

Doctrine and Covenants Revelation Sites



Church History Project

Genesis

I am a life-long member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I believe the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith regarding Jesus Christ and his plan of salvation. For four years I enjoyed the privilege of living in the area where Jesus Christ restored the fullness of His gospel and priesthood authority to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Many of the revelations received by Joseph Smith and several of his successors were recorded in a book called the Doctrine and Covenants, which members of the LDS church accept as modern-day scripture. As I eventually prepared to move from the area, I determined to visit the location where the Prophet received each revelation found in the Doctrine and Covenants, and there read the corresponding revelations. What did I hope to accomplish?

Far West, Missouri

Spirit of the Place

In the October 1995 General Conference, Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, told of a marvelous experience he and his family had when visiting Church history sites and reading the Doctrine and Covenants revelations received there by the Prophet Joseph. Such an experience was greatly appealing to me, but I was unable to do anything about it for several years. Then an employment opportunity resulted in a move to upstate New York, and I soon became enveloped in the spirit of the place.

I have an uncle who traveled extensively for the LDS Church. He shared a memorable experience he had while visiting the Book of Mormon lands of Central America that captures the spirit and intent of my desire.

He and a group of Seminary and Institute leaders participated in a training meeting held in the Atitlan region of Guatemala. The artist Arnold Frieburg used this breathtaking area as the background for his Waters of Mormon painting, familiar to many members of the church. In this beautiful setting, they read together the account in Mosiah 18 of the prophet Alma fleeing the wicked King Noah, and leading many souls to repentance and baptism in the pure fountains of a place called Mormon.

Enlightenment and the sweet spirit of testimony accompanied the experience, he recounted. It came not because the participants were convinced that this was the exact place spoken of in the scriptures. Rather, they learned that "in a setting like this," godly sorrow led to repentance, covenants were made, ordinances were administered, testimonies were born, and prayers were heard and answered. In such instances, time seems to stand still, the visions of the past are near at hand, and the Holy Ghost whispers reassuring eternal truths across the ages in a manner that resonates within the heart of the humble and faithful.



Kirtland, Ohio

The spirit of the place enhances the spirit of the message. I simply wanted to see and feel the places where God had spoken to modern-day prophets, hoping to deepen my understanding of and appreciation for this marvelous book of revelation.

The Challenge

Where were each of the revelations received? Headings in the Doctrine and Covenants generally give clues as to where revelations were received, but don't specify exact locations. For example, the heading to Section 2 states that the Prophet Joseph received this revelation while in his father's home at Manchester, New York in September 1823. The Smith family lived in several homes in that area. Which is the home referred to?

Lists prepared by local LDS historians were available at the Kirtland, Hiram, and Fayette visitor centers identifying specific local revelation sites. These lists were helpful, but I came to realize that the exact location of many revelations was not clearly identified in the historical record, and scholars sometimes differed in their opinion as to the revelation sites. I contacted BYU church history professors and CES scholars looking for a comprehensive, accurate, and detailed list of revelation sites, but was repeatedly advised that it did not exist. I was going to have to put one together as best I could.

Research

My final list of revelation sites was developed from many sources, including published books, personal interviews, old maps, local historian data, journals, and research papers. At or near the place became my location criteria, and I tried to be as accurate as possible. I generally sought for multiple references identifying each location, particularly in cases where the locations are not well known or documented. This approach often turned up multiple possibilities, so I visited the possibilities identified. While I believe the final list is quite accurate, I recognize that it may contain errors for which I accept sole responsibility.

I present the results of my research in the hope of conveying something of the spirit of those places made sacred by what transpired there. I believe that the spirit of the place enhances the spirit of the message.

Second Edition - 2005

What began as a personal research project has evolved over the past several years into something that continues to gain momentum and breadth of scope. This is the second edition of Doctrine and Covenants Revelation Sites. It now includes a listing of key events for each location, many statements made by Joseph Smith and his successors, PDF documents that can be downloaded and printed for ready reference, photos that can be enlarged, and more. I suppose it represents my contribution to the tremendous body of work being presented this year to honor the bicentennial of the Prophet Joseph Smith's birth.

I know that Joseph Smith was God's chosen instrument for revealing the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. Joseph's mission was to bring us to the Lord Jesus Christ, who on conditions of obedience and repentance will purify and prepare us to meet our Father in Heaven again. I also know that the authority to direct God's work on the earth continued from Joseph Smith through an unbroken line of succession to living Prophets in our day. Jesus Christ continues to direct his "great and marvelous work" through revelation to these chosen servants, whose mission continues to be – brining us to the Savior.

I hope you find the following materials to be helpful and edifying. If you have any questions or comments about this project, I would be pleased to hear from you.



Valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, Missouri