**DC 11                                                 Historical Background**

While Joseph and Oliver had been in Harmony, PA translating the Book of Mormon, Hyrum Smith had been managing affairs as the oldest surviving son in the Smith home in Manchester, NY, near Palmyra. In early April 1829, his brother Samuel returned from his journey—having taken Oliver Cowdery to Harmony to meet Joseph.

“By the latter part of May, Samuel returned feeling much improved in health, and overjoyed at the progress made by Joseph. While with Joseph, Samuel had obtained a testimony of the truth of Joseph's work and had been baptized.

“Hyrum listened carefully to all that Samuel had to say of his journey…The story of Samuel's conversion and baptism left no question in Hyrum's mind about the importance of baptism; but when Samuel told about the visit of John the Baptist, who had appeared in his resurrected state to confer the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, Hyrum wondered. However, he thought, such an occurrence was quite reasonable. If the divine authority of the gospel had been taken from the earth, then at some time God would surely restore it.

“Samuel explained the details of the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood.

“Samuel's story so greatly impressed Hyrum that plans were made immediately for Hyrum to depart for Harmony. Samuel agreed to take Hyrum's place in looking after things at home. Hyrum's journey to see Joseph was one of great anticipation. He needed to have a serious visit with his prophet brother, for there were several questions to be answered; and he felt a great concern over what his own work was to be.

“The roads had dried out, the countryside had donned its spring attire, and the air was warm and balmy. The change from the confining routine work of the winter was exhilarating, and Hyrum's mount seemed to sense his carefree mood, for the miles to Harmony were covered in record time.

“When he arrived, the brothers exchanged warm handclasps and hugged each other affectionately; it had been months since they last had seen each other. And then they talked and talked.

“They agreed that certain ordinances were necessary for one's salvation. They discussed baptism. Had not the Savior told Nicodemus, ‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God’? (John 3:5.) They talked about authority. Hyrum knew that Joseph had not acted of his own volition but had been called as had Moses and Aaron. And John the Baptist had been sent under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who in turn had been ordained by Jesus Christ. Thus Joseph's authority could be traced directly to the Savior himself.

“Hyrum's one remaining question concerned his place in the great work of restoration.” (Pearson H. Corbett, *Hyrum Smith, Patriarch* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 47-49.)

**DC 11**                                                            **Introduction**

**M. Russell Ballard**

Hyrum Smith, the second son of Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith, was born February 9, 1800, almost six years before his younger brother Joseph. As he grew to adulthood, Hyrum had a healthy body of work-hardened muscles, a seemingly endless reservoir of energy, and a litheness of movement. A handsome man, it is generally believed he stood about six feet tall, much the same size as the Prophet Joseph. One of Hyrum's sons, John Smith, described them as follows: “The Prophet Joseph stood even six feet high in his stocking feet and weighed 212 pounds. … Hyrum Smith stood five feet eleven and a half inches high and they weighed in the same notch, varying from 210 to 212 pounds.”

The general membership of the Church has never really known this great-great-grandfather of mine. It was his nature to keep a low profile, but without him the Prophet could never have achieved all that he did. Hyrum's wisdom seemed never to be doubted by Joseph, who would often write or say “What shall we do, Hyrum?” After Hyrum's reply to the query, Joseph would respond, “That is good enough.” There is much in Hyrum's noble character that is worthy of emulation.

Perhaps we can best understand Hyrum and the attributes that commend him to us as a hero through those who knew him best. Consider the following tributes given to Hyrum Smith by the Lord and by the first three Presidents of the Church in this dispensation:

   I, the Lord, love [Hyrum Smith] because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me (D&C 124:15).

[Joseph Smith]: “I could pray in my heart that all my brethren were like unto my beloved brother Hyrum, for truly he possesses the mildness of a lamb, and the integrity of a Job, and in short the meekness and the quiet spirit of Christ; and I love him with that love that is stronger than death.”

[Brigham Young]: “Hyrum was as good a man as ever lived. … His integrity was of the highest order, … I used to think and think now that an angel dwelling in the presence of the Father and the Son possessed no more integrity in their hearts than did Hyrum Smith.”

[John Taylor]: “He was a great and good man, and my soul was cemented to his. If ever there was an exemplary, honest, and virtuous man, an embodiment of all that is noble in the human form, Hyrum Smith was its representative.”

Love, integrity, and humility were the attributes that guaranteed his greatness as one of the firm pillars of the Restoration, greatness that was cemented by a martyr's death in Carthage at the side of his prophet-brother. (*Heroes of the Restoration*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 148-149.)

