

## Section 37

---

By the end of 1830 an astonishing amount had happened since the spring, when a handful of members organized the Savior’s Church. There were now dozens of members in New York, and missionaries had converted many more than that in Ohio before trekking to the western frontier to convert others and scout a location for New Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, Joseph and Sidney Rigdon were reading the Bible closely and seeking and receiving revelation that clarified and amplified it. Joseph received the Book of Moses by revelation, including the prophecy of Enoch (now Moses 6–8 in the Pearl of Great Price). Church historian John Whitmer noted that “after they had written this prophecy, the Lord spoke to them again and gave further directions”—section 37.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord explained to Joseph that under these circumstances it was not useful for Joseph to continue revising the Bible until he had gone to Ohio for the Church’s sake, because of some unspecified enemy. The Lord commanded Joseph to strengthen the Saints in both western and eastern New York first. All Saints in New York, the Lord said, were to move to Ohio quickly, before Oliver Cowdery returned from his mission to the West. This was the wise thing to do, but as free agents each

---

<sup>1</sup> “[John Whitmer, History, 1831–circa 1847](#),” p. 4, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 25, 2020.

of the Saints must choose whether to do it. Soon the Lord would come and hold them accountable for their choice.

Joseph and Sidney did exactly what the Lord told them to do. John Whitmer's history says that "after the above directions were received, Joseph and Sidney went to the several churches preaching and prophesying wherever they went, and greatly strengthened the churches." Specifically, as the revelation directed, "Joseph and Sidney went to Colesville to do the will of the Lord in that part of the land and to strengthen the disciples in that part of the vineyard." Joseph sent John Whitmer to Ohio to preside and to take a copy of the revelations to teach the Saints there. John reported what he found: "The enemy of all righteousness had got hold of some of those who professed to be his followers, because they had not sufficient knowledge to detect him in all of his devices."

Back in New York the generally prosperous and long-settled Saints struggled to come to terms with section 37. John blamed worldliness and false traditions for the Saints' hesitance to "believe the commandments that came forth in these last days for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God, and the salvation of those who believe." They dragged their feet and waited for Section 38 to be revealed before doing what Section 37 commanded them to do, namely to choose to obey or disobey.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> "John Whitmer, History, 1831–circa 1847," p. 5, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 25, 2020.