

## Hard Questions in Church History

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### Joseph Seeks Federal Help for Missouri Losses in Washington DC

#### Questions to Consider:

- Why did the Lord direct Joseph Smith to government leaders if they were not going to help the Saints?
- Why couldn't President Van Buren help the Saints?
- What is different about the Gift of the Holy Ghost and use of the Spirit that Joseph restored compared to other Christians?

<b>1839</b>		
	May 10	Joseph moves to Commerce (Nauvoo), Illinois. Involved in resettlement of the Saints
	Aug-Sept	Apostles leave for mission to the British Isles
	Oct 29	Joseph, Sidney, & Elias Higbee leave Nauvoo to present Mormon Redress petitions to US President Martin Van Buren
	Nov 28	Joseph arrives in Washington D.C.
	Nov 29	Joseph visits President Martin Van Buren and prepares to see Congressmen
	Dec 5	Joseph wrote to his brother Hyrum with details of the disappointing interview with President Van Buren
	Dec	Joseph visits Latter-day Saints in Philadelphia and New Jersey
<b>1840</b>		
	Feb	Joseph leaves Washington D.C. to return home to Nauvoo
	March 4	Joseph arrives home to Nauvoo
	Sept 14	Joseph Smith Sr. dies

#### Fall 1839

Lucy recorded that when the weather changed and the plague subsided. Even without knowing the transfer of malaria came from mosquitoes, they knew it came and went with the weather:

When the weather became cold, the sallow faces of the community began to assume a more fresh and ruddy hue and with all the bustle and business some building some fencing some hauling wood and indeed there was none who were Idle [*sic*] but all hands were as active in gathering around them the comforts of life as though they had never been disturbed from their possessions and had no reason to distrust the lasting friendship of those who professed to be their friends how often have I looked upon the innocent cheerful countenances of our brethren and wondered at the difference which there was between them and the dark lowering wicked look of our persecutors who thronged our lovely city. . . .

It now became a duty for Joseph to attend to the fulfillment of a commandment which he received while in prison to go as soon as he was situated so that he could do so leave home to the city of Washington and petition congress for redress he ar [*sic*] that if their [*sic*] was any virtue in the government that they might not fail to do justice for want of a correct understanding of the facts (*josephsmithpaper.org*; Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844-1845, p.[9], bk. 17; also Anderson, *Lucy Book*, 705-706).

Lucy may have referred to D&C 101: 86–89, “Let them importune at the feet of the judge; and if he heed them not, let them importune at the feet of the governor; and if the governor heed them not, let them importune at the feet of the president; and if the president heed them not, then will the Lord arise and come forth out of his hiding place, and in his fury vex the nation.”

### Joseph Smith visits US President Martin Van Buren

The Prophet Joseph was determined to seek federal redress after failing in local and state courts to regain the saints’ property in Missouri. The Saints prepared 491 redress petitions of their property losses in Missouri (Jeffery Walker, “Mormon Land Rights in Caldwell and Daviess Counties and the Mormon Conflict of 1838 New Findings and New Understandings,” *BYU Studies*, 47, no.1, 31). Over the next four years, three other attempts were made for national help. During that time more Saints submitted their losses and the number of petitions increased to 770 (*ibid.*). The estimated losses totaled two-million dollars at that time. With their land costing between \$1.25 and \$10.00/acre, the equivalent value is today’s money is approximately half of a billion dollars.

In October 1839, a group of five men left Nauvoo for Washington D.C.—Joseph, Elias Higbee, Sidney Rigdon, Porter Rockwell and Dr. Foster. By the time the group reached Columbus, Ohio, Sydney was too ill to continue. So Porter and Dr. Foster remained with Sidney, while Joseph and his legal advisor, Elias Higbee continued on their nearly thousand-mile journey (Dean Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 448, 453). Joseph was thirty-three years old that year.