**DC 11:1-9 A repetition of DC 6:1-9**

Interestingly, these nine verses were given verbatim to Oliver Cowdery in DC 6:1-9. Why would the Lord say the exact same thing to both Oliver and Hyrum? Were their ministries that similar? Well, one was Joseph’s right hand man in the beginning and the other in the end. But is it not because the message is universal and can be applied to any servant in the Lord’s kingdom? If we are to liken the scriptures unto ourselves (1 Ne. 19:23), then we should each read these nine verses as if the Lord were speaking directly to us.

**DC 11:6 seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion**

**Dale E. Miller**

Brothers and sisters, thrusting in our sickles to help build the Lord’s kingdom should be the prime focus of our lives. It seems reasonable to suggest that we each agreed to that in our premortal life. The key decisions pertaining to education, career, marriage, the very use of our time, talent, and means should prayerfully hinge on how best we serve the Master, building His kingdom and becoming perfected in Him.

Our work in building up Zion takes several forms. In one context, Zion is geographic, having a center, while enlarging its boundaries to eventually fill the earth. We enlarge Zion’s borders as we share the gospel with others. That is part of our job here.

Another context shows Zion as an organization wherein we work to strengthen its stakes through our callings. Each stake, in turn, pushes deep into the gospel soil, providing a defense and a refuge so followers of Christ might stand with confidence against the snares of the adversary. Stakes create the foundation culture for perfecting God’s people on earth.

The scriptures suggest that Zion has a third context, an intensely personal one. It is the perfecting process within us. Those willing to serve are invited to labor in the vineyard of the Lord, steadily transforming themselves to become the pure in heart.

The symbiosis between Church and member is strikingly efficient. As we invest our time, talents, and means to build Zion, our hearts are purified, our wisdom increases, celestial habits begin to form, and the Holy Spirit prepares us to receive the presence of the Father and the Son. By thrusting in our sickle, we reap a double portion—for ourselves and for the kingdom. (“The Kingdom’s Perfecting Pathway,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 29-30)

**DC 11:7 Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich**

“We spend seemingly countless hours earning a living and providing food, clothing, shelter, care, education, and other temporal necessities for ourselves and our loved ones. As we work at our labors, however, we need to remind ourselves constantly that our efforts to pursue temporal comfort cannot become obsessive and cloud our commitment to obtain salvation. We have come to earth to develop our spiritual selves and attain eternal values—not to obtain earthly goods. Honesty may not make us rich in a worldly sense, but it makes us rich in an eternal one. As the Lord said to Joseph Smith, ‘Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.’ (D&C 11:7.)

“Happiness cannot be found in the mall or in the fleeting pleasures of worldly luxuries. The Savior taught of our need to focus on the things of eternity instead:

   Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal;

   But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

   For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (3 Ne. 13:19–21.)” (John C. Baldwin, “Are You Honest to the Core?” *Ensign*, Feb. 1990, 15)

**DC 11:8 even as you desire of me so it shall be done unto you**

**Neal A. Maxwell**

Actually, everything depends—initially and finally—on our desires. These shape our thought patterns. Our desires thus precede our deeds and lie at the very cores of our souls, tilting us toward or away from God (see D&C 4:3). God can “educate our desires” (see Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 297). Others seek to manipulate our desires. But it is we who form the desires, the “thoughts and intents of [our] hearts” (Mosiah 5:13).

The end rule is “according to [our] desires … shall it be done unto [us]” (D&C 11:17), “for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts” (D&C 137:9; see also Alma 41:5; D&C 6:20, 27). One’s individual will thus remains uniquely his. God will not override it nor overwhelm it. Hence we’d better want the consequences of what we want! (“Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 23)

**DC 11:12 that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously**

**Jay E. Jensen**

Hyrum Smith was told, “Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good.” (D&C 11:12.) We know by this that promptings to do good can be manifestations of the Spirit. Have you ever learned of someone in need, perhaps a close friend, and felt strongly impressed to help? Have you ever talked with someone and been led to say the right thing? Have you ever suddenly felt a need to fix something in the house or to weed the garden? This is how the Spirit can work—he leads us to do good.

Hyrum Smith also learned in this verse that the Spirit leads us “to do justly.” (D&C 11:12.) There are several meanings for the word *just*, but I think the one most pertinent to this phrase is this: acting in conformity with what is morally upright, correct, or good. Satan may lead us to lie, or cheat, or take advantage of others. The Spirit, though, prompts a different behavior. Have you ever felt that you should forgive someone? Have you ever been prompted to pay tithing before you pay certain bills? Have you ever seen a child learn to share his toys? These are a few times in which the Spirit can prompt a person, even a small child, to do justly.

Hyrum Smith further learned that the Spirit leads us “to walk humbly.” (D&C 11:12.) A proud walk or demeanor, by which people draw attention to themselves through arrogant speech or conduct, is the antithesis of the way in which the Spirit leads. Have you felt at times that, though you may be a teacher or a leader, you are really learning more than those you lead? Have you sometimes felt during a disagreement that your point should not be pressed any further? When several people, including you, have worked on a project, have you given them the credit? These are some of the ways in which the Spirit can lead us to walk humbly.

