

Date Modified, Text Added to Revelation

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The Manuscript History of Joseph Smith for August 1830 reads:

Early in the month of August, Newel Knight and his wife paid us a visit, at my place at Harmony, Penn . . . I was met by a heavenly messenger, And received the following revelation; the first paragraph of which was written at this time, and the remainder in the September following. Revelation given at Harmony Penn, August 1830. ¹

The idea that there were two dates (August and September) when parts of the revelation was written, then combined together, is not correct. The Book of Commandments (BC) in its heading has the following: “given in Harmony, Pennsylvania, September 4, 1830” (BC 28).

Joseph Smith was living at Harmony and the Manuscript History says: “during the last week of August we arrived at Fayette” and that “a conference meeting had been appointed for the first day of September”² which would indicate why he would leave in August. Joseph Smith did not leave to travel for the conference in August since Smith was still in Harmony on September 4. Since the Church conference started on September 26, 1830, rather than September 1, the Manuscript History is twenty-five days off.

The text of the revelation is shorter in BC 28 when compared to a longer text in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (D&C), now LDS D&C 27, and was used for the Manuscript History. The addition of over three hundred words was not made in 1830 but in the year 1835 after the ordination of the newly established Quorum of Twelve Apostles.³

The recent publication by the LDS Church Historian’s Press states that the revelation “was greatly expanded when it was printed in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. The material added to the 1835 version included updated and expanded doctrine on priesthood keys that was not known at the time the revelation was originally dictated.”⁴

The earliest and shortest text with the September 1830 date represents the words as presented by Joseph Smith and not the later modified and expanded wording added for another purpose. The Manuscript History presents an altered date and text and has to be used with caution.

¹ Manuscript History of Joseph Smith, Book A-1:51, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. See *History of the Church* 1:106. The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (page 179) has the date as “September, 1830.”

² Manuscript History A-1:53-54. This was corrected in the *History of the Church* 1:110 to “26th day of September.”

³ See H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 72-80.

⁴ Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Riley M. Lorimer, eds. *Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman, general eds. (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), xxxi.