

JANUARY 18-24, 2021

Doctrine and Covenants 3–5

“MY WORK SHALL GO FORTH”

Summary: *Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, July 1828, relating to the loss of 116 pages of manuscript translated from the first part of the Book of Mormon, which was called the book of Lehi. The Prophet had reluctantly allowed these pages to pass from his custody to that of Martin Harris, who had served for a brief period as scribe in the translation of the Book of Mormon. The revelation was given through the Urim and Thummim. (See section 10.) 1–4, The Lord’s course is one eternal round; 5–15, Joseph Smith must repent or lose the gift to translate; 16–20, The Book of Mormon comes forth to save the seed of Lehi.*

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to his father, Joseph Smith Sr., at Harmony, Pennsylvania, February 1829. 1–4, Valiant service saves the Lord’s ministers; 5–6, Godly attributes qualify them for the ministry; 7, The things of God must be sought after.

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, March 1829, at the request of Martin Harris. 1–10, This generation will receive the Lord’s word through Joseph Smith; 11–18, Three witnesses will testify of the Book of Mormon; 19–20, The word of the Lord will be verified as in previous times; 21–35, Martin Harris may repent and be one of the witnesses.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How necessary is the principle of preparation?

Although Jews generally do not refer to a life after death,

sages have taught that our earth life is a preparation for the life to come. “The sages of the Talmud saw life as a prelude to life in the world to come. ‘This world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare yourself in the vestibule that you may enter into the hall’ (Mishnah, Avot 4:21). In other words, according to rabbinic theology, the physical life a person has is a kind of trial period for his ‘real’ life which comes after death. Indeed, in rabbinic parlance, the life after death is known as ‘the world of truth’.”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Throughout time, the principle of preparation also underlies the furtherance or continuation of the scriptures.

How has the Lord prepared for the possibility of lost scriptures?

The preparation of scriptures for later use is a pattern seen in the Bible as well as

the Book of Mormon. There is strong evidence that Biblical texts were lost and even found again as told in an account of King Josiah. “During the renovation, the book of Deuteronomy was discovered in one of the storage chambers. The biblical Books had previously been destroyed by Amon so that the find caused a sensation. When the Book was read to Josiah he was deeply shocked by its prophecies of doom. He immediately sent a delegation to the prophetess Hulda to ask her advice. The answer was forthright and not reassuring – Jerusalem and the Temple were doomed, but Josiah himself would not live to see their destruction. Josiah led the people to the Temple in repentance. He issued a proclamation to celebrate the Passover according to the ancient statutes. The people flocked to Jerusalem from all corners of the kingdom to celebrate the renovation of the Temple and the holiday of Passover. Josiah was far-sighted. Despite his successes, he heeded Hulda’s prophecy and hid the Ark of the Covenant so that it should not be captured when Jerusalem fell. He also hid the anointing oil, prepared in the

wilderness by Moses.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What did Isaiah say about a “Marvelous Work and Wonder?”

“Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.” (**Isaiah 29:12-14**) The marvelous restoration work came in recognizing the true Messiah and the true meaning of his life and those who testified of Him through the restoration of the SPIRIT. “In our interview with the President, he interrogated us wherein we differed in our religion from the other religions of the day. Brother Joseph (Smith) said we differed in mode of baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost” (**History of the Church, 4:42**)

Where does the “gift” come from?

The Hebrew word for spirit is *Ruach Elohim*, the breath or the wind of God. Moses knew that gift well and desired that everyone would have it. “And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!” (**Numbers 11:29**) There are some people who do not have that gift yet, and those who do must exercise patience and love because eventually more will get that gift and be very happy. The SPIRIT comes because of the gift of belief, that comes from God. The point to consider is that the Lord’s gift of spirit reveals and teaches truth. In the New Testament, the day that Jesus gave His apostles the promised comforter as the gift of the spirit was the Jewish Pentecost. This occurred on the Mount of Olives fifty days after the Passover when Jesus completed the great atonement. In

the Biblical calendar, fifty days after Passover is *Shavuot*, a day to commemorate receiving the “Law of Moses at Mount Sinai,” the Jewish Pentecost. “In many modern synagogues, the ceremony of confirmation takes place on *Shavuot*. This is a group ceremony in which the boys and girls of the community who have reached the age of maturity (usually when they are 15 or 16 years old), take a sort of symbolic oath of allegiance to the Torah and Judaism. The custom began with the Reform Movement’s efforts to deepen the significance of *bar mitzvah* and to emphasize the relationship between *Shavuot* and the study of Torah.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How can one receive the “gift?”

For Latter-day Saints, the procedure of confirmation includes giving the gift of the Holy Ghost. One of its blessings is that of helping us understand the scriptures. “. . . the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (**John 14:26**) “In this last great gift through one of the Godhead, even the Holy Ghost, is to be found the way to the certain knowledge, after one’s study of the scriptures . . .” (**Harold B. Lee, Stand Ye In Holy Places, Pg.317**)

What is a tool of the “spirit?”