On November 29, 1839, the Prophet Joseph, Elias Higbee, and their escort—Illinois congressman, John Reynolds—walked into the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue to request an audience with US President Martin Van Buren. A porter led the three men upstairs where President Martin Van Buren was speaking with other visitors. It appears that Joseph had learned that they needed local political support, either from their Missouri trials or from seeking a state charter for the Kirtland Safety Society. By having a congressman there to introduce Joseph he hoped to have more success at this political endeavor.

Within a few minutes, the door opened and President Smith and his party were escorted into President Van Buren’s office, and within minutes they were escorted out. Joseph wanted to personally deliver the Latter-day Saint petitions of redress for the wrongs they had suffered in Missouri. But it appeared Van Buren was more worried about his political standing and states’ rights than addressing the abuse of thousands of citizens. After reading Joseph’s written introduction, Van Buren answered: “Help you! how can I help you? All Missouri would turn against me” (*josephsmithpapers.org*, Discourse March 1, 1840).

Elias Higbee recorded his perspective too, “We were not to be intimidated, and demanded a hearing and constitutional rights—Before we left him he promised to reconsider what he had said, and observed that he felt to sympathize with us on account of our sufferings” (Ronald Barney, “Joseph Smith Goes to Washington, 1839-1840” in Holzapfel and Jackson, ed., *Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer* [Provo, UT: BYU RSC, 2010], 391-420).

After their rejection, Joseph and Elias turned to the congress. While in Washington, DC, Joseph Smith also dined with Judge Stephen A. Douglas and Henry Clay, and other congressmen. Joseph also met with the Saints and other interested audiences.

On January 27, 1840 Joseph Smith and Elias Higbee reported to the United States House of Representatives that the persecution against the Saints in Missouri was rooted in that a desire for land rights.

The Mormons had either purchased of the settlers or the General Government, or held by Pre-emption rights, what were regarded the best lands in that region of the Country. The tide of speculation during this period of time ran high; and the cupidity of many was thus unlawfully aroused to possess themselves of these lands, and add to their wealth by driving the Mormons from the country, and taking forcible possession of them; or constraining them to sell through fear and coercion at prices merely nominal and of their own fixing (The full petition to Congress is available in *josephsmithpapers.org*; also see Smith, *History of The Church*, 5:393).

Even those outside the Mormon community acknowledged this motive. In an article published in the *New Yorker* dated October 13, 1838, the editor succinctly wrote:

The latest accounts from the Mormon neighborhood in Missouri directly assert that all the trouble is occasioned by the “world’s people” about them, who covet the fine lands on which they have settled, or wish to frighten or drive them from the country before they have taken up any more in the fertile country surrounding their settlement. Of course, this interferes with the trade of the pre-emptioners, who are determined to eject them, either by their own force, or by stirring up the State against them (Alexander Baugh, “Mormon Land Rights and the Conflict of 1838,” *BYU Studies*, 47; no 3, 39-40).

Joseph grew impatient with the politics and grew homesick. His letters to Emma show his desire to be with his wife and children. His letter dated January 20, 1840 reads:

I expect is before the house of congress now & I shall start for Washington in a few days and from there home as soon as possible [*sic*] I am filled with constant anxiety and shall be until I git [*sic*] home I pray God to spare you all untill [*sic*] I git home my dear Emma my heart is intertwined arround [*sic*] you and those little ones I want <you> to remember me tell all the children that I love them and will come home as soon as soon as I can yours in the bonds of love your Husband untill [*sic*] Death &c—Joseph Smith Jr

On February 5, 1840, the Prophet gave a discourse on the church’s beliefs to dispel false rumors. By mid month, Joseph left Washington D.C. for home. Elias Higbee remained for a few more weeks to continue to seek federal help for their rights and remuneration.

Joseph’s visit to Washington DC did not bring federal help but it was a defining moment in Joseph’s life and in our understanding of the importance of the Holy Spirit. His brief conversation with President Martin Van Buren has become famous in Mormondom. On December 5, 1839, just a week after Joseph’s visit at the White House, Joseph wrote to his brother Hyrum about the experience and included an important detail from his conversation with the president. As Joseph and Elias Higbee were finishing the interview, Van Buren asked the Prophet how his Church differed from other religions of the day. Joseph replied, “We differed in mode of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.” Offering a sentence of explanation to Hiram, Joseph added in the letter, “We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 4.42). Joseph’s reply to President Van Buren begs for a serious analysis of Joseph’s understanding of the Spirit compared to other nineteenth century religious leaders and their biblical interpretation.

