

June 21-27, 2021

## Doctrine and Covenants 67–70

“WORTH . . . THE RICHES OF THE WHOLE EARTH”

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**Summary:** *Doctrine and Covenants 67. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, early November 1831. The occasion was that of a special conference, and the publication of the revelations already received from the Lord through the Prophet was considered and acted upon (see the heading to section 1). William W. Phelps had recently established the Church printing press in Independence, Missouri. The conference decided to publish the revelations in the Book of Commandments and to print 10,000 copies (which because of unforeseen difficulties was later reduced to 3,000 copies). Many of the brethren bore solemn testimony that the revelations then compiled for publication were verily true, as was witnessed by the Holy Ghost shed forth upon them. Joseph Smith’s history records that after the revelation known as section 1 had been received, some conversation was had concerning the language used in the revelations. The present revelation followed. 1–3, The Lord bears the prayers of and watches over His elders; 4–9, He challenges the wisest person to duplicate the least of His revelations; 10–14, Faithful elders will be quickened by the Spirit and see the face of God.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 68. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, November 1, 1831, in response to prayer that the mind of the Lord be made known concerning Orson Hyde, Luke S. Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, and William E. McLellin. Although part of this revelation was directed toward these four men, much of the content pertains to the whole Church. This revelation was expanded under Joseph Smith’s direction when it was published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. 1–5, The words of the elders when moved upon by the Holy Ghost are scripture; 6–12, Elders are to preach and baptize, and signs will follow true believers; 13–24, The firstborn among the sons of Aaron may serve as the Presiding Bishop (that is, hold the keys of presidency as a bishop) under the direction of the First Presidency; 25–28, Parents are commanded to teach the gospel to their children; 29–35, The Saints are to observe the Sabbath, labor diligently, and pray.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 69. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, November 11, 1831. The compilation of revelations intended for early publication had been passed upon at the special conference of November 1–2. On November 3, the revelation herein appearing as section 133, later called the Appendix, was added. Oliver Cowdery had previously been appointed to carry the manuscript of the compiled revelations and commandments to Independence, Missouri, for printing. He was also to take with him money that had been contributed for the building up of the Church in Missouri. This revelation instructs John Whitmer to accompany Oliver Cowdery and also directs Whitmer to travel and collect historical material in his calling as Church historian and recorder. 1–2, John Whitmer is to accompany Oliver Cowdery to Missouri; 3–8, He is also to preach and to collect, record, and write historical data.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 70. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, November 12, 1831. The Prophet’s history states that four special conferences were held from the 1st to the 12th of November, inclusive. In the last of these assemblies, the great importance of the revelations that would later be published as the Book of Commandments and then the Doctrine and Covenants was considered. This revelation was given after the conference voted that the revelations were “worth to the Church the riches of the whole Earth.” Joseph Smith’s history refers to the revelations as “the foundation of the Church in these last days, and a benefit to the world, showing that the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of our Savior are again entrusted to man.” 1–5, Stewards are appointed to publish the revelations; 6–13, Those who labor in spiritual things are worthy of their hire; 14–18, The Saints should be equal in temporal things.*

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## Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

### How do the scriptures help me to understand how to “see God?”

“For no man has seen God at any time in the

flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God. Neither can any natural man abide the presence of God, neither after the carnal mind. Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected.” (**Doctrine and Covenants 67:11-13**) Anciently, as the covenant was being restored through Moses, we learned, “And he (Moses) said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.” (**Exodus 33:18**) “And he (God) said I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen. (**Exodus 33:19-23**) From time to time, worthy humans may see him – through His mercy and when we are perfected by His forgiveness and atonement. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: (**Exodus 33:11**) Other prophets have testified; “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” (**Isaiah 6:5**) When the Son of God walked on the earth he said, “. . . he that has seen me has seen the Father” (**John 14:9**). There was one brief occasion that Jesus’ glory was revealed, to a few, at the transfiguration. (**Matthew 17:2**). Moses and Elijah were also there, speaking to the glorified Lord, face to face. (**Matthew 17:3**). As the Apostle Paul taught us; Father in Heaven and His Son are real. “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (**Colossians 2:9**).

