

May 3-9, 2021

Doctrine and Covenants 46–48

“SEEK YE ERNESTLY THE BEST GIFTS”

Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 46. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 8, 1831. In this early time of the Church, a unified pattern for the conducting of Church services had not yet developed. However, a custom of admitting only members and earnest investigators to the sacrament meetings and other assemblies of the Church had become somewhat general. This revelation expresses the will of the Lord relative to governing and conducting meetings and His direction on seeking and discerning the gifts of the Spirit. 1–2, Elders are to conduct meetings as guided by the Holy Spirit; 3–6, Truth seekers should not be excluded from sacramental services; 7–12, Ask of God and seek the gifts of the Spirit; 13–26, An enumeration of some of these gifts is given; 27–33, Church leaders are given power to discern the gifts of the Spirit.*

Doctrine and Covenants 47. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 8, 1831. John Whitmer, who had already served as a clerk to the Prophet, initially hesitated when he was asked to serve as the Church historian and recorder, replacing Oliver Cowdery. He wrote, “I would rather not do it but observed that the will of the Lord be done, and if he desires it, I desire that he would manifest it through Joseph the Seer.” After Joseph Smith received this revelation, John Whitmer accepted and served in his appointed office. 1–4, John Whitmer is designated to keep the history of the Church and to write for the Prophet.

Doctrine and Covenants 48. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 10, 1831. The Prophet had inquired of the Lord as to the mode of procedure in procuring lands for the settlement of the Saints. This was an important matter in view of the migration of members of the Church from the eastern United States, in obedience to the Lord’s command that they should assemble in Ohio (see sections 37:1–3; 45:64). 1–3, The Saints in Ohio are to share their lands with their brethren; 4–6, The Saints are to purchase lands, build a city, and follow the counsel of their presiding officers.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What guidelines can I learn from the Church Historian that I can use in recording a

personal or family history?

Serving as a Senior Missionaries in the Church History Department, Sister Rona and I have been assigned to create Church historical profiles on several countries including, so far, Singapore, North and South Korea, Indonesia, Austria, Switzerland, Ethiopia, and now Israel. Our reports are about 80 to 100-pages in length. Another team reduces those profiles to about 8-pages. Those smaller summaries are also reduced to a page or two – as a succinct synopsis. Prayerfully, we are guided by the Book of

Mormon verses that remind us of the inspired writers who could only write a “hundredth part!” Following are guidelines we felt directing us in recording the histories.

(1) Testimonies that testify of Christ, especially in a local context. “And now there cannot be written in this book even a *hundredth part* of the things which **Jesus did truly teach** unto the people;” **(3 Nephi 26:6)**

(2) Use the Lord’s spirit to help us choose what to report. You could consider, even creating several entries, then choose as directed. “Wherefore, **I chose these things**, to finish my record upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the plates of Nephi; and I cannot

write the *hundredth part* of the things of my people.” (Words of Mormon 1:5)

3) We also learn from contrasting views.

The “profiles” (80-100 pages) might be compared to the “large plates,” and the “summarized” (phase-2), 8-9 pages) might be compared to the “small plates.” The smaller version could be the future generation’s poignant spiritual understanding and guideline. “And a *hundredth part* of the proceedings of this people, which now began to be numerous, cannot be written upon these plates; but many of their proceedings are written upon the **larger plates**, and their **wars**, and their **contentions**, and their **reigns of their kings.**” (Jacob 3:13)

4) Reveal the fulfillment of the promises.

“And the Lord spake unto Ether, and said unto him: Go forth. And he went forth, and beheld that the **words of the Lord had all been fulfilled**; and he finished his record; (and the *hundredth part* I have not written) and he hid them in a manner that the people of Limhi did find them.” (Ether 15:33)

5) Reveal what made the event extraordinary? I have found that the better histories report on the WHAT, HOW, WHEN, WHERE, and WHO, in such a way that the WHY is revealed. “And there had many things transpired which, **in the eyes of some, would be great and marvelous**; nevertheless, they cannot all be written in this book; yea, this book cannot contain even a *hundredth part* of what was done among so many people in the space of twenty and five years;” (3 Nephi 5:8)

What assistance has the Lord provided for me to follow leaders and commandments?

The key to recognizing the Messiah, the true meaning of his life and those who testified of Him is the SPIRIT. The word for spirit in Hebrew is *Ruach Elohim*, the breath, 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) As previously stated, there are some people who do not have that gift yet, and those that do must exercise patience and love because eventually more will get that gift and be very happy. The gift of belief comes from God. “. . . Phinehas is known to have traveled to redeem captives, and on one journey a river in flood parted for him, so as not to delay his mission. He constructed the famous ‘ladder of saintliness’ in which Caution (against evil) leads through Eagerness (for good), Cleanliness, Purity, Asceticism, Holiness, Humility, Fear of God, Attainment of the Holy Spirit (divine inspiration), ultimately to the Resurrection of the Dead.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica, Jr.)

