

Doctrine & Covenants Study – D&C 18-19

Online zoom Sunday School, 28 Feb 2021

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June 1829

T&C JSH 15:23

the Lord continued to pour out upon us his holy spirit, and as often as we had need he gave us in that moment what to say

T&C JSH 15:24-25

We now became anxious to have that promise realized to us which the angel that conferred upon us the Aaronic priesthood had given us, namely that, provided we continued faithful, we should also have the Melchizedek priesthood, which holds the authority of the laying on of hands for the gift of the holy ghost... we had not long been engaged in solemn and fervent prayer when the word of the Lord came unto us in the chamber [of Mr. Whitmer's house], commanding us that I should ordain Oliver Cowdery to be an elder in the church of Jesus Christ, and that he also should ordain me to the same office, and then to ordain others as it should be made known unto us from time to time.

Similar to the order their baptism was performed. See JSH 1:70-71 [14:1].

T&C JSH 15:25-26

We were, however, commanded to defer this, our ordination, until such times as it should be practicable to have our brethren, who had been and who should be baptized, assembled together; when we must have their sanction to our thus proceeding to ordain each other and have them decide by vote whether they were willing to accept us as spiritual teachers or not; when also we were commanded to bless bread and break it with them, and to take wine, bless it, and drink it with them; afterward proceed to ordain each other according to commandment, then call out such men as the spirit should dictate and ordain them, and then attend to the laying on of hands for the gift of the holy ghost upon all those whom we had previously baptized, doing all things in the name of the Lord.

The following commandment will further illustrate the nature of our calling to this priesthood, as well as that of others who were yet to be sought after:

Then follows D&C 18. The above history gives historical context to D&C 18.

D&C 18:2

Behold, I have manifested unto you [Oliver Cowdery] by my spirit in many instances that the things which you have written are true

What things has Oliver written? Is this referring to the Book of Mormon?

D&C 18:3-4

And if you know that they are true, behold, I give unto you a commandment, that you rely upon the things which are written; For in them are all things written concerning the foundation of my church, my gospel, and my rock.

All things concerning the foundation of Christ's church are contained in the Book of Mormon. Oliver is commanded to "rely upon the things which are written" [in the Book of Mormon].

In Joseph Smith's history, D&C section 20 follows directly after the D&C 18 revelation. D&C 20 is largely a product of Oliver Cowdery. How well does it follow the pattern of the foundation of Christ's church given in the Book of Mormon?

D&C 18:7-8

Wherefore, as thou hast been baptized by the hands of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun... if he shall be diligent in keeping my commandments he shall be blessed unto eternal life; and his name is Joseph.

We know God is talking about Joseph, then there is this almost strange out to place comment, "*and his name is Joseph.*" As if we didn't know. Suggesting that there is a significant reason for making special mention of it. (see v 23-25 below and also Thomas' note in Margaret Barker's book, D&C 19:1 below.)

D&C 18:9

Does the use of the word "apostle" in section 19 have the same meaning as its use in D&C 18?

To Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer:

I speak unto you, even as unto Paul mine apostle, for you are called even with that same calling with which he was called. (D&C 18:9)

Wherefore, I will explain unto you this mystery, for it is meet unto you to know even as mine apostles. (D&C 19:8)

What does the word "apostle" mean at this juncture in the restoration? Is it the same as how the term came to be known in the church later? How is the term used in the church today?

The word apostle (from the Greek ἀπόστολος, ἀπόστολος) literally means "someone sent away," implying that someone with this title is sent to deliver a message. An English equivalent would be "messenger."

Before 1835, the term apostle did not mean 12 men belonging to a quorum. It meant men who were ordained to the High Priesthood who had seen Christ. The June 1, 1833 revelation (see D&C 95:11-17 [T&C 94:4]) referred to the School of the Prophets as *the school of my apostles*. The school was *to prepare mine apostles* (par. 1). However, the identity of the apostles was expansive, including *the officers, or in other words, those who are called to the ministry in the church, beginning at the high priests, even down to the deacon* (D&C 88:127 [T&C 87:1]), describing those for whom the school of the prophets was to be built. After an appearance of Christ to members of the school of the prophets, Joseph declared: *Brethren now you are prepared to be the Apostles of Jesus Christ, for you have seen both the Father and the Son, and know that They exist, and that They are two separate Personages.* (JSP, Documents, Vol. 3:43n259.) It was not membership in a "quorum," but knowledge that originally defined the meaning of apostle when used in all notes, minutes, revelations, and preaching before 1835. (See T&C Glossary, *Apostle*)

D&C 18:20

Contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil.