### How can I learn to better revere the scriptures?

With a lack of present-day revelation, and forgetting the anthropomorphic nature of God, Jews have turned to revere the scripture scrolls in a more meticulous manner. To the Jews, the words of God, are so special the scriptures must never touch the ground. Many use a pointer to read the words rather than touch the scrolls with their fingers. The scroll cabinet, the “Ark,” is said to contain the “presence of God,” meaning the word of God. “The Torah scroll, for example, has inspired much ritual art. As the Torah must not be touched with a bare hand, much work has gone into making beautifully decorated covers for it, and ornamental handles with which it may be held. Sephardi Jews prefer a case rather than a cloth cover for the Torah, the cases being made of carved wood, or perhaps even silver or gold. A pointer molded in the shape of a miniature hand (*yad*) is used to read with, and crowns, usually with bells whose tinkling symbolizes the joy of the Torah, rest on the handles. In the synagogue, the Torah is placed in a specially built Ark covered by a decorated curtain (*parokhet*), in front of which the eternal light (*ner tamid*) burns continuously in a decorative lampshade.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### How did the Jews preserve the writing style and language of the scriptures?

In reviewing history, one of the oldest technologies for recording texts that become a library was writing on leather. As more space was needed for added texts, additional leather was sewn on to the existing scroll. One of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Isaiah, is about twenty-seven feet long! These scrolls are usually fastened to a stick at each end for better handling, rolling open and shut and for stability in storage. Since the Dead Sea Scrolls, a particular manner of copying scripture scrolls came into use. Each scroll has the same positioning of every page, line and letter. “A scribe, called *sofer*, (*soferim*, plural) even preserved idiosyncrasies because they might mean something that might be understood better at a later time. “Of particular importance in the work of the *soferim* was the preservation of certain oddities in the text of the Bible itself.

At some very early stage in the transmission of the Bible, features such as letters with dots over them, letters suspended above their normal position on the line, letters smaller and larger than usual, made their appearance in the text, and they came to be viewed as sacred components which could not be tampered with even though their significance was not always understood. In addition, a fairly large number of words in the Bible are written in a form that does not correspond exactly to the pronunciation which tradition requires and in some cases words are read that in fact do not appear in the text; it was the duty of the *soferim* to ensure both that the text continued to be written with all these hallowed, though anomalous, features, and that it be read in accordance with the understanding that tradition dictated.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **How often do I read the scriptures?**

Reading the scriptures is a very important part of Jewish Life. There are normally three days a week when the first five books of the Bible, the “*Torah*,” known as the Law, are read. Every congregation, whether Orthodox, Conservative or Reform reads the same *Torah* section on Mondays, Thursdays and Sabbaths (Saturdays). There are additional readings on High Days such as Yom Kippur, Passover, Sukkoth, Rosh Hannah, Shavuot, etc. In addition to reading the Torah segments, additional readings from the “*Neviim*,” the Prophets, and the “*Ketuvim*,” their writings, are added. Over the years, these additional readings have been added to assist in explaining the Torah portion being read. At one time in history, approximately 150 BCE, the foreign occupying government of the Greeks and Syrians forbade (with the penalty of death) the Jews to read the Torah, so they began reading the Psalms, part of the *Ketuvim*, instead. Nowadays, selected Psalms and other writings of the Old Testament constitute a regular part of daily Jewish reading. It should be noted that reading scriptures and praying are to be done in a singing or chanting way to differentiate the common everyday sounds of the mouth with the Word of the Lord or words to the Lord. A pattern of singing has developed

that puts emphasis on particular syllables and words. When a boy has a *Bar Mitzvah*, he is accompanied by a person who may prompt him to sing his words correctly while making sure that his clothing, cap, robe, sash, etc. is worn correctly. “The custom of reading the *Torah* publicly is very, very ancient—originating with Ezra in the fifth-fourth centuries B.C.E. At some later date a reading from the *Neviim* was added; this corresponding passage from the Prophets is known as the *Haftarah*.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **Where was Orson Hyde instructed to go as early as 1831?**

