**DC 60                                                 Historical Background**

The elders had made a long journey to Zion. Their trip had been a spiritual pilgrimage and an adventure to the reaches of the civilized world. They had dedicated land for the building of a temple and for the redemption of Zion—one of the most anticipated events in all scriptural history. It had been a glorious and exciting time.

As they planned to return, one of the elders asked the Prophet how they were to return. This may seem to be a rather trivial point, however, they had been given fairly specific instructions regarding the first leg of their journey. They Lord had told them that they were to travel to Zion, “preaching the word by the way… Yea, verily I say, let all these take their journey unto one place in their several courses, and one man shall not build upon another’s foundation, neither journey in another’s track.” (D&C 52:22, 33)

Did the Lord have specific instructions for them as to how they were to make their way back home? Should they travel as a group or separately? Should they preach by the way or return home as quickly as possible?  Should they travel by land or take the Missouri River?

**DC 60:2  with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths**

**Derek A. Cuthbert**

When we have something to tell others which will benefit them, protect them, or enlighten them, we should not hold back. There are so many people who are confused and discouraged and who want a better way of life. How grateful they are when someone takes the time to share their happiness and purpose in life. Will you seek to hear even more? You are a great power for good, providing your righteous potential is harnessed by service. (“The Futility of Fear,” *New Era*, Nov. 1985, 46)

**Thomas S. Monson**

We never know when our turn will come to comply with the admonition of Peter to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15.)

Some years ago I had an opportunity to address a business convention in Dallas, Texas, sometimes called “the city of churches.” After the convention, I took a sightseeing bus tour about the city's suburbs. Our driver would comment, “On the left you see the Methodist Church,” or “There on the right is the Catholic cathedral.”

As we passed a beautiful red brick building situated upon a hill, the driver explained, “That building is where the Mormons meet.” A woman in the rear of the bus asked, “Driver, can you tell us something about the Mormons?” The driver steered the bus to the side of the road, turned about in his seat, and replied, “Lady, all I know about the Mormons is that they meet in that red brick building. Is there anyone on this bus who knows anything about the Mormons?”

I gazed at the expression on each person's face for some sign of recognition, some desire to comment. I found nothing—not a sign. Then I realized the truth of the statement, “When the time for decision arrives, the time for preparation is past.” For the next fifteen minutes I had the privilege of sharing with others my testimony concerning The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (*Live the Good Life*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], 119-120.)

**Joseph B. Wirthlin**

[While on assignment in Hawaii, Elder Wirthlin met a young German man]  I served a German-speaking mission in Austria and Switzerland as a young man. Here was a young man whose countenance bespoke a sincere heart and an approachable personality, and I spoke his language and understood his culture. I felt prompted to open my mouth and introduce the gospel to him, but because other people were around us, our brief encounter was interrupted, and we went our separate ways without my having said a word about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I failed to be the missionary that every member of the Savior's church ought to be.

As we drove away, I had the disturbing feeling that I had failed in my duty to proclaim the gospel. I remembered the Lord's words in the Doctrine and Covenants: “But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Wo unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them.” (D&C 60:2.)

We drove around the island to see Molokai's beautiful waterfalls. After many miles, the road came to a dead-end, and we got out of our car to enjoy the beautiful surroundings. We had been there only a few moments when another car drove up and stopped. The young man we had seen on the overlook trail got out of the car, smiled, and gave me a warm handshake. As I grasped his outstretched hand, I thought to myself,*This time I will do my duty!*

We introduced ourselves, and I learned that he attended a university in a small city south of Dusseldorf, Germany. I spoke of my experiences in his country and of my admiration for the German people. Speaking of my work in Europe gave me an opportunity to explain some of the basics of the gospel. As we parted, I asked for his address and telephone number, which he gladly shared with me. I felt that he was truly a newfound friend and an interested investigator.

Upon my return to Salt Lake City, I wrote to the president of the Germany Dusseldorf Mission. I explained how Sister Wirthlin and I had met this outstanding young man and gave him his address, asking him to send missionaries to continue the gospel discussion that I had begun in Hawaii.