What church is that? If I approach outsiders and non-members with an attitude that they possess spiritual experiences with God in different ways than I do, and that I can learn from them, regardless of what "church" they may belong to, then how am I to recognize when I actually come across "*the church* [or assembly] *of the devil*"? Is the devil's church only those who outright claim to be Satan worshipers, or is he more insidious?

Can the devil's "church" occupy any denomination? If so, then can that also include The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints? Are we immune from corruption?

Note that the Devil is always looking to convert the holy church of God into something perverted and evil (see More 8:33-41 [NC 4:5]).

How to recognize the devil's "church" (assembly). What does the devil teach?

*And Korihor put forth his hand and wrote, saying, I know that I am dumb, for I cannot speak; and I know that nothing, save it were the power of God, could bring this upon me. Yea, and I always knew that there was a God; but behold, *the Devil has deceived me*, for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel and said unto me, Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God. And he said unto me, There is no God. Yea, and *he taught me that which I should say*, and I have taught his words; and I taught them because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind. And I taught them even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true. And for this cause I withstood the truth, even until I have brought this great curse upon me. (Alma 30:52-53 [NC 16:12])*

By this we know the Devil does teach, or in other words persuades and deceives.

Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this: Satan had great power unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. (3 Ne 6:15 [NC 3:3])

The Devil's teachings puff up with pride and lead to seeking for power and authority and riches and vain things of the world.

And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers, he being an enemy to all righteousness. (Mosiah 4:14 [NC 2:3])

Fighting and quarreling is serving the Devil.

And now my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts, and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the spirit which teacheth a man to pray, ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray. (2 Ne 32:8 [NC 14:3])

Devil teaches NOT to pray.

And it [the words which Nephi has written] speaketh harsh against sin according to the plainness of the truth; wherefore, no man will be angry at the words which I have written, save he shall be of the spirit of the Devil. (2 Ne 33:5 [NC 15:1])

The spirit of the Devil is to be *angry* at words of truth.

"The greatest threat to salvation does not come from teaching false doctrine but instead comes from ignoring doctrine altogether. Substituting platitudes and truisms for careful, ponderous and solemn investigation of the deep things of God is sufficient to keep people in the chains of captivity. It isn't necessary for the devil to convince you of lies, only for him to make you content in your ignorance or fearful of the search for truth." (T&C Glossary - *Truth*)

"A false spirit is not difficult to identify. It stirs up fear, anger, resentment, envy, jealousy, and false accusation. It makes a man spread false rumors and make accusations that are untrue and unwarranted." (T&C Glossary, *False Spirits*)

If "*he that hath the spirit of contention is not of [Christ], but is of the devil*" (3 Ne 11:29), then what does it mean to "contend" against the church of the devil?

According to what we read from Nephi above, we contend against the devil when we pray (2 Ne 32), and when we speak against sin according to plainness of the truth (2 Ne 33), (but not with anger). And not with a spirit of fighting or quarreling (Mosiah 4).

Consider that tolerance requires disagreement. Insisting on agreement is not tolerance, but its opposite. If tolerance requires disagreement, yet Christ commands there be no disputations among us, is it possible to disagree without disputing?

"The purpose of discussion is not to dispute, which leads to contention, which leads to anger. When the Gospel and its ordinances turn into something angry and contentious, then the spirit has fled, and souls are lost...When men arrive at the point they are angry in their hearts with one another, they are not united by love as they are intended to be. These are the end results of the two paths. One leading to

love and joy (Helaman 5:42-45 [NC 2:25]), and the other to anger and wrath (D&C 76:30-39 [T&C 69:7])." (T&C Glossary, *Disputation*)

What's in a name?

D&C 18:23-25

Behold, Jesus Christ is the name which is given of the Father, and there is none other name given whereby man can be saved; Wherefore, all men must take upon them the name which is given of the Father, for in that name shall they be called at the last day; Wherefore, if they know not the name by which they are called, they cannot have place in the kingdom of my Father.

Here we are told that Jesus Christ is the name given of the Father whereby man can be saved, but then we read that "*all men must take upon them the name which is given of the Father, for in that name shall they be called at the last day; Wherefore, if they know not the name by which they are called, they cannot have place in the kingdom of my Father.*" Does this add insight to the question we asked in verse 8 above, about the special mention of Joseph's name?