Hyrum Smith also learned in this one verse that the Spirit leads us “to judge righteously.” Though we must curb the tendency to judge others, judgment is inevitable. Every decision we make requires a judgment. Have you ever helped to resolve an argument among your children and restored peace? Have you ever realized that your opinion of someone is incorrect? These are instances where the Spirit may be leading you to judge righteously. (“Have I Received an Answer from the Spirit?” *Ensign*, Apr. 1989, 24)

**DC 11:13 my Spirit…shall enlighten your mind…and fill your soul with joy**

**L. Lionel Kendrick**

Personal revelations are received in both the mind and in the heart. These impressions come to the mind as thoughts and to the heart as feelings. **Elder Packer**explained, “This guidance comes as thoughts, as feelings, through impressions and promptings.” At times the Spirit will impress both the mind and the heart at the same time. Usually when your head and your heart are receiving the same impression, you know that you are receiving a personal revelation. The Savior instructed Hyrum Smith, “I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy” (D&C 11:13)…

The means by which the Spirit speaks to both the mind and the heart is through the still, small voice spoken of in the scriptures. This voice is often called the “voice of the Spirit”(1 Ne. 4:18). Sometimes that voice is heard within, but more often it is felt. It may prompt us with both a thought and a feeling concerning a matter.

Elder Packer described the still, small voice with these words: “These delicate, refined spiritual communications are not seen with our eyes nor heard with our ears. And even though it is described as a voice, it is a voice that one feels more than one hears.” (“Personal Revelation,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1999, 10-11)

**DC 11:16 you shall have my word, my rock, my church, and my gospel**

At the time of this revelation, Hyrum is just beginning the process of discipleship. He has neither studied the *word* of God, nor been taught it. He has not yet been the recipient of the*rock* of personal revelation regarding Christ (Matt 16:16-18). The *church* has not yet been formally organized, and he has not yet received the *gospel* by baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost (3 Ne 27:20-21). He lacks the word, the rock, the church, and the gospel. Therefore his tongue could not be loosed and he was not yet called to preach.

As members of the church, we have all of these things. Do we appreciate them? Do we realize the great blessing of having the word of the Lord in the scriptures, the privilege of personal revelation by the Spirit, a true and living church which can teach us the principles of salvation, and the gospel of repentance for the remission of sins? To those who appreciate all of these blessings, the Lord promises, “you may know of a surety my doctrine”.

**DC 11:20 this is your work, to keep my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind, and strength**

This is the fourth time that the Lord has instructed Hyrum to keep the commandments (see vs. 6, 9, 18, 20). Ironically, Hyrum’s nature was to be obedient and diligent. Therefore, the charge is repeated not because Hyrum had a rebellious streak but because obedience is so important.

**Harold B. Lee**

President Heber J. Grant used to tell us…that as he approached the end of his ministry, knowing that his life wouldn’t be too far prolonged, he thought if there were some unusual thing that the Father would like him to do, he would be so pleased; and so he sought earnestly to know what would the Father have him do during his remaining years, thinking, I suppose, of some outstanding thing, like the building of a temple or something of the sort. And in answer to his inquiry, the Lord said that the most important thing that he could do as president of the Church was to teach this people to keep the commandments of God. (“The Way to Eternal Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1971, 11)

**DC 11:21 Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word**

**Marion G. Romney**

For those of us who desire to effectively share the gospel, there are some very important lessons taught in this message: We must put our lives in order so the Lord’s Spirit can influence our thoughts and actions—so we can be taught from on high. We must work and study his word with full desire until his teachings become our teachings. Then we will be able to speak with power and conviction. If we choose to follow some other path of preparation, we have no assurance of success. We will end up delivering our own ideas or some other man’s ideas, and we will not be profitable servants of the Lord. The primary source of the Lord’s word is in the standard works, augmented as needed by living prophets. (“Records of Great Worth,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1980, 7)

**Bruce R. McConkie**

We can read all of the standard works of the Church in one year if we proceed at the rate of about six pages a day. To do the sincere searching and the solemn pondering required will take more time.

There is knowledge and there are spiritual experiences to be gained from reading, pondering, and praying about the scriptures which can be gained in no other way. No matter how devoted and active members of the Church are in administrative matters, they will never gain the great blessings which come from scriptural study unless they pay the price of that study and thus make the written word a part of their lives. (“The Teacher’s Divine Commission,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1979, 23)

**DC 11:21 obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed**

Eleven months after receiving this revelation, Hyrum was told that he had met the requirements to have his tongue loosed, “Behold, I speak unto you, Hyrum, a few words; for thou also art under no condemnation, and thy heart is opened, and *thy tongue is loosed”*(DC 23:3, italics added).

