

SECTION 100

FAITH: Mormonism | TEXT: Doctrine and Covenants | VOLUME: 2013 | AUTHOR: Joseph Smith

OVERVIEW

Received on October 12, 1833, in Perrysburg, New York, this revelation addresses the anxieties of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon regarding their families during a missionary journey. The text begins with a divine reassurance of God's sovereignty over their families. It then pivots to missiology, declaring that an 'effectual door' is open for the salvation of souls in the region. The text instructs them to preach extemporaneously, promising that the Holy Ghost will provide the words in the very moment they are needed. Crucially, the revelation formalizes the ecclesiastical hierarchy between the two men: Sidney Rigdon is ordained as a 'spokesman' to expound scriptures, while Joseph Smith is designated as a 'revelator' to Sidney, establishing a chain of command for divine knowledge. The section concludes with updates on other church leaders (Orson Hyde and John Gould), a promise regarding the redemption of Zion despite current chastening, and a soteriological formula that links salvation directly to obedience and commandment-keeping.

KEY FIGURES

The Lord (Jesus Christ), Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Orson Hyde, John Gould

DOCTRINES ANALYZED

1. CONDITIONAL SALVATION (WORKS-RIGHTEOUSNESS)

Assertion: Salvation is contingent upon the dual action of calling upon the Lord and keeping His commandments.

"And all that call upon the name of the Lord, and keep his commandments, shall be saved. (D&C 100:17)"

Evangelical Comparison: In Evangelical theology, salvation is a gift of grace received through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9), and while good works are the inevitable result of true faith, they are not the cause or condition of justification. D&C 100:17 alters the biblical formula found in Romans 10:13 ('whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved') by inserting the clause 'and keep his commandments.' This shifts the soteriological basis from finished atonement to ongoing performance, suggesting that salvation is ultimately secured by the believer's fidelity rather than Christ's sufficiency.

2. MODERN PROPHETIC OFFICE (THE REVELATOR)

Assertion: Joseph Smith is designated as a 'revelator' who receives new truth that he then passes to a spokesman to expound.

"he shall be a revelator unto thee, that thou mayest know the certainty of all things pertaining to the things of my kingdom on the earth. (D&C 100:11)"

Evangelical Comparison: Evangelical Christianity holds to the sufficiency of Scripture and the priesthood of all believers, rejecting the need for a mediating 'revelator' between the believer and God's truth post-Apostolic age. This text establishes a Mosaic/Aaronic hierarchy (Joseph as Moses, Sidney as Aaron) that Evangelicals believe was fulfilled and rendered obsolete by Christ. It elevates Joseph Smith's words to the level of binding scripture, creating an open canon that supersedes biblical authority.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Divergence Status: Yes

Theological Gap: The fundamental gap lies in the requirements for salvation and the nature of authority. D&C 100:17 explicitly conditions salvation on keeping commandments, a concept Evangelicals view as a return to the Law and a rejection of the sufficiency of Grace (Galatians 2:21). Furthermore, the text establishes Joseph Smith as a necessary mediator of truth ('revelator'), creating a structural barrier between the believer and God that the Protestant Reformation sought to remove. The text assumes that the Bible is insufficient and that a living prophet is required to 'know the certainty of all things' (v11).

Shared Values:

Concern for family well-being; Zeal for evangelism/missionary work; Belief in God's sovereignty; Reliance on the Holy Spirit for preaching

Friction Points:

1. [Critical] Sola Fide (Faith Alone) – Salvation is explicitly tied to keeping commandments (v14, v17).
2. [Critical] Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone) – Establishes a living 'revelator' whose words are binding and necessary for certainty.

Semantic Warnings:

"Saved"

In Text: Conditional outcome based on calling on God AND keeping commandments (likely referring to Exaltation in later LDS theology).

Evangelical: Justification by grace through faith alone, independent of works (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Example: *In D&C 100:17, 'saved' is the reward for obedience. In Romans 10:9, 'saved' is the result of confession and faith.*

"Revelator"

In Text: An office held by Joseph Smith to receive new, binding divine law and knowledge.

Evangelical: Not a continuing office; revelation is complete in the person of Christ and the canon of Scripture.

Example: *Joseph acts as a revelator to Sidney (v11), whereas in the New Testament, the Spirit guides all believers into truth (John 16:13).*

SOTERIOLOGY

Salvation Defined: Being 'saved' (v17) and the redemption of Zion (v13).

How Attained: By calling upon the name of the Lord AND keeping His commandments (v17); walking uprightly (v15).

Basis of Assurance: Assurance is conditional ('inasmuch as'), based on the believer's performance and obedience.

Comparison to Sola Fide: Directly opposes Sola Fide. The text uses the conditional 'inasmuch as' (v14) regarding salvation, whereas the Bible uses 'whosoever believes' (John 3:16). The addition of works as a salvific requirement nullifies grace (Romans 11:6).

MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

Explicit Commands:

1. Follow me and listen to counsel (v2)
2. Lift up your voices unto this people (v5)
3. Speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts (v5)
4. Declare in solemnity of heart and meekness (v7)
5. Continue your journey (v12)
6. Let your hearts rejoice (v12)

Implicit Obligations:

1. Sidney must accept Joseph's revelations as the source of certainty (v11)
2. Believers must walk uprightly to ensure things work for good (v15)
3. Obedience to commandments is required for salvation (v17)

Ritual Requirements:

1. Ordination of Sidney Rigdon to the calling of spokesman (v9)

EVANGELISM TOOLKIT

Discovery Questions:

1. In verse 17, it says those who keep commandments shall be saved. How many commandments must you keep perfectly to be assured of your salvation?
2. Verse 15 mentions that things work together for good to them that 'walk uprightly.' How do you interpret that promise when you struggle with sin? Does the promise stop working?
3. Why do you think the Lord needed to appoint a 'revelator' (v11) for Sidney Rigdon, rather than Sidney receiving guidance directly from the Holy Spirit through Scripture?

Redemptive Analogies:

1. The Spokesman – Just as Sidney needed a mediator to speak, we need a mediator. However, our mediator is not a man like Joseph, but Jesus Christ, who advocates for us before the Father. [1 John 2:1]
2. Concern for Family – God understands our anxiety for our loved ones. The ultimate security for our families is not just God's providential care in this life, but their eternal security through faith in Christ. [Acts 16:31]

Spiritual Weight:

1. Performance Anxiety / Legalism [Severe] – The text conditions salvation on 'keeping commandments' and 'walking uprightly.' This places the burden of salvation on the believer's consistency, leading to chronic insecurity and fear of failure.
2. Dependency on Human Authority [Moderate] – By designating Joseph as the 'revelator' who provides 'certainty,' the adherent is stripped of the ability to know truth directly from God's Word, creating a dependency on the hierarchy for spiritual validation.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowledge Source: Direct revelation through the Prophet (Joseph) and spiritual impression during preaching.

Verification Method: The Holy Ghost 'bearing record' (v8) creates an internal emotional/spiritual confirmation of the spoken words.

Evangelical Contrast: Biblical epistemology tests spirits and prophecies against the objective standard of written Scripture (Acts 17:11, 1 John 4:1). This text relies on subjective internal experience ('thoughts I shall put into your hearts') validated by internal feeling ('bearing record'), which is circular without an external objective standard.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Dating: October 12, 1833

Authorship: Joseph Smith (dictated)

Textual Issues: Part of the compilation of revelations regarding the establishment of Zion and missionary work. The text reflects the specific historical anxieties of the Missouri period.