

Sunday, April 4, 2010

## Section 132

I have written that it is my view that Section 132 is not a single revelation, but as many as five. I was asked about how I divide Section 132. Before I respond a few words of explanation:

First, the version we have was written in 1843 at the request of Hyrum. He (Hyrum) intended to take it to Emma and persuade her it was from God. Hyrum knew this revelation had been a continuing source of friction between Joseph and Emma and he offered to try and get Emma to accept its truthfulness. So Joseph agreed to dictate it. The scribe was summoned, and Hyrum asked if he should retrieve the Urum and Thummim. Joseph responded that he could recite it from memory, and then dictated it as it now appears in Section 132.

There were two copies made. The one Hyrum took to Emma was burned by Emma. The second came west and was ultimately made public in the 1850's and added to the scriptures.

The dating of the revelation is uncertain, but the headnote to Section 132 notes that "the principles involved in this revelation had been known by the Prophet since 1831." (Section 132, headnote.) Given the uncertainty of dating, the typical approach by scholars has been to date it from when the first practice began. I think that is wrong. I would date it from the time Joseph translated Jacob, Chapter 2, in 1829. Joseph prayed during the translation of the Book of Mormon to receive the visitation of John the Baptist and the ordinance of baptism. I see no reason why the translation of Jacob 's comments on plural wives would not have provoked a similar inquiry and revelation.

We know the information was suppressed from at least 1831 to 1843. What we do not have is an earlier version from which to reconstruct the entire process; we only have the finished product in 1843. With that, I think the revelation divides into sections as follows:

First, the original revelation begins in the first verse and continues until verse 40. This is concerned with one subject and provides the doctrinal and historical basis for the practice of plural wives. However, the subject changes in verse 41 and comes in response to another inquiry regarding the subject of adultery.

The answer to the question on adultery is a separate revelation beginning in response to Joseph's inquiry in verse 41 and continuing through verse 50. That revelation confirms upon Joseph the sealing authority by the voice of God (a separate issue altogether) and pronounces Joseph's calling and election sure. This is the voice of the Lord to Joseph confirming his exaltation and it is unlikely to have happened at the same time as the original revelation in 1829 or 1831. [It is important that this conferral of authority to seal, and his calling and election are contemporaneous events. This is not well understood by the church today, but nevertheless true.]

Verses 51 through 56 are a revelation to Emma which appears to be separate as well. It makes no sense to have this revelation given to instruct, warn and counsel Emma until after she learns of the first revelation and has reacted to it. Once that has happened, a separate revelation to her about her reaction makes sense.

Because of Emma's refusal after her warning, the final section from verses 61 through the end is a new explanation of the law. It talks about how to proceed in light of her (or any woman's) rejection of the principle.

These are four of the potential five sections which appear to me. It is possible that verses 64-66 are also separate from verses 61-63, which would then make five total revelations which are grouped into this single section of the D&C.

Now, what is important about this revelation being in separate parts (to me at least) is that first, the subject was not fully understood by Joseph when first received. He encountered practical and doctrinal questions even after the first revelation came on the subject. That is commonly experienced by all who receive revelation from God. Additionally, it is important that the sealing authority was given to Joseph by the word of the Lord, in revelation to him, apart from the events in the Kirtland Temple. This is consistent with how that authority came to Helaman in chapter 10 of Helaman, as well. The voice of the Lord speaking about exaltation and conferring authority at the same moment is the Lord's way of doing things. It was no different for Joseph.

Now, least anyone be confused or begin asking questions about plural wives, I do not believe in the practice. It was discontinued and we do not practice it. I have addressed the polygamists' claims to the right to continue the practice in Beloved Enos and my position is as I stated there.