### Joseph Smith’s Understanding of the Gifts and Workings of the Spirit

While Joseph Smith’s thoughts on the Holy Ghost appear to fall within the mainstream of enthusiastic outbursts of the Second Great Awakening (1800–1840), a closer look shows that his

restored doctrines made an abrupt and radical departure from the pneumatology of his day. Many historians interpret Joseph’s claim to revelation as a creative response to the cultural and religious stimulus of the “Burned-over District” in upstate New York. The Burned-over-District was alive with religious revivals.

**Table 1: Religious Revivals in New England and New York between 1815 and 1818**

RI	CT	PA	NJ	Eastern NY	VT	MA	Burned-over-District or Western NY
6	15	21	21	21	45	64	80

These numbers are even more significant when we count the sparse developing population (Cross, *Burned-Over District*, 11–12). At these revivals and in periodicals and pamphlets, the most regularly discussed topic was revelation (second was the trinity and third, the depravity of men). By Joseph claiming the restoration differed in the Gift of the Holy Ghost he is hitting the hottest topic of the Second Great Awakening.

As we examine what Joseph’s understanding of the gift of the Holy Spirit were that different from traditional Christianity?” I have found four main differences—1) Definition, 2) Numbers, 3) Names, and 4) Detail.

#### Definition:

- Initially, Joseph may have identified the Spirit as most Christians—the source of God’s love and forgiveness—the source of inspiration. But over his twenty years the years of divine tutelage, the Lord expanded his understanding of the Spirit. Here are just a few ways that Joseph taught a different view of the Spirit:
- First, he learned that the Holy Spirit was a separate entity from the Father and Son of God. The Holy Spirit acted as a cleansing agent and facilitator of the Atonement in mortal lives, and sealed one to Christ (Mosiah 3:19; D&C 76:52; 130:22-23; 132:7, 18-19, 26).
- The Spirit acts as a source of hope, comfort, perfect love, truth, witness, **cleansing**, and revelation (Moroni 6:4; 8:26; D&C 50:14; Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:18-19).
- “No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 6.58)
- Joseph spoke most often about the gifts of the Spirit—in particular, the gift of discernment. For example, in prefacing one of his newspaper editorials he wrote, “Try the Spirits” and included an explanatory introduction:
 

“Recent occurrences that have transpired amongst us render it an imperative duty devolving upon me to say something in relation to the spirits by which men are actuated . . . Nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:571; written April 1, 1842).
- Joseph identified the “difference between the Holy Ghost and the Gift of the Holy Ghost” from the biblical story of Cornelius, who “received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him. Until he obeyed these ordinances and received the Gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or

commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, and it obey him” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:554-555).

- “This first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:380; Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980], 4).
- The Holy Spirit of Promise became a very important step to ensure sealing of ordinances—first conditionally, then permanently (Eph. 1:13; D&C 76, 124, 132). “The Holy Spirit of Promise acted in this ultimate role as a witness to the ‘final sanctioning authority for all priesthood blessings’” (Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 26). Joseph interpreted the ultimate sealing of “the Holy Spirit of Promise” as synonymous with one’s “calling and election made sure” (Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 26). Elsewhere he elaborated on the sure sealing as an ordinance that took place only after “the Lord has thoroughly proved, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 3.380).
- The Second Comforter is not the Spirit: “What is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face . . .” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 3.380; Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 4).
- He taught the Spirit would someday go to a world and receive a body during a Second Estate (Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 382).

