

Doctrine and Covenants Section 27



Joseph Smith's letter to the Colesville Saints to set a date to fulfill the commandment in Section 26:1 to "confirm the church at Colesville"

Newel's Knight's journal is the only place where this letter was preserved.

In August of 1830, when Newel and Sally were in Harmony visiting Joseph and Emma, the two women were confirmed members of the church. As the Knights left the Smith home, the prophet sent a letter back with them to the Colesville Saints. There were about a dozen who had been baptized in Colesville on June 30th, but were still not yet confirmed, because of the trouble with the residents of the township. In August, when a date was set for a confirmation meeting, Joseph and church leaders had no transportation to get them to Colesville.

Newel wrote in his autobiography¹:

"Brother Joseph intended visiting the Saints at Colesville on Saturday, the 21 of August and on my return [from Harmony] arrangements were made for the brethren and sisters to meet on that day, if possible, without letting our enemies know anything about it. But Bro. Joseph was prevented from keeping his engagement on this occasion but wrote a letter:

¹ *Newel Knight's Journal*, Allen typescript version, pp. 7-8

Harmony, August 20 [28]

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

We are under necessity to disappoint you this time for reasons which I shall mention hereafter, but trusting that your meeting may not be an unprofitable one, may you all realize the necessity of getting together often to pray and supplicate at the Throne of Grace that the spirit of the Lord may always rest upon you. Remember that without asking, we can receive nothing, therefore ask in faith, and ye shall receive such blessings as God sees fit to bestow upon you. Pray not with a covetous heart that ye may consume it upon your lusts, but pray earnestly for the best gifts, fight the good fight of faith that ye may gain the crown which is laid up for those that endure faithful unto the end of their probation. Therefore, hold fast that which ye have received so liberally from the hands of God so that when the time of refreshing shall come ye may not have labored in vain, but that ye may rest from all your labors and have fulness of joy in the kingdom of God.

Dearly beloved brethren we are not ignorant of your tribulations, owing that ye are placed among ravening wolves, therefore we have the more earnest desire to come to see you, but our friends from the West have not yet come and we can get no horse and wagon, and we are not able to come afoot so far, therefore we cannot come this Saturday, but we look for our friends from the West every day and with safety we can promise to come next Saturday, if the Lord will; therefore our desire is that ye should assemble yourselves together next Saturday so that all things will be in order when we come. Be careful that the enemy of righteousness will not get the advantage over you in getting the news abroad. Were it not for the prayers of you few, the Almighty would have thundered down his wrath upon the inhabitants of that place, but be not faint, the day of our deliverance is not far distant for the judgments of the Lord are already abroad in the earth, and the cold hand of death will soon pass through your neighborhood, and sweep away some of your most bitter enemies, for you need not suppose that God will be mocked at, and his commandments be trampled under their feet in such a manner as our enemies do, without visiting them in his wrath when they are fully ripe, and behold the angel cries, thrust in your sickle for the harvest is fully ripe, and the earth will soon be reaped, that is, the wicked must soon be destroyed from off the face of the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it and who can stay the hand of the Lord, or who is there that can measure arms with the Almighty, for He commands the heavens and the earth must pass away, for the day is fast hastening on when the restoration of all things shall be fulfilled which all the Holy Prophets have prophesied of even into the gathering of the House of Israel. Then shall come to pass that the lion shall lie down with the lamb. But brethren be not discouraged when we tell you of the perilous times, for they must shortly come, for the sword, famine, and pestilence are approaching, for there shall be great destruction upon the face of this land, for ye need not suppose that one jot of tittle of the prophecies of all the Holy Prophets shall fail, and there are many that remain to be fulfilled yet, and the Lord hath said that a short work will he make of it, and the righteous shall be saved if it be as by fire.

May the Grace of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost be and abide with you from henceforth and forever. Amen

Signed by John Whitmer and Joseph Smith

p.s. (to Newel Knight) Waited until Saturday morning and our friends have not yet arrived. Please send Polly's letter² and also the priest's with William, and oblige . . . [next page, #137 of the journal was missing.]”

On August 29th Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and John and David Whitmer had a new plan to meet with the Colesville Saints. Because the baptism meeting at the end of June was disrupted by a hostile mob, and the first attempt at a confirmation meeting was broken up when Joseph was arrested and put on trial for disrupting the peace for preaching the Book of Mormon, the men had concerns about their safety in coming to Colesville.

Newel wrote about Joseph Smith and those wanting to come confirm them:

“. . . they well knew the hostilities of our enemies in this quarter and also knowing it was the duty to visit us, they called upon their Heavenly Father in mighty prayer that he would grant them an opportunity of meet with us, that he would blind the eyes of their enemies and that they might on this occasion return unmolested.”³

Newel Knight also wrote,

Their prayers were not in vain. A little distance from my house they [the four church leaders] encountered a large company of men at work upon a public road, amongst whom were some of our bitterest enemies who looked earnestly at the brethren, but not knowing them, the brethren passed on unmolested.” A sacrament and confirmation service was held that night at Father Knight's home, and many were confirmed in what Joseph Knight, Jr. wrote as “the greatest time I ever saw. The house was filled with the Holy Ghost which rested upon us.”⁴

The four church leaders stayed the night at the Knight home and left quietly in the morning. Newel later told Joseph Smith that not long after he had departed a group of angry men came to the home, looking for him, but he was gone.

Diane L. Mangum – November 2024

² According to Michael Hubbard MacKay and Willim G. Hartley in *Rise of the Latter-day Saints, the journals and autobiographies of Newel Knight*, page 21, footnote 39, Newel's sister Polly had been under verbal harassment from a local priest, that turned into correspondence between them. The priest eventually gave up, defeated in his hopes of pulling Polly from this new religion.

³ Newel Knight Journal, Allen typescript, p 8.

⁴ William Hartley, *They Are My Friends*, Grandin Press, 1986, Appendix B, Joseph Knight's *Incidents of History*, p 215.