
Doctrine and Covenants 63 — Signs Follow Faith

A revelation given through Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, in late August 1831, after the elders' return from Zion, addressing faith, sign-seeking, purity, and the gathering.

This is a wide-ranging revelation given at Kirtland in late August 1831, after the leaders returned from dedicating the land of Zion. It gathers several urgent concerns of the moment — sign-seeking, sexual sin among the members, how Zion was to be obtained, and the reverence due the Lord's name — into one sustained word to a people who *call yourselves the people of the Lord* (v. 1) but among whom serious problems had appeared.

Hebrew Word Studies

סִמְלָה *meion* — "a sign; a token pointing beyond itself" vv. 7–12. A *meion* is a sign that points to something — its value is in what it signifies, not itself. Jesus rebuked those who demanded one: "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matt. 12:39); yet He promised "these signs shall follow them that believe" (Mark 16:17). Section 63 holds both: signs demanded as proof are barren ("not unto salvation"), but signs that follow faith are real, given "by the will of God." The order is everything — faith first, sign after.

From the Chapter's Architecture

*The structure moves through the concerns of a struggling people. It opens with the **warning to the people of the Lord** (vv. 1–6): God's word will be obeyed, the rebellious should tremble. It teaches **faith and signs** (vv. 7–12): signs follow faith, never produce it. It confronts **sin and promises the obedient** (vv. 13–23): purity required, a well of living water given. It gives the **way to Zion** (vv. 24–48): by purchase not blood, gather not in haste, send up your means. And it closes with **reverence and rebuke** (vv. 49–66): the resurrection, Sidney Rigdon corrected, the name not taken in vain, speak with care. The architecture is a pastor's honest survey of a community — naming its sins, correcting its errors, and holding out, in the middle of it, the living water reserved for the obedient.*