### Difference in Numbers:

One way to examine the divergence of Joseph’s sacred writings from the Bible is a simple word-counting. Even though the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are under half the size of the Bible (374,233 English words compared to 790,868 KJV words), Joseph’s sacred texts have 217 more references to the Spirit. The total word ratio of pneumatological words is especially apparent in the Doctrine and Covenants where it mentions the Spirit sixty-three percent or 1.6 times more often than the New Testament, and seventeen times more than the Old Testament. The data in the following table substantiates this prominence (I used the Hebrew *ruach* and Greek *pneuma* when it refers to the Holy Spirit—and not a “contrite spirit,” nor “the spirit of Joshua,” and the like).

**Table 2: Word Ratio of Spirit, Holy Ghost, Comforter, and Baptism of Fire**

Text	Spirit	Holy Ghost	Comforter	Baptism[ized] of /with Fire	Total	Number of references per 1,000 words
D & C 1–133 107,289 words	148	48	24	4	224	0.209
Book of Mormon 266,944 words	202	91	1	6	300	0.112
KJV New Testament	143	86	4	0	233	0.129

180,565 words						
KJV Old Testament 610,303 words	73	0	1	0	74	0.012
KJV Bible 790,868 words	216	86	5	0	307	0.039

Joseph's sacred texts cite the Spirit 3.5 times more often than the Bible. In the Old Testament only half of the books include a reference to *ruach* as the Spirit of God (with Isaiah as the most prolific), in the New Testament, twenty-four of the twenty-nine books include either *pneuma*, *parakleto*, or *theopneustos*. We find references to the Spirit in every book in the Book of Mormon, and 77 of the 134 sections of the D&C attributed to Joseph.

### Difference in Names:

Joseph's sacred writings use a wide variety of descriptive names for the Spirit. In contrast to the Bible's prevailing shorter references like Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, Joseph's modern scripture uses longer titles which often convey additional doctrinal meaning. They demonstrate this most dramatically by describing the Spirit with three-to-five-word titles. In table 2, the totals demonstrate that the Book of Mormon uses these descriptive three-to-five-word titles for the Spirit 7.3 more times than the Old Testament and 2.3 times than the New Testament.

**Table 3: Titles for the Holy Spirit in Three-to-Five Word Segments**

Titles or Descriptions	Old Testament	New Testament	Book of Mormon	D&C
Baptism of (by) fire Baptize(d) with fire			4	4
Filled with the Spirit Filled him with the Spirit	1 2	1	7	1
Gift of the Holy Ghost		2	3	6
His Holy Spirit Holy Spirit of God	2	1 1	5 2	1
Holy Spirit of Promise		1		7
Power of the Holy Ghost		1	25	5
Spirit and in Truth		2	2	
Spirit and my Word				1
Spirit and Power Spirit and Power of God			2 1	1
Spirit of Christ		2	2	1
Spirit of Glory		1		
Spirit of God Spirit of our God Spirit of the living God	14	12 1 1	20	3 2

Spirit of Grace	1	1		
Spirit of His mouth		1		
Spirit of His Son		1		
Spirit of Holiness		1		
Spirit of Jesus Christ		1		1
Spirit of the Lord Sp. of the Lord Omnipotent	26	5	40 1	1
Spirit of Prophecy Spirit of Prophecy and Revelation		1	18 1	2
Spirit of Revelation			9	2
Spirit of your Father		1		
Spirit of Truth Spirit of the Truth		4	1	12
Sword of the Spirit		1		
Voice of the Spirit			2	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>53</b>

### ***Spirit of the Lord***

In the KJV Old Testament, the most common title, “Spirit of the Lord,” is found twenty-six times, five times in the KJV New Testament, and forty times in the Book of Mormon. When length of books and word ratio is taken into account, these numbers are even more significant. The Book of Mormon uses “Spirit of the Lord” 5.5 more times than the Old Testament, and 3.5 times more than the New Testament. If this were a unique finding it would be less significant, but most comparisons in Table 2 show a similar prominence in The Book of Mormon. Most phrases that define the Spirit in Joseph’s texts use biblical vocabulary, but a few titles are unique. These variations poignantly divulge the theological bias within the texts of the Restoration.

