
Doctrine and Covenants 39 — Thine Heart Is Now Right

A revelation given through Joseph Smith to James Covell (Covill) at Fayette, New York, on January 5, 1831, after Covell covenanted to obey whatever the Lord would reveal to him.

This is a revelation of great promise to one man — James Covell — and it can only be fully understood alongside the short, sorrowful Section 40 that follows it, because together they tell the story of a heart that was right with God for a moment and then turned away.

Hebrew Word Studies

merimna — "anxiety, care, worry; the cares of the world" v. 9. The word in the parable of the sower for the thorns that choke the seed — "the care (merimna) of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word" (Matt. 13:22). It is the same diagnosis the Lord gives Covell: he rejected the word "because of pride and the cares of the world." The thorns are not open wickedness but ordinary anxiety and worldly preoccupation — which is exactly what would choke the word in him again days later (Section 40).

From the Chapter's Architecture

*The structure is a door swung wide open. It opens with the **gospel and its promise** (vv. 1–6): the light of the world, power to become my sons, receiving the gospel is receiving Christ. It moves to the **man, known and invited** (vv. 7–11): I know thee, your sorrow came from pride and worldly care, but the days of thy deliverance are come — arise and be baptized. And it widens to the **work and the blessing in store** (vv. 12–24): labor in the vineyard, go to Ohio, where a blessing such as is not known awaits. Everything in the architecture is invitation; nothing is closed. Which is precisely what makes Section 40 so sorrowful — the door was fully open, and Covell chose not to walk through it.*