

# SECTION 66B (MODERN D&C 53)

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

## OVERVIEW

This revelation, dated June 8, 1831, is addressed to Sidney Gilbert, a business associate of Joseph Smith. In the text, the voice of the Lord confirms Gilbert's request to know his standing and calling within the newly restored church. The text establishes a distinct ecclesiological structure, appointing Gilbert to the office of Elder and the role of 'agent' (a financial/business capacity) under the direction of the Bishop. Theologically, the text bridges the immediate practical commands (forsaking the world, traveling with Smith and Rigdon) with soteriological claims. It asserts that the reception of the Holy Spirit is contingent upon the ordinance of the laying on of hands and establishes a 'progressive' revelation model where further knowledge ('the residue') is withheld until the adherent proves themselves through labor. It concludes with a stern warning that salvation is reserved strictly for those who 'endureth unto the end,' framing salvation as a conditional future state rather than a present possession.

## KEY FIGURES

Jesus Christ (The Lord), Sidney Gilbert, Joseph Smith, Jr., Sidney Rigdon, The Bishop (Edward Partridge, implied)

## DOCTRINES ANALYZED

### 1. CONDITIONAL REVELATION

**Assertion:** Further spiritual knowledge and ordinances ('the residue') are granted only in proportion to the adherent's work ('according to your labor').

"the residue shall be made known in a time to come, according to your labor in my vineyard."

**Evangelical Comparison:** In Evangelical theology, the 'mystery' of the Gospel has been fully disclosed in Christ (Colossians 1:26) and Scripture is sufficient (2 Timothy 3:16). This text introduces a tiered system of knowledge where the 'residue' (remaining ordinances or truths) is withheld by God until the adherent performs sufficient 'labor.' This creates a merit-based epistemology where spiritual depth is earned rather than freely given by the Spirit to all believers.

### 2. ORDINANCE-BASED PNEUMATOLOGY

**Assertion:** The Holy Spirit is received specifically through the ritual of laying on of hands by authorized priesthood holders.

"reception of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands."

**Evangelical Comparison:** While the book of Acts records the laying on of hands, Evangelical theology maintains that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurs at the moment of regeneration by faith (Galatians 3:2, Romans 8:9). This text institutionalizes the Holy Spirit as a gift dispensed through priesthood authority and ritual ('ordinances'), effectively placing a human mediator between the believer and the reception of God's presence.

### 3. CONDITIONAL SALVATION

**Assertion:** Salvation is not a finished work but a future possibility contingent on enduring to the end.

"it is he only who is saved, that endureth unto the end"

**Evangelical Comparison:** The text utilizes the phrase 'endureth unto the end' to define the prerequisite for being 'saved.' In Evangelical soteriology, endurance is the \*evidence\* of salvation, not the \*cause\* of it. By stating 'he only who is saved' is the one who endures, the text shifts the locus of security from Christ's finished work on the cross to the believer's ongoing performance and fidelity.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

**Divergence Status:** Yes

**Theological Gap:** While the text opens with a seemingly orthodox reference to Christ being 'crucified for the sins of the world,' it immediately pivots to a system of salvation that requires additional mediators (priesthood), additional rituals (ordinances), and additional works (laboring to receive the residue). The fundamental gap is between 'It is Finished' (John 19:30) and 'It is Conditional.' The text presents a God who withholds the fullness of His will until the human agent performs adequately, contrasting sharply with the God of Grace who gives freely to the undeserving.

**Shared Values:**

Belief in Jesus as the one crucified for sins; Call to preach faith and repentance; Importance of prayer

**Friction Points:**

1. [Critical] Sola Scriptura – Adds new commandments and requirements for salvation not found in the Bible.
2. [Major] Universal Priesthood – Restricts the Holy Spirit's reception to a ritual performed by specific priesthood holders.
3. [Critical] Sola Fide – Conditions salvation on enduring in works and labor rather than faith alone.

**Semantic Warnings:**

**"Ordinances"**

**In Text:** Saving rituals (like ordination and laying on of hands) required for spiritual power and salvation.

**Evangelical:** Outward rites (Baptism/Communion) that symbolize inner grace but do not cause salvation.

**Example:** *In this text, Gilbert must 'take upon you mine ordinances' to fulfill his calling; in Evangelicalism, ordinances are responses to salvation, not prerequisites for the Spirit.*

**"Saved"**

**In Text:** A final state achieved only after enduring to the end of life in obedience.

**Evangelical:** A present state of justification possessed by the believer upon faith (Ephesians 2:8).

**Example:** *The text says 'he only who is saved, that endureth'; the Bible says 'he that believeth... hath everlasting life' (John 6:47).*

## SOTERIOLOGY

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**Salvation Defined:** A future state contingent on enduring to the end and keeping ordinances.

**How Attained:** Faith + Repentance + Ordinances (Laying on of hands) + Labor/Endurance.

**Basis of Assurance:** Low assurance; based on the individual's ability to endure and labor.

**Comparison to Sola Fide:** Directly contradicts Sola Fide by adding 'ordinances' and 'labor' as necessary components for the reception of the Spirit and final salvation (Galatians 3:2-3).

## MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

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**Explicit Commands:**

1. Forsake the world
2. Take upon you mine ordinances (become an Elder)
3. Preach faith, repentance, and remission of sins
4. Act as an agent to the church
5. Journey with Joseph Smith Jr. and Sidney Rigdon

**Implicit Obligations:**

1. Submit to the Bishop's direction regarding location
2. Labor continuously to unlock future revelation
3. Accept the exclusivity of the church 'raised up in these last days'

**Ritual Requirements:**

1. Ordination to Elder
2. Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost

## EVANGELISM TOOLKIT

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### Discovery Questions:

1. In this passage, the Lord says the 'residue' of knowledge depends on your labor. How do you know when you have labored enough to receive God's full will?
2. The text mentions receiving the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. How does that compare to Acts 10:44, where the Spirit fell on people simply because they heard and believed the Word?
3. If salvation is only for those who endure to the end, can you have peace with God right now, or is your status always 'pending'?

### Redemptive Analogies:

1. The Desire for Calling and Election – Gilbert wanted to know he was chosen. The Gospel offers this assurance not through a new revelation or job title, but through being 'chosen in Him before the foundation of the world' (Ephesians 1:4). [Ephesians 1:3-6]

### Spiritual Weight:

1. Uncertainty/Withholding [Moderate] – The believer is told that God is holding back information ('the residue') until they work hard enough. This creates a relationship based on transaction rather than intimacy.
2. Dependency on Hierarchy [Severe] – The believer cannot receive the Holy Spirit directly from God by faith but must rely on a human administrator ('laying on of hands'), creating spiritual dependency on men.
3. Performance Anxiety [Severe] – The command to 'endure to the end' to be saved, without the counterbalance of Christ's finished work, places the entire burden of salvation on the believer's consistency.

## EPISTEMOLOGY

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**Knowledge Source:** Prophetic Revelation (Joseph Smith speaking for God).

**Verification Method:** Subjective confirmation of prayers ('I have heard your prayers').

**Evangelical Contrast:** Biblical epistemology relies on the objective standard of written Scripture (Acts 17:11). This text relies on a modern prophet's utterance validated by the adherent's internal desire for an answer.

## TEXTUAL CRITICISM

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**Dating:** June 8, 1831

**Authorship:** Joseph Smith (dictated)

**Textual Issues:** This text was later canonized as D&C 53. The 1835 version shows the formalization of church offices (Elder, Bishop) that were evolving during this period.