### ***Spirit of Revelation***

As a case in point, the non-biblical phrase “the Spirit of revelation” refers to one of Joseph’s often used topics. The phrase is found nine times in the Book of Mormon and twice in the Doctrine and Covenants (Alma 4:20; 5:46; 8:24; 9:21; 17:3; 23:6; 45:10; Helaman 4:23; 3 Nephi 3:19; D&C 8:3; 11:25). Indicative of his own thought, the same phrase appears over a dozen times in Joseph’s sermons and personal writings together with four more occurrences of the “spirit of prophecy and revelation” (See Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 5-6, 82, 211-212; Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984], 216, 665; Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:313, 318; 381; 5:426). Of all the workings of the Spirit, revelation of divine messages was paramount to Joseph’s role as a prophet.

### ***Voice of the Spirit***

Another characteristic phrase that is unique to Joseph’s translations and revelations is “the voice of the Spirit.” Seven times in his sacred writings and nine times in the official *History of the Church*, Joseph

describes divine inspiration as “the voice of the Spirit” (1 Nephi 4:18; 22:2; D&C 84:46, 47; 104:36; 105:36, 40) and often in Smith, *History of the Church*. He used this phrase for general application, “every one that hearkeneth to the *voice of the Spirit* cometh unto God” (D&C 84:47); and specific to him, “it shall be manifest unto my servant, by the *voice of the Spirit*, those that are chosen; and they shall be sanctified” (D&C 105:36). It may describe an audible voice at times, but it also identifies an inner communication: “make proposals for peace unto those who have smitten you, according to *voice of the Spirit* which is in you, and all things shall work together for your good” (D&C 105:40; See Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 423).

### ***Spirit and Power***

Joseph’s sacred writings associate emphatically the Spirit with power. They use the phrase “power of the Holy Ghost” thirty times compared to a single appearance in the Bible (1 Nephi 10:17, 19; 13:37; etc.). Correspondingly, 1 Nephi includes the unique expression “*Spirit and power of God*” to describe the strong interaction between God’s Spirit and his prophets: “that we may preserve unto them the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets, which have been delivered unto them by the *Spirit and power of God*, since the world began, even down unto this present time” (1 Ne. 3:20).

Even though “Spirit and power of God” is not a biblical expression, the Bible associates the “Spirit” or “Holy Ghost” with “power” ten times. Looking for the same pattern in the Book of Mormon, a book one-third the length of the Bible, we find 57 connections. The Doctrine and Covenants continues with thirty-five uses (or twenty-six times the concentration of the Bible). To the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Holy Spirit represented power as the source of all “the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets, which have been delivered unto them by the *Spirit and power of God*, since the world began, even down unto this present time” (1 Ne. 3:20). The numerical prominence is evidence of its theological importance to Joseph.

### ***Spirit of Prophecy***

The majority of the titles for the Spirit, however, are biblical, such as “spirit of prophecy.” The Bible mentions this phrase once in Revelation 19:10, in contrast to eighteen citations in the Book of Mormon, two in the Doctrine and Covenants, twenty-three in Smith, *History of the Church* (1:42, 46, 64, 71; 2:382, 428, 489; 3:28, 379, 389; and after the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith editors compiled his notes into 5:140, 215, 231, 392, 400, 427, 516; 6:77, 194). Four of the latter occurred on January 1, 1843 when the Illinois State Legislature asked Joseph to define a prophet: when Joseph defined the word “prophet:”

If any person should ask me if I were a prophet, I should not deny it, as that would give me the lie; for, according to John, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; therefore if I profess to be a witness or teacher, and have not the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus, I must be a false witness; but if I be a true teacher and witness, I must possess the spirit of prophecy and that constitutes a prophet; and any man who . . . denies the spirit of prophecy, is a liar” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:215-216).

Joseph claimed to have the spirit of prophecy as did all who testified of Christ with the Spirit. Joseph claimed the spirit of prophecy upon himself and anyone else who testified of Christ with the Spirit.

