

SECTION 94 (MODERN SECTION 100)

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

OVERVIEW

This revelation, dated October 12, 1833, addresses Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon during a missionary journey in New York. The text begins with divine reassurance regarding the safety of their families back in Ohio, asserting God's sovereignty over them. It proceeds to instruct the men to preach with the promise of immediate inspiration ('in the very hour'), utilizing language reminiscent of the New Testament. A significant ecclesiological structure is established in verse 3, where Sidney Rigdon is ordained as a 'spokesman' to Joseph Smith, while Joseph is designated as a 'revelator' to Sidney. This creates a tiered spiritual hierarchy where Sidney's knowledge of certainty is mediated through Joseph. The revelation concludes with a word concerning 'Zion' (Independence, Missouri) and the missionaries Orson Hyde and John Gould. Crucially, the text articulates a conditional soteriology, stating that these men—and by extension the church—will be saved 'inasmuch as they keep my commandments,' explicitly linking ultimate salvation and divine protection to moral and obedient performance rather than faith alone.

KEY FIGURES

Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Orson Hyde, John Gould

DOCTRINES ANALYZED

1. MEDIATED REVELATION

Assertion: Joseph Smith acts as a 'revelator' to Sidney Rigdon, meaning Sidney receives certainty of kingdom matters through Joseph.

"he shall be a revelator unto thee, that thou mayest know the certainty of all things pertaining to the things of my kingdom"

Evangelical Comparison: In Evangelical theology, the Holy Spirit illuminates Scripture directly to the believer (1 John 2:27), and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). This text establishes a secondary mediator, Joseph Smith, through whom Sidney Rigdon must derive 'certainty.' This creates a spiritual hierarchy that mirrors the Mosaic/Aaronic model rather than the New Covenant model where all believers have access to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).

2. CONDITIONAL SALVATION

Assertion: Salvation and divine protection are contingent upon the continuous keeping of commandments.

"inasmuch as they keep my commandments they shall be saved... all that call on the name of the Lord and keep his commandments, shall be saved"

Evangelical Comparison: The text uses the qualifying phrase 'inasmuch as' to condition salvation. Evangelical soteriology teaches that salvation is a gift of grace received through faith, resulting in works (Ephesians 2:8-10). This text reverses that order, suggesting that salvation is the result of calling on the Lord AND keeping commandments. This introduces a 'merit' system where safety and eternal life are unsecured until performance requirements are met.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Divergence Status: Yes

Theological Gap: The fundamental gap lies in the mechanism of salvation and revelation. The text modifies Romans 8:28 to apply only to those who 'walk uprightly,' shifting the basis of divine favor from God's election and love to human performance. Furthermore, by designating Joseph as a 'revelator' to Sidney, the text denies the New Testament teaching of the priesthood of all believers, where every Christian has direct access to God through Christ. The text creates a dependency on the prophet for 'certainty' that Evangelicalism reserves for Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Shared Values:

Desire for the salvation of souls; Belief in God's sovereignty over families; Reliance on the Holy Spirit for preaching; Necessity of meekness

Friction Points:

1. [Major] Universal Priesthood – Establishes Joseph Smith as a necessary mediator/revelator for Sidney Rigdon to know truth.
2. [Critical] Sola Fide – Explicitly conditions salvation on keeping commandments ('inasmuch as...').
3. [Critical] Sola Scriptura – Adds new revelation and modifies biblical promises (Romans 8:28).

Semantic Warnings:

"Saved"

In Text: Preservation from physical danger and/or spiritual exaltation, contingent on obedience.

Evangelical: Deliverance from the penalty of sin and reconciliation with God, contingent on faith in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8).

Example: Verse 4: '*inasmuch as they keep my commandments they shall be saved.*'

"Zion"

In Text: A specific physical location (Independence, Missouri) to be redeemed.

Evangelical: Often refers to Jerusalem, the people of God, or the heavenly city (Hebrews 12:22).

Example: Verse 4: '*Zion shall be redeemed, although she is chastened.*'

SOTERIOLOGY

Salvation Defined: A state of safety and divine favor achieved through obedience.

How Attained: By calling on the Lord AND keeping His commandments.

Basis of Assurance: Personal obedience ('inasmuch as they keep...').

Comparison to Sola Fide: Directly opposes Sola Fide. The text makes salvation a result of a synergistic effort (God's power + Man's obedience), whereas Sola Fide posits salvation as a gift received by faith alone (Romans 4:4-5).

MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

Explicit Commands:

1. Follow me and listen to the council which I shall give
2. Lift up your voices unto this people
3. Speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts
4. Declare whatsoever things ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart
5. Continue your journey

Implicit Obligations:

1. Sidney must accept Joseph's words as revelation
2. Believers must 'walk uprightly' to ensure things work together for their good
3. Accept the chastening of Zion as temporary

Ritual Requirements:

1. Ordination (God promises to ordain Sidney to the calling of spokesman)

EVANGELISM TOOLKIT

Discovery Questions:

1. In verse 4, it says 'inasmuch as they keep my commandments they shall be saved.' How does that make you feel about your security with God when you have a bad day or fail to keep a commandment?

2. Verse 3 says Joseph is a 'revelator' to Sidney so Sidney can know the 'certainty' of things. Do you feel you need a prophet to mediate between you and God to know truth, or does the Holy Spirit do that directly through the Bible?
3. The text changes the promise of Romans 8:28 from 'those who love God' to 'those who walk uprightly.' Why do you think the focus was shifted from our heart's affection for God to our outward behavior?

Redemptive Analogies:

1. Anxiety for Family – Just as the missionaries worried about their families, we worry about our eternal security. God offers true security not through our own 'upright walking' but through being held in His hands via Christ. [John 10:28-29 ('neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand')]
2. The Need for a Spokesman – We all need someone to speak for us before God because we are guilty. Jesus is our Advocate (Spokesman) with the Father. [1 John 2:1]

Spiritual Weight:

1. Performance Anxiety [Severe] – The phrase 'inasmuch as they keep my commandments they shall be saved' places the burden of salvation on the believer's consistency. This creates a cycle of anxiety where one's standing with God is always tentative, fluctuating with one's daily behavior.
2. Dependency on Human Authority [Moderate] – By establishing Joseph as the 'revelator' through whom 'certainty' is found, the believer is conditioned to distrust their own reading of Scripture or the direct leading of the Spirit, creating a psychological dependency on the hierarchy for truth.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowledge Source: Prophetic Revelation

Verification Method: The Holy Ghost bearing record of the words spoken by the missionaries.

Evangelical Contrast: Biblical epistemology tests spirits against the objective standard of written Scripture (Acts 17:11, 1 John 4:1). This text relies on subjective internal confirmation ('thoughts I shall put into your hearts') and the authority of the 'revelator' (Joseph).

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Dating: October 12, 1833

Authorship: Joseph Smith (dictated)

Textual Issues: This text appears as Section 94 in the 1835 edition but is Section 100 in modern editions. The 1835 edition was the first canonized compilation.