I don't believe it was happenstance that my wife and I met this young man twice. Our meetings were not chance encounters or mere coincidence. But the Lord doesn't always give us a second chance to share the gospel. I had failed to follow the Spirit the first time when the still small voice spoke to my heart and mind to prod me to action. But when I saw that young man get out of his car later, I quickly made up my mind I would not fail a second time and that I would open my mouth as the Lord so emphatically commands in revelations that apply to all of us.

In the thirty-third section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord commands us three times in three verses to “open our mouths”: “Open your mouths and they shall be filled, and you shall become even as Nephi of old . . . Yea, open your mouths and spare not, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your backs, for lo, I am with you. Yea, open your mouths and they shall be filled, saying: Repent, repent, and prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (D&C 33:8-10.)

Each of us has the sacred responsibility to proclaim the gospel. The Savior's commandment applies to all members of the Church, not just to full-time missionaries or to returned missionaries. We each have the responsibility to follow the Spirit when it prompts us to share the gospel so that others can come to follow the Savior. (*Finding Peace in Our Lives* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 239-241.)

**DC 60:2 they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man**

**Ezra Taft Benson**

Sometimes we have among our missionaries those who are afraid because of the fear of man, and if you permit yourselves to get that spirit of fear, the adversary will back you up. He will support you. He will encourage you in it until you get to the point where you are afraid to exercise your authority and to bear testimony regarding this message. Remember the promise made in the first section: “And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.” (D&C 1:5) There is no place for fear. There is no place for discouragement, because you can't fail in this work if you do your part. There is no place for timidity or hesitancy. (*God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], 61 - 62.)

**Ezra Taft Benson**

The proud stand more in fear of men’s judgment than of God’s judgment. (See D&C 3:6–7; D&C 30:1–2; D&C 60:2.) “What will men think of me?” weighs heavier than “What will God think of me?”

King Noah was about to free the prophet Abinadi, but an appeal to his pride by his wicked priests sent Abinadi to the flames. (See Mosiah 17:11–12.) Herod sorrowed at the request of his wife to behead John the Baptist. But his prideful desire to look good to “them which sat with him at meat” caused him to kill John. (Matt. 14:9; see also Mark 6:26.)

Fear of men’s judgment manifests itself in competition for men’s approval. The proud love “the praise of men more than the praise of God.” (John 12:42–43.) Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said He did “always those things” that pleased God. (John 8:29.) Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to elevate ourselves above our brother and outdo another?

…When pride has a hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedoms to the bondage of men’s judgment. The world shouts louder than the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. The reasoning of men overrides the revelations of God, and the proud let go of the iron rod. (See 1 Ne. 8:19–28; 1 Ne. 11:25; 1 Ne. 15:23–24.) (“Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 5)

**DC 60:3 it shall be taken away, even that which they have**

**Spencer W. Kimball**

The Lord says in the 60th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, “With some I am not well pleased for they will not open their mouths” (D&C 60:2). What does he mean? He says that if they do not use it, they will lose what he has given them. They lose their spirit. They lose their testimony. And this priceless thing that you have can slip right out of your life. (“President Kimball Speaks Out on Testimony,” *New Era*, Aug. 1981, 6)

**DC 60:5  it mattereth not unto me**

The next three revelations (Sections 60-62) all contain this counsel from the Lord. The early brethren were very careful to inquire of the Prophet regarding almost all of their travels. Sometimes, however, they were concerned with details that the Lord considered inconsequential. They preferred that the Lord should plan their journey rather than just to proceed according to the direction of the Spirit. Some saints place themselves in the same predicament—expecting the Lord to tell them what to do in every situation. “Should I do this or that?” they ask the Lord. His response, more often than they would like to believe, is “it mattereth not unto me,” do as you wish, “as seemeth you good.” (D&C 62:5).  “You are agents unto yourselves and need not be commanded in all things.” (D&C 58:26-28)

“Some Saints today agonize over whether God wants them to drive a Ford or a Chevy, to buy a house or rent an apartment, to study sociology in college or dental hygiene in trade school, when God *might*not care one way or the other. Often, God does care about such things, and it is important for us to be prayerful and to follow the promptings of the Spirit. But sometimes, when we get no promptings concerning the details of our lives or the many choices we face, it may be because any of the available options is equally acceptable to the Lord.” (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 2:171)

**Neal A. Maxwell**

Often ignored… are several revelations that reflect the Lord's response to certain inquiries early in this dispensation. In one case, those who were to undertake a certain mission were told that it did not matter whether they went “by water or by land,” for later decisions could be made “according to their judgments hereafter.” (D&C 61:22.) In a second case, the Lord invited His disciples to make their own decision as to purchasing or constructing craft—“it mattereth not unto me”—as long as those involved got to St. Louis. (D&C 60:5.) Five days later, the Lord said His disciples could travel in a group upon returning or two by two “as seemeth you good.” (D&C 62:5.)