### ***Filled with the Spirit***

The Book of Mormon uses the phrase “filled with the Spirit” seven times, while two Old Testament books use “filled with the Spirit” once each (Eph. 5:18; Ex. 28:3; 1 Nephi 1:12, 14; 5:17; 2 Nephi 25:4; Mosiah 18:14; Alma 18:16; 3 Nephi 20:9; D&C 27:7). In the Old Testament and the Doctrine and



Covenants, “filled with the Spirit” describes those chosen by God (Ex. 28:3; D&C 27:7). In Ephesians, the phrase is juxtaposed with being drunk (Eph. 5:18). The Book of Mormon describes “filled with the Spirit,” when someone “began to prophesy” (1 Ne. 5:17; 2 Ne. 25:4), or “came forth . . . rejoicing” (Mosiah 18:14), and “being *filled with the Spirit of God* . . . perceived the thoughts of the king” (Alma 18:16). Elsewhere the Spirit works powerfully on those called to repent so that they experience physical signs: “My father did speak . . . with power, being *filled with the Spirit*, until their frames did shake before him” (1 Ne. 2:14). When an entire group receives an outpouring of the Spirit, 3 Nephi 20:9 says: “Behold, they were *filled with the Spirit*; and they did cry out with one voice, and gave glory to Jesus.”

The biblical phrase “filled with the Spirit” is reiterated four times in Joseph’s handwritten personal journal and five times in his *History of the Church* (1:391; 2:277, 284, 387, 392; Jesse, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 6-7, 149, 152, 157). The first entry from 1836 offers a feel for just what he meant by being “filled with the Spirit”: A journal entry from 1836 tells of “President Zebedee Coltrin, one of the Seven, saw a vision of the Lord’s host. And others were *filled with the Spirit*, and spake with tongues and prophesied. This was a time of rejoicing long to be remembered. Praise the Lord” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:387; Jesse, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 157). Being “filled with the Spirit” carries implications often associated with the gifts of the Spirit.

### ***Spirit and Baptism***

The Bible only associates the Spirit with the baptism of fire twice. Both are used by John the Baptist in proclaiming that the Lord’s mission is to “baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16; Matt. 3:11). If we look for similar links between baptism and fire in the works of Joseph Smith, we find sixteen references (See Lynne Hilton Wilson, “A New Pneumatology: Comparing Joseph Smith’s Doctrine of the Spirit with His Contemporaries and the Bible,” *BYU Studies* 51, no. 1 [2012], 199-252).

The higher number speaks to the additional doctrinal importance of Joseph’s message. Even more surprisingly, if we look for *any* connection of the Spirit to baptism, we find thirteen verses in the New Testament, twenty-five in the Book of Mormon, and fifteen in the Doctrine and Covenants. If every pair or word combination of baptism and Spirit is counted, the rate increases in the Book of Mormon to 1.5 times, and in the Doctrine and Covenants to twice as frequent as the New Testament. Numerically, Joseph’s sacred writings have greater pneumatological emphasis than the Bible.

***Table 4: Baptism Coupled with the Holy Spirit***

<b>The Book of Mormon</b>	<b>Doctrine &amp; Covenants</b>	<b>New Testament</b>
1 Ne 11:27 Holy Ghost, baptized	D&C 19:31 Holy Ghost, baptism	Matt 3:11 Holy Ghost, fire baptize (2X)
2 Ne 31:8 Holy Ghost, baptized	D&C 20:37 Spirit, bptz, bptsm2x	Matt 3:16 Spirit of God, baptized
2 Ne 31:12 Holy Ghost, baptized	D&C 20:41 Holy Ghost, baptized, baptism of fire	Mark 1:8 Holy Ghost, baptized
2 Ne 31:13 Holy Ghost (2X), baptism (2X) of fire	D&C 20:73 Holy Ghost, baptism baptize (2X)	Mark 1:10 Spirit, dove, cometh up out of the water
2 Ne 31:14 Holy Ghost, baptism (2X) of fire	D&C 33:11 Holy Ghost, baptized, baptism of fire	Luke 3:16 Holy Ghost, baptized fire