D&C 18:30

And you have that which is written before you; wherefore, you must perform it according to the words which are written.

What is "*that which is written*"? See discussion from verses 2-4 above.

Does this mean that the baptism and ordination are to be performed according to the words which have been written in the Book of Mormon?

D&C 18:34-36

These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man; For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them; Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words.

If Joseph Smith has spoken to you, through this revelation, then you have heard the voice of God. Can this statement, or has this statement been abused?

When I was in the bishopric in California as the executive secretary, there were several occasions when apostles would come visit the area. On one of these occasions I remember David B. Haight told us of an experience he had with Bruce R McConkie. In relating the experience the twelve had had at the time of President Kimbal's revelation about all worthy males being able to receive the priesthood (D&C Declaration 2), Elder McConkie had written a statement that included the words:

From the midst of eternity, the voice of God, conveyed by the power of the Spirit, spoke to his prophet. . . . And we all heard the same voice, received the same

message, and became personal witnesses that the word received was the mind and will and voice of the Lord. (McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 128, 133–34.)

As the youngest member of the quorum, Elder Haight had tremendous respect for Elder McConkie. He later confronted Bruce about this statement (I picture them talking by the water cooler somewhere in the temple). Elder Haight did not disagree in any way about the reality of the revelation or the sacredness of the experience as apostles they had all had, but he wondered about the language that Bruce had chosen to use, "*we all heard the same voice [of God]*".

"I can't say I heard any audible voice", was the jest of Elder Haight's concern.

Bruce used these words from this section in D&C 18 to explain to Elder Haight how this language was not in conflict with the experience they all had as apostles in the temple with President Kimball on this occasion.

You can read more about this experience from a BYU article online:

On Thursday, June 1, 1978, the General Authorities held their regular monthly fast and testimony meeting. The members of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric were then excused, and President Kimball, his two counselors, and ten of the Apostles remained (Elder Mark E. Petersen was in South America, and Elder Delbert L. Stapley was in the hospital).

Before offering the prayer that brought the revelation, President Kimball asked each of the Brethren to express his feelings and views on this important issue. For more than two hours, they talked freely and openly. Elder David B. Haight, the newest member of the Twelve, observed:

"As each responded, we witnessed an outpouring of the Spirit which bonded our souls together in perfect unity—a glorious experience. In that bond of unity we felt our total dependence upon heavenly direction if we were to more effectively accomplish the Lord's charge to carry the message of hope and salvation to all the world.

"President Kimball then suggested that we have our prayer at the altar. Usually he asked one of us to lead in prayer; however, on this day he asked, 'Would you mind if I be voice at the altar today?' This was the Lord's prophet asking us. Such humility! Such meekness! So typical of this special servant of all.

". . . The prophet of God pour[ed] out his heart, pleading eloquently for the Lord to make his mind and will known to his servant, Spencer W. Kimball. The prophet pleaded that he would be given the necessary direction which could expand the Church throughout the world by offering the fullness of the everlasting gospel to all men, based solely upon their personal worthiness without reference to race or color."
[19]

In response to a prophet's humble prayer of faith, united with those of twelve other prophets, seers, and revelators, the Lord poured out His Spirit—and His answer—in a most powerful way. Elder McConkie testified:

“It was during this prayer that the revelation came. The Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon us all; we felt something akin to what happened on the day of Pentecost and at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. From the midst of eternity, the voice of God, conveyed by the power of the Spirit, spoke to his prophet. . . . And we all heard the same voice, received the same message, and became personal witnesses that the word received was the mind and will and voice of the Lord.

“ . . . On this occasion, because of the importuning and the faith, and because the hour and the time had arrived, the Lord in his providences poured out the Holy Ghost upon the First Presidency and the Twelve in a miraculous and marvelous manner, beyond anything that any then present had ever experienced.”

(BYU Religious Studies Center, article by E. Dale LeBaron, Official Declaration 2: Revelation on the Priesthood <https://rsc-legacy.byu.edu/archived/sperry-symposium-classics-doctrine-and-covenants/23-official-declaration-2-revelation>)

D&C 19:1

I am: Jehovah identifies himself to Moses as i AM (Exodus 3:13-14 [OC 2:5]). Jesus makes a connection with declarations of I am the good Shepherd (John 10:11-16 [NC 6:26]), and before Abraham was, I am (John 8:58 [NC 6:16]).

