

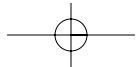
HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR EACH SECTION

"These sacred revelations were received in answer to prayer, in times of need, and came out of real-life situations involving real people" (Explanatory Introduction).

Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
---------	---

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | A committee was appointed to draft a preface for a collection of revelations to be published as the Book of Commandments. When the committee made their report to the elders, who had gathered for a conference in Hiram, they asked the Prophet to inquire of the Lord about their work. The brethren united in prayer, and Joseph Smith was the voice. When he concluded, the Prophet then dictated the words of this revelation by the Spirit, and Sidney Rigdon wrote it down. |
| 2 | Confident of obtaining a divine manifestation, young Joseph Smith prayed for forgiveness of his sins and a knowledge of his standing before God. |
| 3 | Following the loss of 116 pages of Book of Mormon manuscript, Joseph Smith had the plates taken from him in consequence of repeatedly asking the Lord for the privilege of letting Martin Harris take the writings. Joseph inquired through the Urim and Thummim as to his standing with the Lord. |
| 4 | Joseph Smith Sr. asked his son to inquire of the Lord on his behalf concerning how he could help in the Lord's work. |

*(see section headings for historical references)



Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
---------	---

- 5 A repentant Martin Harris asked Joseph Smith if he possessed the plates and wanted him to inquire of the Lord whether he would be privileged to see the plates in the future.
- 6 Joseph Smith's scribe, Oliver Cowdery, desired an additional divine witness that the work of translation was true. The Prophet inquired of the Lord for him through the Urim and Thummim.
- 7 While translating the plates, a difference of opinion arose between Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith concerning what had happened to John the Beloved. They inquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim.
- 8 Having been promised an opportunity to translate (see section 6), Oliver Cowdery desired to assist in translating.
- 9 When Oliver Cowdery failed in his attempt to translate, the Prophet inquired of the Lord so that he could understand his part in the translation.
- 10 Once the plates and the Urim and Thummim were returned by Moroni, Joseph inquired of the Lord as to how he should proceed with the work of translation.
- 11 Hyrum Smith asked his brother Joseph to inquire concerning the Lord's will for him.
- 12 Joseph Knight Sr. was anxious to know his duty and part in the work of the Restoration.
- 13 While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery desired to know more about baptism for the remission of sins. They walked to the banks of the Susquehanna River and prayed.
- 14, 15, 16 David, John, and Peter Whitmer were anxious to know their duties concerning the work of the Lord. The Prophet inquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim on their behalf.
- 17 Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris wanted to know if they might be the three witnesses spoken of in the Book of Mormon (see *History of the Church*, 1:52–53).
- 18 In preparation for the organization of the Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith directed Oliver Cowdery to write a foundational document outlining the history, basic beliefs, and procedures of the Church. Frustrated in his efforts, Oliver asked Joseph to inquire of the Lord for direction.

Historical Context for Each Section

xiii

Section Situation that brought forth the section*

- | | |
|----|---|
| 19 | Martin Harris had mortgaged his farm for the printing of the Book of Mormon. Fearing he would lose his farm if the Book of Mormon did not sell and wanting to know if he was in good standing with the Lord, Martin Harris asked the Prophet for reassurance and direction from the Lord. |
| 20 | Known as the “Articles and Covenants” of the Church, this section was a combination of several inspired writings written sometime in 1829 and not completed until after April 6, 1830, by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (see section 18). |
| 21 | Oliver Cowdery recorded the words of this revelation as the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated them by the Spirit during the meeting to officially organize the Church. |
| 22 | People who had been baptized by immersion in other churches wanted to know whether they needed to be rebaptized in order to join the Church. |
| 23 | Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, Joseph Smith Sr., and Joseph Knight were anxious to know their duties in the Lord’s newly organized Church. |
| 24 | After ministering to the branches of the Church in New York during a time of intense persecution, the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery arrived home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, in need of encouragement and instruction from the Lord. |
| 25 | Emma Hale Smith had suffered much persecution, humiliation, and harassment from others over the past several months. The Prophet received this revelation on her behalf to encourage, instruct, and strengthen her. |
| 26 | The Prophet Joseph, Oliver Cowdery, and the Whitmers became involved in a disagreement over the wording of section 20, verse 37. These instructions proved helpful in resolving the matter. |
| 27 | Earlier Emma Smith and Sally Knight had been baptized but had not been confirmed members of the Church. Joseph Smith desired all to partake of the sacrament prior to these confirmations. Joseph left home to buy wine for the service when a heavenly messenger appeared and gave him instructions. |
| 28 | The Prophet was distressed over Hiram Page’s claim to divine revelations through a seer stone. Oliver Cowdery and some of the Whitmers were also deceived. Joseph was uneasy about |

Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
---------	---

- commencing the second conference of the Church until he had settled this incident, so he inquired of the Lord for instruction.
- 29 Given for the benefit of the six elders about to depart on a mission to the Lamanites, this revelation came at a time when many were interested in the doctrine of Zion, or the New Jerusalem.
- 30 The Prophet received three separate revelations for David, Peter, and John Whitmer based on their actions during the Hiram Page incident.
- 31 Thomas B. Marsh desired to know the will of the Lord concerning him.
- 32 Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer Jr. wondered if the number of missionaries assigned to go to teach the gospel to the Lamanites could be increased.
- 33 Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet, as newly ordained elders, desired to know the will of the Lord concerning them.
- 34 Orson Pratt, who had traveled two hundred miles to see Joseph Smith, wanted to learn the Lord's will concerning him.
- 35 Sidney Rigdon, who had been baptized by the missionaries to the Lamanites, asked the Prophet to reveal the Lord's will concerning him.
- 36 Edward Partridge, who had not yet been baptized, asked the Prophet Joseph Smith to inquire of the Lord on his behalf.
- 37 The Church in New York had been under constant harassment, and the lives of the leaders of the Church were in danger. As the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon worked on the inspired translation of the Bible, the Lord gave this commandment.
- 38 Many of the Saints were poor and expressed a desire to know more about how and why they should move to Ohio.
- 39 James Covill, a Baptist minister for about forty years, promised to obey any command the Lord gave him through Joseph Smith. The Prophet inquired of the Lord on his behalf.
- 40 When James Covill rejected the command of the Lord, the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon wondered why.
- 41 The Prophet found some strange notions and false spirits among the Saints in Ohio. He inquired of the Lord to know how best to govern the Church.
- 42 Groups of elders united in prayer on two separate occasions

Historical Context for Each Section

xv

Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
---------	---

- with the desire to receive the law of the Lord, as promised in D&C 38:32 and 41:2–3. They also wanted to know how to organize missionary work and how to proceed in cases of adultery or other serious transgressions (see D&C 42:70–93).
- 43** A self-proclaimed prophetess named Hubble deceived some Saints with her revelations and commandments. The Prophet knew she was an imposter and inquired of the Lord concerning the matter.
 - 44** The Prophet Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord for instructions concerning the next general meeting of the Church.
 - 45** At a special conference for elders leaving on missions, the Prophet sought clarification of the meaning of prophecies concerning the Second Coming of Christ (see Matthew 24).
 - 46** Following a discussion of whether only Church members should be admitted to sacrament and confirmation meetings, the Prophet inquired of the Lord.
 - 47** John Whitmer was reluctant to accept the responsibility for keeping a history of the Church. He said he would do it, however, if it was the will of the Lord. The Prophet inquired of the Lord on John's behalf.
 - 48** Church leaders were concerned about purchasing land in Ohio on which the New York Saints could settle. The Prophet inquired of the Lord.
 - 49** Leman Copley was eager to share his newfound faith with his friends in a religious order called the Shakers. He asked the Prophet Joseph to inquire of the Lord concerning some of the teachings of his former religion.
 - 50** Several elders asked the Prophet to inquire of the Lord concerning the many strange and extreme spiritual manifestations among the Saints. After joining them in prayer, Joseph dictated the Lord's answer.
 - 51** Bishop Edward Partridge sought further direction on how to implement the law of consecration on behalf of the New York Saints arriving in Ohio. The Prophet's countenance shone as he dictated the revelation.
 - 52** Following a three-day priesthood conference, the Prophet inquired of the Lord what the elders should do until the convening of the next conference in Independence, Missouri.

Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
----------------	--

- 53 Having just been ordained an elder, Sidney Gilbert asked the Prophet to inquire of the Lord concerning his part in the Lord's work.
- 54 When selfishness caused confusion over consecrated land in Thompson, Ohio, Newel Knight and others asked the Prophet what they should do.
- 55 When William W. Phelps, a former newspaper editor and recent convert, arrived in Ohio, he asked the Prophet to inquire of the Lord on his behalf.
- 56 When Ezra Thayer refused to go to Missouri, Thomas Marsh, his appointed traveling companion, asked the Prophet what he should do.
- 57 Upon his arrival in Independence, Missouri, the Prophet greeted the Saints and viewed the countryside and its people. He diligently sought the Lord for answers to questions concerning the establishment of Zion in the last days.
- 58 Many Saints in Jackson County, Missouri, were anxious to know the will of the Lord concerning where they would live, how they should be organized, and what they should do.
- 59 Following the funeral of the faithful Polly Knight, the Prophet sought assurance from the Lord concerning the future prosperity of the Saints in Missouri.
- 60 As missionaries prepared to return home to Ohio, they inquired of the Prophet about the return trip to Kirtland.
- 61 A serious canoe accident on the Missouri River caused the Prophet and ten elders to stop and make camp. William W. Phelps saw the destroyer riding in power upon the waters. The next morning, the Prophet sought the Lord in prayer.
- 62 The Prophet met by chance a group of Saints headed to Missouri. Wanting to know whether they should continue their journey to Missouri, the Prophet inquired of the Lord.
- 63 The Saints in Ohio desired to know more about the land of Zion. The Prophet inquired of the Lord concerning the gathering of the Saints, the purchasing of land, and other matters.
- 64 Influenced by the apostasy of Ezra Booth and others, some Saints began to question the character of the Prophet. On behalf of several elders, Joseph Smith sought the Lord's guidance.

Historical Context for Each Section

xvii

Section Situation that brought forth the section*

- | | |
|----|---|
| 65 | This section was given during the period that the Prophet was preparing to recommence translation of the Bible. |
| 66 | William McLellin, a recent convert, had asked the Lord to reveal the answers to five questions. All his questions were answered in this revelation. |
| 67 | At the November 1831 conference regarding the publication of the revelations that had been given through Joseph, some of the brethren had expressed feelings that the language used in the revelations was inferior. The Lord's response and challenge to these doubters was given through the Prophet. |
| 68 | Elders Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, and William E. McLellin were desirous to know the mind of the Lord concerning themselves. |
| 69 | Oliver Cowdery had been appointed to carry the manuscripts for the Book of Commandments and Church monies through the often hazardous wilderness to Independence. |
| 70 | At the conclusion of the November 1831 conference the Lord gave stewardship of all official Church literature and its publication to Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, John Whitmer, and Martin Harris. These men in their stewardship were known as the Literary Firm. |
| 71 | Ezra Booth had apostatized and printed nine scandalous letters in the <i>Ohio Star</i> . These letters had inflamed the public against the Church, and Joseph and Sidney were commanded to stem the tide of lies. |
| 72 | Several of the Church members and leadership gathered for instruction and edification, and the discussion turned to the temporal and spiritual welfare of the Church and its members. |
| 73 | The elders of the Church were desirous to know what they should do while waiting for the January 1832 conference in Amherst, Ohio. |
| 74 | This revelation was received during the period of the translation of the Bible as an explanation of 1 Corinthians 7:14. |
| 75 | At the January 1832 conference in Amherst, the elders were anxious to know how they were to bring people to a knowledge of their fallen condition. |
| 76 | Joseph and Sidney were deep in translation of the Bible. When |

Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
---------	---

- they came to John 5:29, the heavens were opened and the revelation known as the Vision was given.
- 77 During translation of the book of Revelation, the brethren had many questions about the meaning of the writings of John.
 - 78 The following four revelations comprising sections 78–81 were received by the Prophet in March 1832. This revelation outlines the Lord's will in organizing and establishing a storehouse for the poor.
 - 79 Jared Carter had come to Hiram, Ohio, to inquire of the Lord through the Prophet about where he should labor as a missionary.
 - 80 Stephen Burnett and Eden Smith were admonished to preach the gospel in whatever place they chose.
 - 81 This section was given in preparation for the formal organization of the First Presidency. Originally it was addressed to Jesse Gause, who, due to apostasy, was replaced by Fredrick G. Williams.
 - 82 Joseph had been commanded in section 78 to go to Zion and establish the United Order. At the same meeting he was also sustained in Zion as the president of the High Priesthood just as he had been in Ohio.
 - 83 During the brief visit to Zion in April 1832, the Prophet sought to organize the Saints in the law of consecration. This revelation came at the end of his visit.
 - 84 Elders had been returning and reporting on their missions in the East.
 - 85 William W. Phelps had been appointed to assist the bishop in administering the law of consecration and had many concerns over the great responsibility that was laid on him. Section 85 is an extract from the letter that the Prophet wrote addressing his concerns.
 - 86 This revelation was given to the Prophet Joseph as an explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares while translating and editing the Bible.
 - 87 Troubles among the nations and within the United States itself were foremost on the minds of the Saints. During this time Joseph received this revelation.
 - 88 At a meeting of high priests two days after section 87 had been received, Joseph gave instructions on how to receive revelation

Historical Context for Each Section

xix

Section Situation that brought forth the section*

and the blessing of heaven. Each of the brethren present in turn offered prayer to the Lord that they might be of one heart and mind and receive the will of the Lord. This revelation, known as the Olive Leaf, followed.

- 89 Widespread use of tobacco amongst the brethren attending the School of the Prophets and the filthy conditions that resulted led the Prophet to inquire of the Lord concerning the matter.
- 90 This revelation was given as an answer to the petitions of the Prophet and the brethren through prayer.
- 91 The Bible used for the inspired translation by the Prophet contained the Apocrypha. Upon inquiry the Lord revealed that it was not necessary to translate them.
- 92 Fredrick G. Williams had been ordained a member of the First Presidency. He was to be equal in all rights and keys to Joseph Smith, and the Lord directed that Brother Williams should be made a part of the United Order, which at the time governed the business affairs of the Church.
- 93 No historical records give any indication as to what precipitated this revelation.
- 94 In a meeting a committee was appointed for raising funds to build a place for the School of the Prophets to meet. Shortly after, this revelation was given.
- 95 Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon were the committee that had been appointed to gather funds for the Church's building projects. They issued a circular encouraging the Saints to fulfill the divine command given six months previous to build the house of the Lord. Section 95 was given the same day the circular was issued.
- 96 In a meeting of high priests, the brethren were not able to decide who should be in charge of the lands that had been acquired by the Church. They decided to ask the Lord what to do.
- 97 This revelation was an answer to letters from Oliver Cowdery and other brethren in Zion.
- 98 The Saints in Missouri had been experiencing severe persecutions. This revelation was given in answer to their prayers.
- 99 Revelation for John Murdock.
- 100 While on a mission in the company of Sidney Rigdon and

Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
---------	---

- Freeman Nickerson, the Prophet was worried about the welfare of his family.
- 101** The Prophet had received news of the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County, Missouri, just six days before.
 - 102** Minutes of the organization of the first high council. The Prophet set forth the ancient pattern for Church councils revealed to him in vision.
 - 103** The Saints in Missouri sent Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight to find out by what means they would be restored to their inheritances in Zion.
 - 104** In order to stabilize the financial situation of the Church before the members of Zion's Camp departed, the United Order was divided into individual stewardships. The Lord confirmed the action in this revelation.
 - 105** After the arrival of Zion's Camp in Clay County, Missouri, the aid promised by the governor was rescinded, and the efforts of the brethren to restore the Saints to their inheritances were frustrated.
 - 106** This revelation was given while Joseph Smith was preparing for the beginning of another session of the School of the Prophets.
 - 107** In preparation for their mission to the eastern states, the Twelve Apostles requested a written revelation from the Lord to guide and comfort them in their labors.
 - 108** Under the influence of the Spirit, Lyman Sherman, one of the seven Presidents of the Seventy, came to the Prophet to express his feelings and desires and to receive a revelation teaching him his duty.
 - 109** This dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple was composed and copied under the direction of the Spirit by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, Warren Cowdery, and Warren Parrish.
 - 110** One week after the Kirtland Temple was dedicated, a general meeting was held. In that meeting Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, separated from the congregation by a veil, offered silent prayer at the pulpit. When they had finished, this glorious vision was given to them.
 - 111** Having heard of available monies in Salem, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, and Oliver Cowdery went hoping to alleviate the heavy debt that hung over the Church. Shortly thereafter this revelation was given.