Lest one smile condescendingly at these early followers, it should be recalled that they were accustomed to responding to specific revelations as well as being anxious to do what the Lord wanted. Nor should we pass all this off by simply saying that when we are righteous the Lord will bless us as we travel. While true, that approach neglects things to be learned from these revelations. These revelations do not reflect indifference or impatience, but the Lord's sweet schooling of his disciples. Praying, deciding, and coping are the lot of the believer as he meets with life's complexities and comes to crossroads.

In a later revelation, two missionaries were told that they could set forth to preach the gospel “whether to the north or to the south, to the east or to the west, it mattereth not, for ye cannot go amiss.” (D&C 80:3.) Opportunities and options abound all about us to “bring to pass much righteousness.” We would be staggered and ashamed if we saw fully the unused and unexplored possibilities for service that surround each of us all of the time. (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], 34.)

**DC 60:7 I am able to make you holy**

A man who washes his body can become clean physically, but how does a man wash his spirit? How can fallen man become clean?

   “The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.

   They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Psalms 14:2-3)

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom 3:23)

How then can Christ make us holy—not physically clean but spiritually cleansed from the filthiness of sin?  First, we are to be baptized whereby our spirits are washed clean with the fuller’s soap of the Atonement. We are brought into conformity with the Law of God by the justifying power of the Holy Ghost. “For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified.” (Moses 6:60)

Next we must be obedient, but even then we fall short. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10) Again our imperfection keeps us from the presence of God.  What can we do to fix it? Though we toil and labor until our dying breath, still we cannot make ourselves holy. Only the Savior can fix this problem. Only He can make up the difference.

Moroni’s last words—the very last message of the Book of Mormon—is this very idea, that only Christ can make us holy:

   “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

   And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, *that ye become holy, without spot*.” (Moro. 10:32-33, italics added)

**Jeffrey R. Holland**

The final and ultimate appeal of the keystone of our religion and the most correct book ever written is to touch not the unclean thing, to be holy and without spot—to be pure. That purity can come only through the blood of that Lamb who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, the Lamb who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, the Lamb who was despised and afflicted, but whom we esteemed not (see Mosiah 14)…

Purity—through the blood of the Lamb. That is what this book pleads for, and that is what I pray we will strive to achieve. Such is God’s covenant. Such is Christ’s mission. Such is our privilege and our duty and our unmerited opportunity. May we one day greet each other, clothed in robes of righteousness, whiter and brighter than the noonday sun, there at the pleasing bar of the Great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both the quick and the dead. (“For a Wise Purpose,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1996, 19)

**DC 60:10-11 he that is able, let him return it…and he that is not, of him it is not required**

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

Edward Partridge, the bishop, was to impart money as it might be needed for the journey. This money was to be returned by such brethren as were able to reimburse the bishop after they arrived at their destination. Those who were not able to pay the money back were not to be required to do so. It is a marvel how these brethren could spend their time in the ministry without some manner of income to support them. Nevertheless the Lord came to their aid. It should be noted that in speaking of the funds in the hands of the bishop which were to be used for this purpose, the Lord said that he was to impart “of the money which I have given him.” The law of revenue for the Church at this early period had not been definitely defined. In making these journeys back and forth from Ohio to Missouri the brethren had to depend for support very largely on the help they received from the people in a land where the majority were hostile to their cause. (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-1949], 1: 208.)

**DC 60:12-13 now I speak of the residue who are to come unto this land**

The Lord had a message for the saints who were to inherit Zion. The Lord was calling upon the Colesville saints who would soon move to Zion to preach the gospel, taking care not to idle away their time nor bury their talent. These saints spent their first winter in Missouri in less than ideal conditions.

