

# Section 99

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Section 99 fits chronologically between sections 83 and 84. Generically it is like sections 32–34 and 66. It is a mission call for John Murdock, but his is unique. No other missionaries were given the option to inherit Zion or serve as missionaries for the rest of their lives.<sup>1</sup>

John was among the early converts in Ohio, and from the time of his baptism in November 1830, he had hardly stopped preaching the gospel. His wife Julia had died after giving birth to twins, giving John five children under age seven to care for.

Then section 52 called John to preach and travel to Missouri in the summer of 1831. John shouldered and balanced his family and missionary calling as best he could. He made a selfless decision to accept an invitation from Emma and Joseph Smith, whose twins had just died, to adopt John and Julia's twins. John left his other children in the care of relatives and fellow Saints and endured a long, sickly, and extremely successful mission to Missouri and back. He found his children well with the exception of little Joseph, who had succumbed to measles in March 1832.

John nurtured his children, regained his health, and served in the Church at headquarters until August 1832, when section 99 called him back to the mission field. The revelation shows the Lord's familiarity with John's family situation and tells him

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<sup>1</sup> "[Revelation, 29 August 1832 \[D&C 99\]](#)," p. 19, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 9, 2020.

how to both provide for his motherless children and perform his mission. John, meanwhile, is given the unusual choice to inherit Zion in a few years or continue his missionary labors for the rest of his life.

John wrote that having received section 99, “I immediately commenced to arrange my business and provide for my children and send them up to the Bishop in Zion,” Edward Partridge. Then John set out to preach the gospel. Some received him as section 99 predicted. Others, including his in-laws, rejected his message. When John “met with a Dr. Matthews, a very wicked man” who rejected his offering, John and his companion followed the revelation’s instruction: “We bore testimony according to the commandment and the Lord helped us in tending to the ordinance” of cleansing their feet “in the secret places by the way for a testimony against them” (D&C 99:4).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John Murdock, “An Abridged Record of the Life of John Murdock, Taken from His Journal by Himself,” typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.