
Five Separate Revelations

D&C 23

Doctrine and Covenants 23 combines five revelations that in the 1833 Book of Commandments appeared as five separate chapters.

The five men named in the revelations were Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, Joseph Smith Sr., and Joseph Knight Sr. Each of these men was anxious to know of the Lord what might be their respective duties in relation to this work. The Prophet Joseph inquired of the Lord and received a revelation in behalf of each man. Directions given or placement in the section is not based on seniority of age or position in the Church.

The five men were told of blessings and warnings, prophecies and promises. Three of the five were told, “Thou art under no condemnation” (D&C 23:3–5). The other two—Joseph Knight and Oliver Cowdery—did not receive that commendation. Joseph Knight was told to “take up your cross” and be baptized. Oliver Cowdery was told to “beware of pride, lest thou shouldst enter into temptation” (D&C 23:1, 6).

Three times in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord used the phrase “beware of pride.” Oliver Cowdery as the Second Elder of the Church was told to beware of pride, as was Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith (D&C 23:1; D&C 25:14). The other reference was given without a specific individual named (D&C 38:39).

President Ezra Taft Benson spoke of the dangers of pride:

In the premortal council, it was pride that felled Lucifer, “a son of the morning.” (2 Ne. 24:12–15; see also D&C 76:25–27; Moses 4:3.) At the end of this world, when God cleanses the earth by fire, the proud will be burned as stubble and the meek shall inherit the earth. (See 3 Ne. 12:5; 3 Ne. 25:1; D&C 29:9; JS—H 1:37; Mal. 4:1.)

President Benson further said, "The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives. (See Helaman 12:6.) They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works."¹

¹ President Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," *Ensign*, May 1989.