2 Ne 31:17 Holy Ghost, baptism	D&C 35:5 Holy Ghost, baptize	John 1:33 Holy Ghost, baptized, baptizeth, Spirit
Mosiah 18:10 Spirit, baptized	D&C 35:6 Holy Ghost, baptize	Acts 1:5 Holy Ghost, baptized
Mosiah 18:13 Spirit, baptize	D&C 39:6 Holy Ghost, baptism (2X) of fire, Comforter	Acts 2:38 Holy Ghost, baptized
Alma 7:14 Spirit, baptized	D&C 39:10 Spirit, baptized	Acts 8:16-17 Holy Ghost, bptzd
Alma 8:10 Spirit, baptized	D&C 39:23 Holy Ghost, baptize	Acts 10:47 Holy Ghost, baptized
3 Ne 9:20 Holy Ghost, baptized baptize with fire	D&C 55:1 Spirit, baptized	Acts 11:16 Holy Ghost, baptized
3 Ne 11:25 Holy Ghost, baptize	D&C 68:25 Holy Ghost, baptism	Acts 19:5-6 Holy Ghost, baptized
3 Ne 11:27 Holy Ghost, baptize	D&C 84:27 Holy Ghost, baptism	1 Cor 12:13 Spirit (2X), baptized
3 Ne 12:1 Holy Ghost (2X), baptize, baptize(d) (4X) with fire	D&C 84:64 Holy Ghost, baptized	
3 Ne 12:2 Holy Ghost, baptized with fire	D&C 84:74 Holy Ghost, baptized	
3 Ne 18:11 Spirit, baptized		
3 Ne 19:13 Holy Ghost, baptized with fire		
3 Ne 26:17 Holy Ghost, baptized, baptize by fire		
3 Ne 27:20 Holy Ghost, baptized		
3 Ne 28:18 Holy Ghost, baptized		
3 Ne 30:2 Holy Ghost, baptized		
4 Ne 1:1 Holy Ghost, baptized		
Mrm 7:10 Holy Ghost, baptized with fire		
Ether 12:14 Holy Ghost, baptized with fire		
Moro 6:4 Holy Ghost, Baptism		

### Difference in Detail:

More than numbers and names, the contents of Joseph's writings show greater doctrinal detail of the Spirit's work than the Bible discloses. For example, when we compare the Bible with the Book of Mormon on the role of the Spirit we find more clarification and nuance. For example:

- (1) In Producing Fruits of the Spirit (love, revelation, inspiration, testimony, peace, etc.) compare Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:9, with Mosiah 3:19; 4:3; and Alma 5:46-47; 13:28;
- (2) In Producing Miracles through the Spirit compare Galatians 3:5, with 2 Nephi 26:1; Alma 23:6; 3 Nephi 7:2;
- (3) The Spirit's work as a Teacher compare John 14:26; Luke 12:12; with Alma 18:34;

- (4) The Spirit's work in repentance compare Matthew 3:11; with Alma 5:50–54; Moroni 8:28;
- (5) The Spirit as a Witness of truth, compare Romans 9:1; with Moroni 10:4–5;
- (6) The Spirit as the Comforter, compare John 14–16; Moroni 8:26;
- (7) Gifts of the Spirit, compare 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 with Moroni 10:7-18 (and most of all, D&C 46:8-33)

Two additional comparisons follow:

***Role of the Spirit: Born Again.*** The first of Joseph's revelations to mention the Spirit is dated March 1829 and was received just before he began the intense translation of the Book of Mormon. The historical context presents Martin Harris asking Joseph to pray for him. Joseph's answer encouraged his friend to seek for the promises of God's Spirit. His instruction resembles the Gospel of John, where Jesus explained the workings of the Spirit to Nicodemus. The Bible states that one must be born again. Joseph's text explains the role of the Spirit in the process of a rebirth.

D&C 5:16

Behold, whosoever believeth on my words, them  
will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit;  
and they shall be born of me, even of water and  
of the Spirit.

John 3:5–8

Except a man be born of water and of the  
Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of  
God. . . . Ye must be born again . . . so is  
everyone that is born of the Spirit.

