
Guidance of the Holy Spirit

D&C 30:1–3

Of the second conference of the Church held in late September 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith said,

At length our conference assembled. The subject of the stone previously mentioned was discussed, and after considerable investigation, Brother Page, as well as the whole Church who were present, renounced the said stone, and all things connected therewith, much to our mutual satisfaction and happiness. We now partook of the Sacrament, confirmed and ordained many, and attended to a great variety of Church business on the first and the two following days of the conference, during which time we had much of the power of God manifested amongst us; the Holy Ghost came upon us, and filled us with joy unspeakable; and peace, and faith, and hope, and charity abounded in our midst.¹

Before the assembled went their separate ways, the Prophet Joseph Smith received revelations on behalf of some of the brethren. Doctrine and Covenants 30 contains revelations received in behalf of Peter Whitmer Jr., John Whitmer, and David Whitmer.

Peter Whitmer Jr. was commanded to journey with Oliver Cowdery to the borders of the Lamanites and give heed to the words of his brother-in-law, Oliver. John Whitmer was instructed to labor for the cause of Zion by declaring the gospel as “with the voice of a

¹ Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:109–111.

trump" (D&C 30:9). With both brothers receiving a missionary assignment, it could easily be assumed that David Whitmer also received a proselyting call—but such was not the case.

David was chastened by the Lord. By revelation he was told that he had set his mind on earthly things, instead of hearkening to the Spirit and the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith. By so doing, David had deviated from the strait and narrow path and now faced the consequences of his behavior. One consequence was the loss of the Spirit to guide him. He was left alone to inquire for himself the correct course to take. That was a huge burden for David to carry, for the Holy Spirit guides us in our decisions and protects us from physical and spiritual danger.

Take, for example, the story told by Elder Boyd K. Packer of Wilford Woodruff:

I served for many years in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles with Elder LeGrand Richards. He died at the age of 96. He told us that as a boy of 12 he attended a great general conference in the Tabernacle. There he heard President Wilford Woodruff.

President Woodruff told of an experience of being prompted by the Spirit. He was sent by the First Presidency to "gather all the Saints of God in New England and Canada and bring them to Zion."

He stopped at the home of one of the brethren in Indiana and put his carriage in the yard, where he and his wife and one child went to bed while the rest of the family slept in the house. Shortly after he had retired for the night, the Spirit whispered, warning him, "Get up, and move your carriage." He got up and moved the carriage a distance from where it had stood. As he was returning to bed, the Spirit spoke to him again: "Go and move your mules away from that oak tree." He did this and then retired once again to bed.

Not more than 30 minutes later, a whirlwind caught the tree to which his mules had been tied and broke it off at the ground. It was carried 100 yards (90 m) through two fences. The enormous tree, which had a trunk five feet (1.5 m) in circumference, fell exactly upon the spot where his carriage had been parked. By listening to the promptings of the Spirit, Elder Woodruff had saved his life and the lives of his wife and child.²

² Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Prayer and Promptings," *Ensign*, November 2009.