*Jesus then says: 'Before Abraham was, I am' (v 58), and the Jews react by stoning him. The temple complex was still being refurbished at that time, and there would have been loose stones lying around. Stoning was the punishment for blaspheming the Name, and so the Jews must have heard Jesus utter the Name, not the *yahweh* form but the *'ehyeh [special characters]ser 'ehyeh* form, claiming to be the divine presence. Thomas' Jesus also claimed the Name:*

Jesus said: 'I am not your Master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have measured out.' And [Jesus] took [Thomas] and withdrew and told him three thing [three words?]. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, 'What did he say to you?' Thomas said to them, 'If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up.'”

(Margaret Barker, King of the Jews, p. 286-287)

D&C 19:4-12

"In Section 19 the Lord explains what the words “endless torment” and “eternal damnation” mean. They are words of art, and are essentially proper nouns referring to God’s punishment.

This is an enormous help in understanding the scriptures generally. Words are chosen carefully, and the Lord is deliberate in how He puts a message across. Things may not mean what we initially think they mean.

The scriptures are designed to reveal and conceal. They are able to reveal even very hidden and mysterious things to the understanding of mankind when we understand what is being discussed. Until the reader has been prepared for this understanding, reading the messages will not necessarily result in greater insight.

It is almost as if you have to know the answer first, or have it revealed to you. Then, while in possession of the truth, you can see that prophets and seers have been speaking about these matters since the beginning of time.

How often do we reflect on Christ's "opening the scriptures" to His followers? This is something that ought to make us all think about how little understanding we obtain without first receiving light and truth from Him. Once again it points to the absolute necessity of personal revelation." (Denver Snuffer blog, The importance of personal revelation, Mar 22, 2010)

D&C 19:15

"Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not."

"And by my anger". In my discussion above on D&C 18:20 I just explored what it means to contend against the church of the devil, and one of the big take-aways is that *dispute* leads to *contention* which leads to *anger*. What is difference between God's anger and the anger that Satan draws us into? You can use the same word, but it doesn't have to mean the same thing. God's anger - God's wrath. (See T&C glossary on *Wrath*).

*And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the **wrath** of the Lamb: For the great day of his **wrath** is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Rev 6:15-17)*

In this verse in Revelation, notice that it is *man* who calls the mountains and rock to fall on and hide us from the face of God, not God calling the mountains to fall upon man. This is a description of man's reaction to God. God just *is*. We project God's wrath as something God is doing, but could it be our reaction to Him that we call His wrath?

D&C 19:16-18

For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed

at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink.

What a humbling thing to contemplate.

D&C 19:19

Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

What does it mean to "finish preparations"? (see discussion from Book of Mormon lesson last year on Alma 7:12)

D&C 19:31

And of tenets thou shalt not talk, but thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism, and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost.

Faith and repentance is the focus on 2 Ne 31, 3 Ne 11, and Lectures on Faith - the chapters specifically mentioned as "doctrine". Anything more or less that this cometh of evil. Tenets, then, would fall in the realm of "more or less" (so to speak). What does it mean, tenets? Why should Martin Harris not be speaking about them? There are a lot of *tenets* in the gospel, and in there we find some beautiful teachings, but, for Martin Harris, at least in this moment, he's commanded not to teach. We read earlier in this section about milk, not meat (v 21-22). Does this mean there's a time and a place for some teachings?

Read from 3 Ne 11:33-41 (particularly verse 40)

This is Christ's doctrine—nothing more and certainly nothing less... This is all of the doctrine. There is no more doctrine. This is not all of the teachings; this is not all of the tenets; these are not all of the precepts; this is not all of the covenants; this is not all of the commandments; and this is not all of the principles. But it's all of the doctrine. There is no more doctrine than this. (Denver Snuffer, *TDS Vol 2* PDF, p. 293)

That's the Gospel. That's what needs to be preached. That's what needs to follow. But there are tenets. There are tenets to the faith. And those we're commanded also to search into but not declare as doctrine necessarily. The things about which we need to have unity and absolute agreement is the Doctrine of Christ. (Ibid p. 298)

D&C 19:35

Pay the debt thou hast contracted with the printer. Release thyself from bondage.

D&C 19:38

*Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing—
yea, even more than if you should obtain treasures of earth and corruptibleness to
the extent thereof.*