

# Section 41

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## Cross reference Sections 36 and 85

“Joseph the Prophet and Sidney arrived at Kirtland to the joy and satisfaction of the Saints,” John Whitmer wrote. They were homeless. Joseph and Emma had left their home in Pennsylvania. Sidney and Phebe Rigdon had, because of their conversions, lost the home their Reformed Baptist congregation built for them.

Joseph received section 41 the day they arrived. It answered the questions about housing and did something out of the blue: called a bishop named Edward Partridge.<sup>1</sup>

Edward had apprenticed four years for a hat maker in New England before venturing west to Ohio to open his own factory with his bride, Lydia Clisbee. They succeeded economically but remained unsettled. They could see a great need for God to “again reveal himself to man and confer authority upon son [sic] one, or more, before his church could be built up in the last days.”<sup>2</sup>

Oliver Cowdery was just such a man. When he and his companions brought the Book of Mormon to Painesville, Ohio, Edward initially reacted with disbelief. Knowingly, and perhaps with a smile, Oliver thanked God for honest-hearted souls and departed.

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<sup>1</sup> “[Revelation, 4 February 1831 \[D&C 41\]](#),” p. 61, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 28, 2020. B.H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 volumes (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977–78), 1:244.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Partridge Papers, May 26, 1839, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Before long, Edward sent one of his employees to fetch a Book of Mormon from Oliver and his fellow missionaries.<sup>3</sup>

Hungering for truth, Edward set out for New York to interview Joseph Smith and returned to Ohio having been baptized by the Prophet himself.<sup>4</sup> Lydia, meanwhile, had been baptized by Parley Pratt. “I saw the Gospel in its plainness as it was in the New Testament,” she testified, “and I also knew that none of the sects of the day taught these things.”<sup>5</sup> Edward returned to New England to declare the good news to his parents and siblings.

Joseph, meanwhile, received Sections 37 and 38, commanding the New York Saints to move to Ohio and promising revelation of the Lord’s law and an endowment of power there. Joseph and Emma traveled to Ohio by sleigh with the returning Edward Partridge and Sidney Rigdon.

Section 41 is strikingly countercultural. It highlights the differences between the kingdom of God and the world in which Joseph Smith lived. The revelation is neither democratic nor republican. It assumes that the Lord, not the people, are sovereign. It does not separate legislative, judicial, and executive powers. The Lord exercises them all.

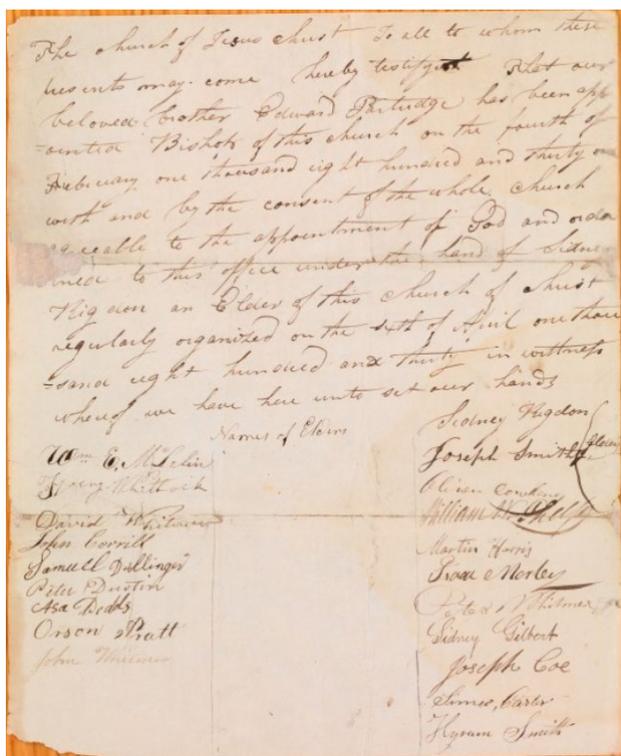
He assumes both the power and prerogative to bless and curse, to include and to cast out, to make and declare law, and to bring lawbreakers to judgment. He repeatedly refers to “my law” and calls for an assembly, not to debate and create law but “to agree upon” law dictated by revelation. Moreover, he commands specific action, most notably for Edward Partridge, to “leave his merchandise” and spend his whole effort executing the divine law. Section 41 is a revelation from a King with instructions about how to build His kingdom.

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<sup>3</sup> Richard L. Anderson, “Impact of the First Mormon Preaching in Ohio,” *BYU Studies* 11:4 (Summer 1971): 489.

<sup>4</sup> History of Edward Partridge, Jr., 5, quoted in Anderson, “Impact of the First Mormon Preaching in Ohio,” *BYU Studies* 11:4 (Summer 1971): 493. Lavina Fielding Anderson, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2001), 504–5.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Scott H. Partridge, “Edward Partridge in Painesville, Ohio,” *BYU Studies* 42:1 (2003): 59.



Edward Partridge's 4 February 1831 license. Image via Joseph Smith Papers.

As Section 38 declared, this King of Kings gives laws that make us free (D&C 38:21–22). He retains sovereignty, including the prerogative to make the laws, but grants agency—the power to decide whether or not to obey them.

“Bishop Partridge had been a member of the Church for less than two months when he was asked to sacrifice everything he had worked for in his life and devote his time completely to his new Church.” How did he choose to act on the revelation? He fed and clothed the Saints, left hat-making and factory-owning to others, and faithfully, if imperfectly, acted out the commands in this revelation and others for the rest of his life.

That was not the American way. It was the Lord’s way. Edward Partridge had been called to model and then implement the law of consecration (section 42). His daughter remembered that he “was called to leave his business, which was in a most flourishing condition, and go to Missouri to attend to the business of the Church. He went.” Soon thereafter, when the Lord called for them in section 57, Lydia and their children went too. This revelation was the beginning of the Partridge family consecrating their lives to the kingdom of God on earth.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Scott H. Partridge, editor, *Eliza Maria Partridge Journal* (Provo: Grandin, 2003), 2–3.