A tool or gift of spirit used by ancient and modern prophets is the *Urim* and *Thummim*. “The exact meaning of the words ‘*Urim*’ and ‘*Thummim*’ have puzzled scholars over the generations. Both in the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible they were rendered as ‘revelation and truth’ or ‘teaching and truth’ and this understanding gave rise to the incorporation of the Hebrew words *Urim ve-Thummim* on the official seal of Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) There are symbols in modern Judaism that purportedly date back to David and

Solomon's times. The account of (**Mosiah 28:13**) speaks of two rims of a bow with two stones, the *Urim* and *Thummin*, used to know the mind of the Lord. The Emeritus General Authority, Patriarch, Eldredge G. Smith once spoke of Joseph Smith describing the *Urim* and *Thummin* as two triangular stones connected by silver bows. Detractors of Joseph Smith spoke of them being "magic glasses." The use of these special revelatory stones has been repeated throughout time. It is a characteristic of the House of Israel. Repeating some insights in a previous lesson, the Magen David is always shown as two triangles, interwoven. One possible explanation is that the two triangles represent a characterization of the *Urim* and *Thummim*. They were two triangular stones – one pointed up and the other pointed down. Superimposed they make a fascinating Magen David! According to a paper given at Hebrew University by the late John Tvedtnes, then, Senior Researcher at FARMS (BYU), the words *Urim* and *Thummim* may come from Egyptian words similar to "RMMM" and "TMMM," one meaning yes or act upon it (positive), the other a more negative meaning (leave it alone). Jewish thought also states: "From the use of the verbs *hippil* and *nilkad* in connection with the *Urim* (and *Thummim*) (**1 Samuel 14: 41–42**), it appears that they were a kind of lot (marked) stones or sticks?), since these verbs occur in connection with the casting of lots (**Isaiah 34:17; 1 Samuel 10:20**). They were suitable for indicating which of two alternatives was right; hence inquiries to be decided by them were designed to elicit "yes" or "no" answers (**1 Samuel 23:10–12; 30:8**)."
(<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-urim-and-thummim>) Since the *Urim* and *Thummin* were revelatory tools, it is possible that they represent a procedure or that they can operate on a simple principle of revelation with answers of yes or no. "But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right." (**Doctrine & Covenants 9:8**) As a reminder, even though the *Magen*

David is so prevalent in Jewish art and culture, the official symbol of the State of Israel is the seven-branched *Menorah*.

Where did the term "Star of David" originate?

One of the most popular symbols of Judaism is known by non-Jews as "The Star of David." Those of the House of Israel call it the *Magen David*, the sign or shield of David. "*Magen David* ('Shield of David'), the six-pointed star, has become the generally accepted emblem of the Jewish people. Tradition tells us that King David wore a *magen David* on his shield, and that King Solomon had the symbol inscribed on his ring in place of the name of God to give him dominion over demons. Despite its long history, it is however only recently that the *magen David* has become an exclusively Jewish symbol." "During the early Middle Ages, Christians decorated their churches and cathedrals with the *magen David*. For Muslims it was a magical sign; in Arabic sources the *magen David* was also known as the 'seal of Solomon' and this alternative name was taken over by Jewish groups as well."

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What did the Magen David look like?

The Magen David is always shown as two triangles, interwoven. As mentioned, one possible explanation is that the two triangles represent a characterization of the *Urim* and *Thummim*. According to statements attributed to Joseph Smith, they were two triangular stones connected by a silver bow. One pointed up and the other pointed down. Superimposed, they make a fascinating Magen David!

How large is the "field – ready for harvest?"

For members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, returning to God's family is a powerful motivator, prompting family research stretching throughout the world. "And again, this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all the nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked . . . and they

shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Joseph Smith - Matthew 1) The expression “white and ready to harvest” gives an image of goodness and readiness to accept the Lord’s plan. In Judaism, wearing white clothing, specifically robes and the Talith (prayer garment), denotes the desire to be pure and spotless from the sins of generations around them. White is a combination of all colors, metaphorically implying a “wholeness” or “completeness.” Garments used by religious Jews are often pure white. There is a certain symbolism to covering the dead with a white sheet, often a *Tallit*. The emblems of the sacrament are covered with a white sheet in remembrance of His death and resurrection.

What additional meaning does “white” have?

“The *tallit* is usually white and made either of wool, cotton, or silk . . . Although the ordinary *tallit* is worn only in the synagogue, strictly observant Jews wear the *tallit katan* (small *tallit*) under their outer garments the entire day. “Perhaps the most beloved ritual of the Day of Atonement, *Kol Nidrei* is . . . chanted before sunset as the . . . worshipers are wrapped in *tallitot* and some even robed in white gowns (*kitels*).” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The special white garment, the *Kitel*, mentioned above, is worn in many Jewish weddings. “In Ashkenazi tradition it is not just the bride who wears white on her wedding day. The groom, too, stands under the canopy wearing his white *kitel*, or robe, over his wedding finery. The day of their marriage is a solemn one for the bride and groom. They pray that their past sins will be forgiven, and they can start their life together afresh. The white of their clothing symbolizes the purity and the

forgiveness of sin for which they are hoping. This is a reason the garment is used to clothe the dead for burial. The *kitel* therefore also serves to remind the wearer of how brief life is, and of the necessity for atonement.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How was “white” used in ancient temple clothing?

“Our first fashion record is the Bible, which describes common, priestly, and royal dress . . . The Talmud stresses that ‘a man’s dignity is seen in his costume.’ A scholar must be spotless and neat . . . From ancient times Jewish women were known for their modesty. Their hair was always covered, their dresses plain and white. Fine clothing was worn on Sabbath and holidays, simple clothing on weekdays. On the Day of Atonement there was no gold on the vestments of the high priest; he officiated in robes of pure linen.” “From Talmudic times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath. This bread, usually prepared from white flour, is also called ‘*hallah*.’ Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Show bread in the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) White cloth for the Sabbath table and white cloth over the wine and bread that precedes the Sabbath meal are again indicative of the special nature, the purity, and the goodness of the meal. It should invoke a memory of partaking of the temple sacrifices and subsequent feasts in ancient days. In restoration times, white sacrament cloth is a symbol of, “keeping the commandments . . . to be lifted up at the last day.” (Doctrine and Covenants 5:35)