

Section 5

About a year after Martin Harris went to Pennsylvania to scribe for Joseph, he arrived there again in spring 1829. This time he said his neighbors were gathering evidence for a lawsuit and threatening to put him in jail if he did not condemn Joseph for deception. Martin said he needed to know, really know, that Joseph had plates engraved with ancient, sacred writings.¹

The Lord spoke to that situation but not to Martin. In sections 4 and 6 and dozens of others, the Lord spoke through Joseph to his father or Oliver Cowdery or others. In section 5, it seems like the Lord was not on speaking terms with Martin. Rather, the Lord told Joseph that Martin's desire for more evidence could be granted if Martin chose to meet the conditions of humility, faith, and patience.

The Lord told Joseph to remind Martin that Joseph was under covenant not to show the plates to anyone unless commanded, implying a stinging reminder to Martin, the covenant breaker who showed off the translation manuscript and lost it, contrary to his solemn promise.

¹ "[Revelation, March 1829 \[D&C 5\] \(Historical Introduction\)](#)," p. [1], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 21, 2020.

The Lord told Joseph he intended to select three witnesses to testify. He would show them the plates and their witness would accompany His words to all mankind. However, the Lord made it clear that seeing is not believing.

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CHAPTER IV.

This revelation reoriented Martin. He came to the Lord saying, "Show me and I'll believe. And let me prove to others so they'll believe." With Joseph as mediator, the Lord responded that he would show Martin after he chose to believe and to be humble, not before. Martin eventually received the greater witness he sought. He became one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon plates and artifacts. That happened after he chose to meet the conditions the Lord set in section 5, not before.

1 *A Revelation given to Joseph and Martin, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, March, 1829, when Martin desired of the Lord to know whether Joseph had, in his possession, the record of the Nephites.*

BEHOLD, I say unto you, that my servant Martin has desired a witness from my hand, that my servant Joseph has got the things of which he has testified, and borne record that he has received of me.

2 And now, behold, this shall you say unto him: —I the Lord am God, and I have given these things unto my servant Joseph, and I have commanded him that he should stand as a witness of these things, nevertheless I have caused him that he should enter into a covenant with me, that he should not show them except I command him, and he has no power over them except I grant it unto him; and he has a gift to translate the book, and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift.

3 And verily I say unto you, that wo shall come unto the inhabitants of the earth, if they will not hearken unto my words, for, behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe my servant Joseph, if it were possible that he could show them all things. O ye unbelieving, ye stiffnecked generation, mine anger is kindled against you!

4 Behold, verily I say, I have reserved the things of which I have spoken, which I have intrusted to my servant, for a wise purpose in me, and it shall be made known unto future generations: But this generation shall have my words, yea and the testi-

Chapter 4 in The Book of Commandments.