Even though both verses focused on the same promise of the Spirit, Joseph explains that *belief* will foster a witness of the Spirit. The vague statement in John leaves Nicodemus confused, whereas Joseph's revelation helps Martin Harris see the connection between applied faith in the words of God and a resultant manifestation of the Spirit.

***Role of the Spirit: Baptism of Fire and the Gift of the Holy Ghost.*** The baptism of fire is described in Matthew and Luke as a momentous gift that Jesus would offer, but they do not explain *why* it is significant. When the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi discussed this topic in his final testimony, he answered that question: the baptism by fire is a spiritual cleansing and allows worthy initiates to enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit, including the glorious manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit. Accordingly, the ordinance of baptism is the sign of obedience and one's desire to take on "the name of Christ"—meaning that one fully embraces the gospel, repents, and is willing to covenant with God to act as a disciple or ambassador of Christ forever. Nephi also explains that the agent of cleansing one from sin through the baptism of fire is the Holy Ghost, itself. The two baptisms work together—after "repentance and baptism by water . . . then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost" (2 Ne. 31:17).

On April 6, 1830, at the organization of the Church of Christ, Joseph expanded his teachings on the Gift of the Holy Ghost to include a special endowment of power to follow the baptismal ordinance as the cleansing fire, administered only by a higher priesthood authority (see D&C 20:68). The key agent for the baptism of fire is the apostolic authority, which he received through "the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost" from the hands of the apostles Peter, James, and John (Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:60). Joseph Smith taught the imperative need for baptism by water and fire or the gift of the Holy Ghost in an extemporaneous sermon on July 9, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois:

So far we are agreed with other Christian denominations [as] they all preach faith and repentance. The gospel requires baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, which is the meaning of the word in the original language—namely, to bury or immerse. We ask the sects, Do you believe this? They answer, No. I believe in being converted. I believe in this

tenaciously. So did the apostle Peter and the disciples of Jesus. But I further believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Evidence by Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:38. You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:499).

Joseph defended the Bible on this subject and likewise used the Bible as his backing to follow Peter's example on Pentecost. Joseph maintained that the gift of the Holy Ghost was essential for the remission of sins through baptism of fire. The two baptisms work together. It is not until after "repentance and baptism by water . . . then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost" (2 Ne. 31:17).

### Conclusion

The Prophet Joseph Smith charted a new course by proclaiming his doctrine on the Holy Spirit, and his doctrine does not arise entirely from his environment. Certainly his frontier mannerisms, work ethic, and religious curiosity developed from sources in his society but his unique perspective on the Holy Spirit indicates that his pneumatology was not the effect of his upbringing. He shared the same KJV vocabulary with Christians, but he interpreted most pneumatology scriptural terms differently from his religious peers. His innovative opinions on the Spirit are not found in conventional Protestant teachings in nineteenth century America. Joseph Smith professed a more expansive view of the role of the Holy Spirit than traditional Christianity. Rooted in his scriptures and personal experiences, Smith had a more expansive view of the Holy Spirit's role, which reflected a more comprehensive appropriation of the biblical tradition than the views of peers.

Significantly, Joseph did not see himself as building another Protestant church. He said, "I never built upon any other man's ground" (Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:410). He contended that the restoration was an outgrowth of the revelations and visions he received from the Spirit of God, Jesus Christ, and angelic messengers. He did not build on his childhood Methodism, his father's Universalism, or his mother's Presbyterianism. And in his understanding of the Gift of the Holy Ghost, he stood alone just as he told President Martin Van Buren in 1839.

### Further Reading:

Most of this handout was previously published: Lynne H. Wilson, "A New Pneumatology: Comparing Joseph Smith's Doctrine of the Spirit with His Contemporaries and the Bible," *BYU Studies* 51, no. 1 (2012): 119-152. <https://byustudies.byu.edu/article/a-new-pneumatology-comparing-joseph-smiths-doctrine-of-the-spirit-with-his-contemporaries-and-the-bible/>