Which comes first for me, believing or doing?

In Judaism, “belief” is superseded by “doing.” Hence, the 613 commandments (365 do nots and 248 do’s) have preeminence over faith. “The biblical word *emunah* (and its other forms) which is often translated as ‘belief’ really means ‘trust’ or ‘confidence,’ which is something quite different.” “Even prayers and benedictions are prepared to be followed, rather than be spoken from the heart. However, some of these benedictions still carry an admonition to go beyond the ‘do’ to embrace ‘faith’ (*Emunah*) in God. ‘In Synagogue services there are certain benedictions recited or read. One of them is a request for the gifts of wisdom and knowledge. “The fourth benediction is a request for the gift of wisdom and understanding. It concludes with *Barukh . . . honen ha-da’at* (Blessed be . . . the gracious giver of knowledge.)”

(Encyclopedia Judaica, Jr.)

How can I improve my opportunities to be inspired?

In biblical times, men were called as judges or prophets in Israel when they understood the law and had extra abilities and spiritual gifts. “The *shofet*, or judge, had to meet strict qualifications, besides just knowing the law. Among these qualifications were piety, wisdom, humility, gentility, and human understanding. When Moses set up the first courts, he looked for ‘able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain’ ([Exodus 18:21](#)) and ‘wise men, and understanding and full of knowledge.’” “Daniel was a Jewish sage and prophet who lived in Babylonia during the sixth century B.C.E. Because of his great wisdom and ability to interpret dreams, Daniel rose to positions of responsibility and honor in the court of kings Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius. However, as a Jew, he was constantly tormented by his rivals who denounced him for not worshiping the idols of the land. Daniel's piety and faith in God always stood firm and despite all dangers, he continued to pray daily in the traditional Jewish way.” “Potiphar respected Joseph's wisdom and put him in charge of his entire household. When Potiphar's wife fell in love with Joseph and he refused to respond to her, she lied about him to Potiphar, who immediately had him imprisoned. The chief jailer soon put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. He interpreted the dreams of two important prisoners, saying that one would be freed, and one would die. Although the interpretation came true, the man who was freed forgot him. He remained in prison for two more years, until Pharaoh requested an interpreter for his strange dreams. Joseph was called before Pharaoh to hear them and God gave him the wisdom to understand that the dreams predicted seven years of plenty throughout the kingdom, to be followed by

seven years of famine. He suggested that food be stored and distributed during the years of hunger. Pharaoh realized that Joseph was honest and wise and ordered him to supervise all necessary preparations. Once again Joseph rose to a high position and became Pharaoh's chief minister. ([Encyclopedia Judaica, Jr.](#))

How may I increase in wisdom and understanding?

Ba'al Shem Tov is a descriptive title which means the “Good Master of the Name.” The “Master of the Good Name”, and the “Name” refers to the name of God. Thus the bearer of the title was a person who was able to invoke the name of God for the purpose of healing the sick or in other worthy causes. “Although the capacity to obtain wisdom might be considered a natural endowment, wisdom itself had to be learned, and could be taught. The two principal methods of teaching were *musar* (instruction or training) and *ezah* (counsel, or persuasion) according to whether the teacher's authority was imposed or freely sought. In general, the teacher's *musar* was an appeal to reason and conscience and to the pupil's own desire for knowledge and understanding. The wisdom was transmitted by a saying or proverb; a rhetorical question; a parable or allegory; and imaginative tales and anecdotes. Despite this great emphasis on teaching and learning, however, wisdom ultimately remained a divine gift rewarding those who desired it enough to submit to its discipline.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica, Jr.](#))

How can I develop spiritual gifts?

It is difficult to develop spiritual gifts when you make an effort not to use them. The inspired translation of the following verse makes the lesson of using spiritual gifts easier to understand. “For whosoever receiveth to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever continueth not to receive, from

him shall be taken even that he hath.”
(Matthew 13:12 JST) There is a modern
proverb which repeats the message, “If
you don’t use it, you’ll lose it.” By
exercising the gift, it expands and grows.
The parables Jesus used offered learning
experiences on the level of those listening
and according to their sense of

understanding. Parables are like
paintings. They can be studied for more
interpretation. Many of Jesus’ parables
contained references to nature and
human experiences so that more people
with differing gifts would be able to
understand them.