

Section 48

The literal gathering of Israel and building of New Jerusalem raise questions. Section 48 was given to answer some of them. Sections 37 and 38 inspired saints in New York to move to Ohio in the fall and winter of 1830–1831. Section 41 called Edward Partridge to be their bishop. Section 42 gave them the law of consecration to live by and gave the bishop responsibility for “the properties of my church” and “the poor and the needy.” It also told Bishop Partridge to obtain places where the New York saints to settle.¹

As spring of 1831 arrived in Ohio and saints from New York with it, the bishop became anxious for more specific instructions and answers.² It is premature, the Lord says, to try to build New Jerusalem yet. Rather, let the New York saints get settled as best they can first. Then the Lord will reveal more about New Jerusalem. Then he will appoint people to lay its foundation. “Then shall ye begin to be gathered with your families” (D&C 48:6).

Section 48 answered Bishop Partridge’s questions and mapped out an orderly, step-by-step process for building and inhabiting New Jerusalem based on previous and future revelation. It also answers common questions related to the law of consecration.

¹ “[Revelation, 9 February 1831 \[D&C 42:1–72\]](#),” p. [1], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 30, 2020.

² “[John Whitmer, History, 1831–circa 1847](#),” p. 23, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 30, 2020.

Is saving contrary to consecration? What about “obtaining” money? Section 48 clarifies that one’s motives matter very much when it comes to saving and obtaining. It commands the saints, as prophets have since, to save all they can for righteous purposes. It commands them to earn all they can “in righteousness” so they can build Zion. It is a restatement of the Lord’s command to seek his Kingdom first and foremost. Earning and saving for that reason is not only justified. It is commanded.