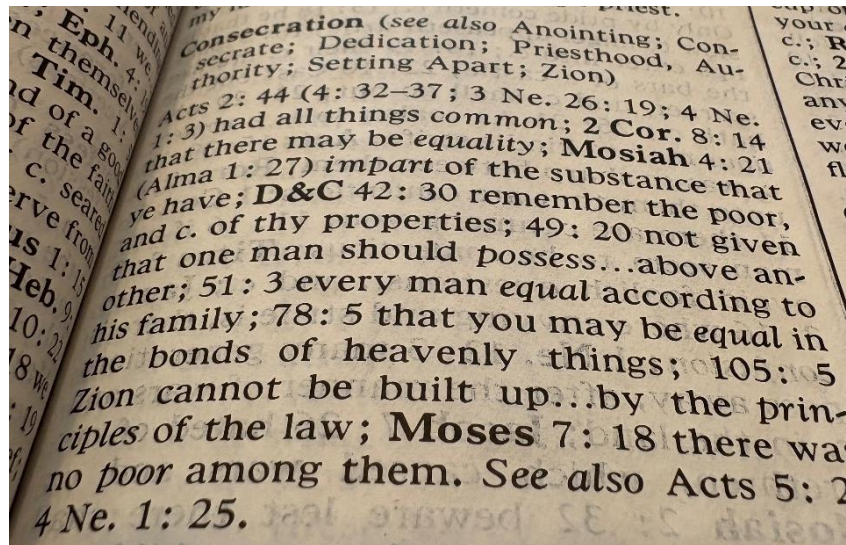


## Doctrine and Covenants Section 42



### The Knights and the Law of Consecration

There was a stream of revelation that came to Joseph Smith in the early months of 1831; four sections of the Doctrine and Covenants were given in February alone. One of the most far-reaching revelations was Section 42. In it, members of the church were called to obey "the law," and Joseph Knight, Sr., that section must have given clarity to the personal commandment he was given almost two years earlier on how to establish Zion through consecration.

In May of 1829, Joseph Knight, Sr., was told of the Lord in a revelation directly personally to him, in Doctrine and Covenants 12:6, "keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion."

Identical instructions had been given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in April in D & C 6:6, and to David Whitmer in June 1829 in D & C 14:6. Clearly establishing the cause of Zion was meant to be a collective endeavor. Jerusalem represented Zion in the old world, and building a New Jerusalem was the cause to work for in this new time and place.

It was in June of 1830 that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Moses and learned in Moses 7:18, "And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them."

Establishing the cause of Zion would require economic consecration. The Savior's teaching followers to share of one's substance with the poor, and is throughout the Bible and Book of Mormon. The early Apostles in the New Testament were an example of those who lived and

shared all things in common. Section 42 gave more specific instructions to church members in this modern dispensation on how to establish the cause of Zion through consecration.

When Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland on about Feb. 1, 1831, he learned that among the recent converts was a group led by Isaac Morley who were already trying to live a communal lifestyle. They modeled themselves after the Lord's apostles described in Acts 4:32 who held all things in common. Joseph encouraged them to leave that group and "live the more perfect law of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> Joseph received the revelation that became Section 41 that named a new Bishop for the Church, and a few days later in the company of 12 men he received the revelation that is Section 42, that included information on the law of consecration.<sup>2</sup>

The Morley group had land that they owned and worked communally.

The new law in Section 42 asked that:

1. They remember the poor and consecrate their properties for their support.
2. Properties be given by covenant and a deed that could not be broken.
3. When one gave of his substance to the poor it should be given to the bishop or his counselors who had been set apart for the purpose of looking after the poor.
4. Once properties are given to the church they cannot be taken from the church.
5. Every man is accountable as a steward over his own property, or that which he was given through consecration, and it should be as much as is sufficient for himself and family.
6. Any residue left should be consecrated to the bishop to administer to those who have not, and it shall be kept in the Bishop Storehouse to be administered to the poor and needy.
7. And the residue may be used to purchase land for the church, for the building of houses of worship and the building up of the New Jerusalem, that the covenant people may be gathered there, and that the Lord may come to his temple.<sup>3</sup>

At the time Section 42 was given, Joseph and Polly Knight were the only Knight family members in Kirtland. The others were still in Colesville selling their homes and preparing to leave. Shortly after the Colesville Branch arrived in Ohio in May of 1831 Section 51 was received that instructed Bishop Edward Partridge to organize the land in Thompson and to give portions to "every man according to his family, according to his circumstance and his wants and needs."<sup>4</sup>

The Colesville Branch and the Knight family were sent to build homes and farms on the land in Thompson that had been consecrated by Leman Copley. They were the first group asked to live the law of consecration.

Diane Mangum – March 2025

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<sup>1</sup> J. Christopher Conkling, *A Joseph Smith Chronology*, Deseret Book, 1979, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Smith announced in July of 1831 that the City of Zion, or the New Jerusalem was to be built in Independence, Missouri.

<sup>4</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 51:2