

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 99

1 Behold, thus saith the Lord unto my servant John Murdock--thou art called to go into the eastern countries from house to house, from village to village, and from city to city, to proclaim mine everlasting gospel unto the inhabitants thereof, in the midst of persecution and wickedness. 2 And who receiveth you receiveth me; and you shall have power to declare my word in the demonstration of my Holy Spirit. 3 And who receiveth you as a little child, receiveth my kingdom; and blessed are they, for they shall obtain mercy. 4 And whoso rejecteth you shall be rejected of my Father and his house; and you shall cleanse your feet in the secret places by the way for a testimony against them. 5 And behold, and lo, I come quickly to judgment, to convince all of their ungodly deeds which they have committed against me, as it is written of me in the volume of the book.

6 And now, verily I say unto you, that it is not expedient that you should go until your children are provided for, and sent up kindly unto the bishop of Zion. 7 And after a few years, if thou desirest of me, thou mayest go up also unto the goodly land, to possess thine inheritance; 8 Otherwise thou shalt continue proclaiming my gospel until thou be taken. Amen.

v1-2 John Murdock is called to proclaim the gospel amidst the wicked (v. 1), and is invested with the Lord's authority and the Spirit in this calling (v. 2).

v2-4 Those who accept Murdock receive the Kingdom of God (v. 2-3), and those who reject him will be rejected of God (v. 4).

v4 "cleanse your feet", cp. D&C 24:15, D&C 60:15.

v6 The Lord instructs Murdock to take care of his family first before departing on the mission. Thus, the priority is family first, cp. D&C 75:28.

v8 The commission to preach the gospel is given to him until he dies.

Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 99

Excerpt from Doctrine and Covenants Commentary

This is a Revelation calling Elder John Murdock to go on a mission to the Eastern States. He was one of the men who received the gospel in Kirtland when Oliver Cowdery and companions passed through that city on the first western journey to the Lamanites, and together with Sidney Rigdon, Edward Partridge, Isaac Morley, Lyman Wight, and others, he was called to the ministry at that time. He held many important positions in the Church and discharged his duties faithfully. One of his children, Joseph S., died at the age of eleven months, as a result of exposure during the night of mob assault upon the Prophet at Hiram. Emma Smith, the Prophet's wife, had given birth to twins on the 30th of April, 1831. On the same date the home of the Murdocks had been blessed with twin children, Joseph S. and Julia, Sister Emma Smith's babies lived but three hours, and, when Sister Murdock passed away, Sister Emma took the motherless infants to rear. During the mob outrage, the infant boy contracted a cold that ended fatally, a few days later. (Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, Doctrine and Covenants Commentary, page 629)

Excerpt from John Murdock's Journal

[March] 19th [1832] thence about 20 miles and when we were on the prairie 5 miles from any house, Brother Parley [Pratt] had a shake of ague, and when the fever came on took his strength from him so that he lay down on the prairie. I said, "Brother P. [Pratt], can you travel any further?", said he "could not." I asked, do you believe the Son will heal you? He said, "The Son would heal him according to his faith", by [but] "my faith is small." I said, "Do you want me to lay hands on you?" He said, "Yes." I fell on my knees and with many tears laid my hands on him in the name of the Lord Jesus, and prayed for him and we both arose and travelled on and gave glory to God for his goodness, and Bro. P. [Brother Pratt] gained health and strength from that time, but I was seized that night with ague and fever, which affected me much till we arrived in Ohio, in the Church in the month of June, about 12 months after leaving my children. Between Vandalia and Orange, Ohio, we preached 31 times and arrived there about the 1st of June, found my little son Joseph had died. I had left my eldest son Orrice with Benjamin Bragg

and John with Philo Judd and Phebe with Syrenus Burnet. I had to pay them all full price for keeping my children during my absence. But my daughter was still doing well with Bro. [Brother] Joseph, the Prophet.

I then continued with the Church preaching to them and strengthening them and regaining my health till the month of August when I received the revelation recorded in the Book of Covenants, page 806 [i.e., D&C 99], at which time I immediately commenced to arrange my business and provide for my children and send them up to the Bishop in Zion, which I did by the hand of Bro. [Brother] Caleb Baldwin in September. I gave him 10 dollars a head for carrying up my three eldest children. I then settled my business and on the 24th of September I visited Father Clapp's family, preached the gospel to them. They were very unbelieving and hard. I returned to the brethren in Kirtland on the 25th and on the 27th started, in company with Brother Zebedia [Zebedee] Coltrin, and on that day called on Mr. Conning's family, Father Clapp's family and Benjamin Brich's family; all unbelieving. Stayed with Bro. [Brother] Kingsbury, in Painesville, preached in the evening. He gave us each 75 cents, God bless him. Met with a Dr. Matthews, a very wicked man, and [he] reviled against us, the Book of Mormon, and the doctrine we taught. We bore testimony according to the commandment and the Lord helped us in tending to the ordinance. (John Murdock, Journal, pages 11-12, as appearing Writings of Early Latter-day Saints, compiled by Milton V. Backman)

Copyright © 2021 by S. Kurt Neumiller <kurt.neumiller@gmail.com>. All rights reserved. No part of this text may be reproduced in any form or by any means for commercial gain without the express written consent of the author. Digital or printed copies may be freely made and distributed for personal and public non-commercial use.