**Parley P. Pratt**

This Colesville branch was among the first organized by Joseph Smith, and constituted the first settlers of the members of the Church in Missouri. They had arrived late in the summer (1831), and cut some hay for their cattle, sowed a little grain, and prepared some ground for cultivation, and were engaged during the fall and winter in building log cabins, etc. The winter was cold, and for some time about ten families lived in one log cabin, which was open and unfinished, while the frozen ground served for a floor. Our food consisted of beef and a little bread made of corn, which had been grated into coarse meal by rubbing the ears on a tin grater. This was rather an inconvenient way of living for a sick person; but it was for the gospel's sake, and all were very cheerful and happy.

We enjoyed many happy seasons in our prayer and other meetings, and the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us, and even on the little children, insomuch that many of eight, ten or twelve years of age spake, and prayed, and prophesied in our meetings and in our family worship. There was a spirit of peace and union, and love and good will manifested in this little Church in the wilderness, the memory of which will be ever dear to my heart. (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 56.)

**DC 60:14 proclaim my word…neither in wrath nor with strife**

**Dallin H. Oaks**

The Lord’s prescribed methods of acquiring sacred knowledge are very different from the methods used by those who acquire learning exclusively by study. For example, a frequent technique of scholarship is debate or adversarial discussion, a method with which I have had considerable personal experience. But the Lord has instructed us in ancient and modern scriptures that we should not contend over the points of his doctrine. (See 3 Ne. 11:28–30; D&C 10:63.) Those who teach the gospel are instructed not to preach with “wrath” or “strife” (D&C 60:14; see also 2 Tim. 2:23–25), but in “mildness and in meekness” (D&C 38:41), “reviling not against revilers” (D&C 19:30). Similarly, techniques devised for adversary debate or to search out differences and work out compromises are not effective in acquiring gospel knowledge. Gospel truths and testimony are received from the Holy Ghost through reverent personal study and quiet contemplation. (“Alternate Voices,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 29)

**DC 60:15 shake off the dust of thy feet**

**Joseph Smith**

It should be the duty of Elders, when they enter into any house, to let their labours and warning voice be unto the master of that house; and if he receive the Gospel, then he may extend his influence to his wife also, with consent, that peradventure she may receive the Gospel, but if a man receive not the Gospel, but gives his consent that his wife may receive it, and she believes, then let her receive it. But if a man forbid his wife, or his children, before they are of age, to receive the Gospel, then it should be the duty of the Elder to go his way, and use no influence against him, and let the responsibility be upon his head; shake off the dust of thy feet as a testimony against him, and thy skirts shall then be clear of their souls. (*Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* compiled by Alma P. Burton [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], 175.)

**DC 60:15 not in their presence, lest thou provoke them**

The Lord doesn’t give counsel without a reason. Earlier that year, some of the elders had some experience with this problem. Apparently, when the missionaries visited the Shakers according to the commandment given in D&C 49, the missionaries performed this ordinance in front of the congregation.  Sidney Rigdon preached to the Shakers and read them what is now section 49 of the Doctrine and Covenants

“In response, Kitchell gave permission for the congregation of Shakers to speak for themselves. Their response was very similar to their leader's; they were fully satisfied with their faith and wanted nothing to do with them or ‘their Christ.’ This seemed to satisfy Sidney, and he put the revelation back into his pocket. Young Parley P. Pratt, however, would not let the meeting come to a close without a further witness against the Shakers. He arose and shook his coattails: ‘He shook the dust from his garments as a testimony against us, that we had rejected the word of the Lord Jesus.’

“This greatly angered Kitchell, a much larger man than Elder Pratt, and he severely rebuked him: ‘You filthy Beast, dare you presume to come in here, and try to imitate a man of God by shaking your filthy tail; confess your sins and purge your soul from your lusts, and your other abominations before you ever presume to do the like again, &c.’ It is clear why the Lord found it necessary later to clarify to those early missionaries that any physical witness performed against those who reject the gospel should not be done ‘in their presence, lest thou provoke them, but in secret’ (D&C 60:15). We can also discern why the Brethren today instruct us that such actions not be undertaken at all.” (Keith W. Perkins, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 1: The Doctrine and Covenants,*ed. by Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 215 - 216.)