), Mrs. Hubble (Implicit rival claimant, historically the catalyst)

DOCTRINES ANALYZED

1. EXCLUSIVE PROPHETIC CHANNEL

Assertion: Only one man at a time is appointed to receive commandments and revelations for the entire church.

"there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken... none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him"

Evangelical Comparison: Evangelical theology holds to the 'priesthood of all believers' (1 Peter 2:9) and that God, having spoken in times past by prophets, has in these last days spoken by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). The canon of Scripture is considered the sufficient rule of faith (Sola Scriptura). This text re-establishes a Mosaic-style mediator, asserting that the church cannot receive binding law except through Joseph Smith. This creates a bottleneck of authority that replaces the sufficiency of Scripture with the necessity of a living prophet.

2. TRANSACTIONAL REVELATION

Assertion: The church receives 'mysteries' only if they provide material support (food and raiment) to the prophet.

"if ye desire the mysteries of the kingdom, provide for him food and raiment... and if ye do it not, he shall remain unto them that have received him, that I may reserve unto myself a pure people"

Evangelical Comparison: While the New Testament supports paying workers (1 Timothy 5:18), it never conditions the release of divine revelation or 'mysteries' on the financial performance of the laity. This text implies that God will withhold truth ('reserve unto myself a pure people') if the prophet is not materially supported, introducing a transactional element to the flow of grace and truth.

3. SELF-SANCTIFICATION THROUGH LAW

Assertion: Believers are sanctified by receiving the law and binding themselves to act in holiness.

"ye shall become instructed in the law of my church, and be sanctified by that which ye have received, and ye shall bind yourselves to act in all holiness"

Evangelical Comparison: In Evangelical theology, the law reveals sin but has no power to sanctify (Romans 8:3). Sanctification is the progressive work of the Holy Spirit in the believer (2 Thessalonians 2:13). This text suggests that sanctification is a result of cognitive instruction in the law and a volitional commitment ('bind yourselves') to act, shifting the locus of power from the Spirit to human will and legal observance.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Divergence Status: Yes

Theological Gap: The fundamental gap lies in the mediation of God's voice. Evangelicalism asserts that the veil is torn and believers have direct access to God through Christ (Hebrews 4:16), guided by the sufficient Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16). This text reconstructs the veil, placing Joseph Smith as the indispensable intermediary. Without him, the church cannot receive commandments. Furthermore, the text introduces a 'works-righteousness' dynamic regarding the 'mysteries of the kingdom,' explicitly tying the reception of divine truth to the financial support of the prophet, a concept alien to the New Testament economy of grace.

Shared Values:

Belief in the Second Coming of Christ; Necessity of repentance; Jesus as Savior of the world; Condemnation of sin/iniquity

Friction Points:

1. [Critical] **Sola Scriptura** – Asserts that new, binding laws are generated through a living prophet, denying the closure and sufficiency of the biblical canon.
2. [Major] **Universal Priesthood** – Restricts the reception of divine will to a single 'appointed' individual, denying the believer's direct access to God's specific will for the body.
3. [Major] **Sola Gratia** – Conditions the receipt of 'mysteries' on the provision of material goods (food/raiment) to the leader.
4. [Major] **Sola Fide** – Teaches sanctification and 'glory added' through binding oneself to act on the law, rather than by faith in Christ alone.

Semantic Warnings:

"Sanctify"

In Text: To purify oneself through obedience to the law and purging iniquity (active, self-willed).

Evangelical: To be set apart by God; primarily the work of the Holy Spirit and the blood of Christ (passive/receptive, then active response).

Example: *Text: 'Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power.' Bible: 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified... by the Spirit of our God' (1 Cor 6:11).*

"Law"

In Text: New commandments and organizational rules given through Joseph Smith.

Evangelical: The moral law of God (OT) or the Law of Christ (love), fulfilled in Jesus.

Example: *Text: 'Ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church.' Bible: 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness' (Romans 10:4).*

SOTERIOLOGY

Salvation Defined: Includes being 'redeemed,' reigning on earth in the Millennium, and receiving 'glory added to the kingdom.'

How Attained: Through hearkening to the appointed prophet, keeping commandments, and binding oneself to act in holiness.

Basis of Assurance: Assurance is corporate and conditional: 'if ye do it not, it shall be taken even that which ye have received.'

Comparison to Sola Fide: The text commands 'labor ye' and 'bind yourselves to act' to receive glory. This opposes Romans 4:5 ('to him that worketh not, but believeth... his faith is counted for righteousness').

MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

Explicit Commands:

1. Hearken to the words of the appointed elder (Joseph Smith)
2. Do not receive teachings from anyone not ordained 'at the gate' by Smith
3. Instruct and edify each other when assembled

4. Purge out iniquity
5. Appoint, uphold, and provide food/raiment for Joseph Smith
6. Labor in the vineyard for the last time
7. Repent and prepare for the great day of the Lord

Implicit Obligations:

1. Reject any charismatic claims or revelations coming from outside the hierarchy
2. Accept Joseph Smith's potential successor only if appointed by Smith himself

Ritual Requirements:

1. Ordination 'at the gate' (proper authorization)
2. Gathering/Assembly for instruction

EVANGELISM TOOLKIT

Discovery Questions:

1. In verse 2, it says only one person is appointed to receive commandments. How does this compare to Hebrews 1:1-2, which says God has spoken to us by His Son?
2. Verse 3 mentions that if the church doesn't provide food and raiment for Joseph, the 'mysteries' might be withheld. How do you interpret that in light of the Gospel being a free gift?
3. The text says to 'sanctify yourselves' by acting on the law. How do you experience the difference between sanctifying yourself through effort versus being sanctified by the Holy Spirit?

Redemptive Analogies:

1. The Hen and Chicks – This is a direct quote of Jesus expressing His heart for sinners. It shows God's desire is not to burden us with laws we can't keep, but to protect us under His grace. [Matthew 23:37, Psalm 91:4]
2. The Desire for a Sure Word – The text addresses a fear of deception and a need for certainty. The Gospel offers the 'more sure word of prophecy'—the Scriptures—which point to Christ, the Rock, rather than a fallible human leader. [2 Peter 1:19]

Spiritual Weight:

1. Performance/Legalism [Severe] – The command to 'sanctify yourselves' and 'bind yourselves to act' places the burden of holiness squarely on the believer's willpower. Failure implies a loss of glory.
2. Dependency/Vulnerability [Moderate] – Believers are stripped of the ability to discern truth independently; they must rely entirely on one man. If he errs, they have no mechanism to correct him, creating spiritual anxiety.
3. Financial Pressure [Moderate] – Linking the receipt of spiritual 'mysteries' to the provision of material support creates a burden where poverty or inability to pay could be seen as blocking spiritual access.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowledge Source: Authoritative Revelation via a single appointed individual.

Verification Method: Adherents are told 'ye shall know assuredly' based on the structural appointment of the leader, not necessarily external testing.

Evangelical Contrast: Biblical epistemology encourages testing spirits (1 John 4:1) and searching the Scriptures to verify teaching (Acts 17:11). This text demands acceptance based on the leader's appointment and warns against being 'deceived' by listening to anyone else.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Dating: February 1831

Authorship: Joseph Smith (dictated)

Textual Issues: This text was canonized as Section 14 in the 1835 edition but is Section 43 in modern editions. The context of Mrs. Hubble is historically documented but not explicit in the text.