**M. Russell Ballard**

Hyrum’s life is a witness to his obedience to this instruction. To the very last day of his life, he devoted himself to obtaining the word through study of the scriptures. In Carthage Jail, he read and commented on extracts from the Book of Mormon. The scriptures were obviously part of Hyrum’s being, and he turned to them during times when he needed comfort and strength the most.

Just think of the spiritual strength we could gain in our lives and how much more effective we would be as teachers, missionaries, and friends if we studied the scriptures regularly. I am sure we, like Hyrum, will be able to endure our greatest trials if we search the word of God as he did. (“Hyrum Smith: ‘Firm As the Pillars of Heaven,’ ” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 7)

**DC 11:21 you shall have…the power of God unto the convincing of men**

“…the Lord has not delegated to men the burden of proof of his mission and promises. He reserves it unto himself. ‘The power of God unto the convincing of men’ (D&C 11:21) is not a product of human word-craft, human argument, or human coercion; it comes from the Spirit.” (Truman G. Madsen, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1985, 49)

**DC 11:22 study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men**

**Ezra Taft Benson**

More than at any time in our history, brothers and sisters, we have need for greater spirituality. The way to develop greater spirituality is to feast on the words of Christ as revealed in the scriptures.

I think we can say without exaggeration that never before in any dispensation have the Saints been so abundantly blessed with the words of the Lord and His prophets.

Now our challenge is to do as the Lord commanded: “Study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men.” (D&C 11:22.)

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** said, “The Book of Mormon [is] the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 194.)

We urge you to study the Book of Mormon as individuals and families and then to do as the prophet Nephi counseled: liken the scriptures to yourselves so that it will be for your profit and learning. (See 1 Ne. 19:23–24.) (“The Heritage of the Servants of the Lord,’ ” *Ensign*, Oct. 1992, 2)

**DC 11:24 build upon my rock, which is my gospel**

Usually in the scriptures “the rock” refers to Jesus Christ (Hel. 5:12) or the rock of revelation (Matt. 16:18). In this passage, it would seem that “my rock” refers to the gospel. This is better explained in the following passage:

   Yea, repent and be baptized, every one of you, for a remission of your sins; yea, be baptized even by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost.

   Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and remember that they shall have faith in me or they can in nowise be saved;

   And upon this rock I will build my church; yea, upon this rock ye are built, and if ye continue, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

   And ye shall remember the church articles and covenants to keep them. (DC 33:11-14)

**DC 11:25 Deny not the spirit of revelation, nor the spirit of prophecy**

The *spirit of revelation* and the *spirit of prophecy* are gifts of the spirit available to all those who have the Gift of the Holy Ghost. They are not reserved for apostles and prophets alone but should be enjoyed, to varying degrees, by every member of the church. Paul wrote, “For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted…Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy” (1 Cor. 14:31,39). These gifts constitute the essence of testimony, “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (John 19:10). By the spirit of prophecy and revelation, Peter gained a testimony of Christ (Matt. 16:16-19). Similarly, every testimony of Christ, borne by the Spirit, in every Fast and Testimony Meeting in the Church, is borne by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. In addition to testimony, these gifts are necessary for understanding difficult scriptures. Nephi declared that Isaiah was easy to understand if one had the spirit of prophecy (2 Ne. 25:4). Furthermore, it was the exercise of these gifts which empowered the sons of Mosiah to teach “with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3). Hyrum would need both of these if he was ever to possess “the power of God unto the convincing of men” (v. 21). So do we.

**Lorenzo Snow**

There is a way by which persons can keep their consciences clear before God and man, and that is to preserve within them the spirit of God, which is the spirit of revelation to every man and woman. It will reveal to them, even in the simplest of matters, what they shall do, by making suggestions to them. We should try to learn the nature of this spirit, that we may understand its suggestions, and then we will always be able to do right. This is the grand privilege of every Latter-day Saint. We know that it is our right to have the manifestations of the spirit every day of our lives. (Roy W. Doxey, *The Doctrine and Covenants Speaks* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964], 2: 296.)

**DC 11:30 as many as receive me…will I give power to become the sons of God**

In the church, we sing, “I am a child of God.” The scriptures sing a different tune entitled, “If you receive me, you will become a child of God”. The scriptures talk much more about the process of *becoming* sons and daughters of God and rarely talk about the fact that we are already his spiritually begotten sons and daughters. One reason for the difference is that by virtue of the Fall we lose the inheritance we might receive as spirit sons and daughters of heavenly Parents. Without the atonement, we would be cast out of God’s presence forever (2 Ne. 9:9). Without accepting Christ we cannot ever gain that inheritance which is promised us (Rom. 8:14-17). This is why king Benjamin was so careful to teach his people about the process of being born again, “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and *have become his sons and his daughters”* (Mosiah 5:7, italics added) Hence the instruction that we are to receive Christ before we c