

The Word of Wisdom: Revelation or Redefinition?

Then: The 1833 Revelation



A Product of Its Time



It mirrored ideas from the 1830s Temperance Movement, not introducing unknown health principles.



A Suggestion, Not a Commandment

The original text states it was sent "not by commandment or constraint."



Permitted "Mild Drinks" like Beer

Joseph Smith and other leaders continued to drink alcohol long after the revelation.



Now: Modern Interpretation & Enforcement

c. 1919



A Strict Requirement for Temple Worship

It became a mandatory temple recommend question around 1919, nearly 90 years later.



Inconsistent Prohibitions

Bans coffee/tea (hot or cold) but allows sugary, caffeinated soft drinks.



Primarily a Test of Obedience

"The fundamental purpose of the Word of Wisdom has to do with revelation."

— Boyd K. Packer