

## Simplified Text

**Document 5. The last confession and statement of John D. Lee, told just before his death in 1877 to his attorney William W. Bishop with a request that it should be published. There are several different versions of Lee's final statement and many historians believe William Bishop made his own changes to this version. It was published in a book called *Mormonism Unveiled*. (Some of the words have been changed from his original words to make it easier to read).**

[Isaac C. Haight] said, (and I believed at that time every word that he said, because I believed it was impossible for a leader of the church to lie) that the emigrants were a rough and cruel group of men. That while traveling through Utah they had been very cruel to all the Mormons they met. That they had insulted, angered, and attacked many of the Mormon women. That the terrible abuses against the Mormons by the emigrants had happened during their whole trip from Provo to Cedar City; that they had burned fences and destroyed growing crops; that at many points on the road they had poisoned the water, so that all the people and animals that drank the water became sick, and many had died from the poison. That these evil Gentiles [non-Mormons] told people that they had the pistol that the Prophet Joseph Smith had been murdered with, and had threatened to kill Brigham Young and all of the Apostles [Mormon leaders]. That when they got to Cedar City they said they would have friends in Utah who would hang Brigham Young by the neck until he was dead, before winter. They also said that Johnston was coming, with his army, from the East, and they were going to return from California with soldiers, as soon as possible, and they would destroy the land, and kill every Mormon man, woman, and child that they could find in Utah. Haight said that unless something was done to stop it, the emigrants would carry out their threats and rob every one of the settlements in southern Utah, and that all of the Mormons were going to be killed by the troops that the emigrants would bring back with them from California. Haight then said "I expect you to carry out your orders." I knew I had to obey or die. I had no wish to disobey, for I then thought that my leaders in the Church spoke for God, and that it was right for me to obey the orders they gave me without asking any questions. Haight said to me: "Go, Brother Lee, and see that the instructions of the leaders are obeyed, and if you do this duty, you will be reward be in the kingdom of God, for God will bless those people who obey.

## Original Text

**Document 5. The last confession and statement of John D. Lee, dictated just before his execution in 1877 to his attorney William W. Bishop with a request that it should be published. There are several different versions of Lee's final statement and many historians believe William Bishop edited this version. It was published in a book called *Mormonism Unveiled*.**

*(speaking of Isaac C. Haight)* He said (and I then believed every word that he spoke, for I believed it was an impossible thing for one so high in the Priesthood as he was, to be guilty of falsehood) that the emigrants were a rough and abusive set of men. That they had, while traveling through Utah, been very abusive to all the Mormons they met. That they had insulted, outraged, and ravished many of the Mormon

women. That the abuses heaped upon the people by the emigrants during their trip from Provo to Cedar City, had been constant and shameful; that they had burned fences and destroyed growing crops; that at many points on the road they had poisoned the water, so that all people and stock that drank of the water became sick, and many had died from the effects of poison. That these vile Gentiles publicly proclaimed that they had the very pistol with which the Prophet Joseph Smith was murdered, and had threatened to kill Brigham Young and all of the Apostles. That when in Cedar City they said they would have friends in Utah who would hang Brigham Young by the neck until he was dead, before snow fell again in the Territory. They also said that Johnston was coming, with his army, from the East, and they were going to return from California with soldiers, as soon as possible, and would then desolate the land, and kill every d—d Mormon man, woman, and child that they could find in Utah. Haight said that unless something was done to prevent it, the emigrants would carry out their threats and rob every one of the outlying settlements in the South, and that the whole Mormon people were liable to be butchered by the troops that the emigrants would bring back with them from California. Haight then said “I expect you to carry out your orders.” I knew I had to obey or die. I had no wish to disobey, for I then thought that my superiors in the Church were the mouth pieces of Heaven, and that it was an act of godliness for me to obey any and all orders given by them to me, without my asking any questions. Haight said to me: “Go, Brother Lee, and see that the instructions of those in authority are obeyed, and as you are dutiful in this, so shall your reward be in the kingdom of God, for God will bless those who willingly obey counsel, and make all things fit for the people in these last days.”