Historical Context for Each Section

xxi

Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
---------	---

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 112 | This section was given to help delineate the roles of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve and their relationship to one another. |
| 113 | Soon after the arrival of the Prophet Joseph Smith to Far West, Missouri, Elias Higbee and other Church members inquired about particular passages of scripture from the book of Isaiah. |
| 114 | David Patten, a member of the first Quorum of Twelve Apostles and a leader in the Church at Far West, was given council to prepare for his mission with other members of the Twelve to Great Britain. |
| 115 | The Prophet Joseph Smith identified this revelation as a "Revelation given at Far West making known the will of God concerning the building up of that place." |
| 116 | This section was an extract from the journal of the Prophet Joseph Smith regarding his visit to various sites for settlement. |
| 117 | William Marks and Newel K. Whitney had been negligent in their duties and needed instruction. |
| 118 | Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Far West, Missouri, July 8, 1838, in response to the supplication, "Show us thy will, O Lord, concerning the Twelve" (<i>History of the Church</i> , 3:46–47). |
| 119 | The financial troubles of the Church, its leaders, and the failure of the Saints to keep the law of consecration led to this revelation and extension of the law of tithing to all members of the Church. |
| 120 | The brethren wished to know how to dispense the properties given through tithing. |
| 121, 122, 123 | The persecutions against and sufferings of the Saints led Joseph Smith to plead with the Lord in their behalf while he was in Liberty Jail. |
| 124 | This revelation was preceded by numerous events that allowed for the establishment of the Saints to gather to Nauvoo, Illinois. Once the Saints had established themselves in Nauvoo, they sought direction from the Lord. |
| 125 | After plans for a temple in Nauvoo were declared, the question arose whether the Saints in the settlement across the Mississippi should move into Nauvoo. |

Section	Situation that brought forth the section*
126	This section was given because the Lord wanted Brigham Young near the Prophet to prepare to succeed him.
127, 128	Performance of ordinances for the dead without any organization or record keeping led to instructions concerning baptism for the dead.
129	Satan's continued efforts to deceive the Saints necessitated instructions on how to perceive if an angel was from God or the devil.
130	This revelation corrected statements presented in a talk by Orson Hyde.
131	Verses 1–4 came up when the Prophet was giving instruction on the priesthood.
132	This section came at the request of Hyrum Smith for the convincing of Emma Smith of the truthfulness of the principles of eternal marriage and plural wives.
133	When the Book of Commandments was brought before the Lord for acceptance, He gave this revelation to be an appendix to it.
134	This section was a declaration to be included in the first publication of the Doctrine and Covenants on earthly government and laws in order that the Church would not be misinterpreted or misunderstood.
135	The Saints wished to know the circumstances surrounding the Prophet's martyrdom.
136	President Brigham Young needed to know how to organize the Saints in the trek westward.
137	In preparation for the future dedication of the Kirtland Temple, two meetings were held wherein the endowment was administered to leaders of the Church. In the first meeting this revelation was received.
138	President Joseph F. Smith was studying the scriptures in order to understand our postmortem existence.
OD 1	President Wilford Woodruff sought for a solution to the problems resulting from persecution of those practicing polygamy.
OD 2	President Spencer W. Kimball desired to know the will of the Lord concerning extending the blessings of the priesthood to all Saints, regardless of race or color.