One of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve, Elder Orson Hyde (1805-1878) said, “Joseph Smith (1805-1844), a prophet and servant of the Most High God, did predict upon my head, that I should yet go to the city of Jerusalem, and be a watchman unto the house of Israel, and perform a work there which would greatly facilitate the gathering together of that people.” (History of the Church 4:375) According minutes of a meeting on April 6, 1840, Hyde was dispatched to visit the cities of London, Amsterdam, Constantinople, and Jerusalem; and other places that he deemed expedient; to converse with priests, rulers, and elders of the Jews, to obtain from them all information possible, and then to communicate the same for publication with a general circulation throughout the United States. His letter of introduction stated that the Jewish nation had been scattered among the Gentiles for a long period; and the time to start their return to the Holy Land had already arrived. Hyde was in Jerusalem, April 1841 to December 1842. On October 24, 1841 he dedicated the land for the return of the Jews, to become a distinct nation, and the rebuilding of their temple in Jerusalem. He then travelled to Germany and other German speaking countries. He met with chief rabbis in every visited city declaring to them that the gathering of the Jews was about to begin. He also learned from these rabbis that they greatly anticipated this gathering. One Rotterdam rabbi said to Elder Hyde, “We believe that many Jews will return to Jerusalem and rebuild

the city — rear a Temple to the name of the Most High, and restore our ancient worship.”  
(*Times and Seasons*, 17 July 1841, p 570)

### **What purpose did the Aaron-Levite Priesthood order have in Bible times – until now?**

In biblical times, the “camp” of Israel was organized into a “City of the Lord” which was likened to the “House of the Lord.” The families of Jacob’s (Israel) twelve tribes (Joseph’s double portion was divided to his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh) were on the outer ring; the priests (Levites) were next. They surrounded the holiest place, the Ark, where the Lord’s prophet communed with God. It may be likened to the terms telestial, terrestrial and celestial. “. . . the ancient Israelites were commanded to build a sanctuary so that God may dwell amongst them (*Exodus 25:8*). The Tabernacle became the place to which sacrifices were brought in times of joy and in times of sadness. It became the place to which Moses retired when he wanted to communicate with God. When the Children of Israel camped in the desert, the Tabernacle was erected at the very center of the camp; when they moved, the Tabernacle was taken apart, and was moved with them. Physically and spiritually it was the central object for the Children of Israel and it was through the Tabernacle that they felt their connection with God.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) The leadership in charge of the Holy of Holies was the firstborn descendants of Aaron. That gives us a sense of their presidency over the Priesthood of Aaron. “. . . While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying: Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.”  
(*Joseph Smith History 1:68-69*)

### **How long was this Aaronic order to remain?**

“And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office. And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest’s office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.” (*Exodus 40:12-15*) The Prophet Joseph Smith revealed that literal firstborn descendants of Aaron could serve as a Bishop (if they were called), however, now that the presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood has been restored, that worthy descendant of Aaron must be designated (called) and ordained under the hands of this presidency.  
(*Doctrine and Covenants 69:20*)

### **How ancient is the “Law of Consecration?”**

Just prior to Jesus’ time, a legislated, cooperative community arose that used similar governance. The Essenes wrote about their disciplines. The best preserved of these Qumran scrolls is called *The Manual of Discipline*, a sort of doctrines and covenants of these religious people. It describes their organization that included a Teacher of Righteousness and two assistants. There was also a council of twelve overseers. Their priestly system included two castes: One of a higher authority that connected with an order of the *Melech Zedek* (righteous king), and another of lesser authority that connected with the Levitical, or order of Aaron. They were bound by a strict order of unity. An Essene’s membership in a kibbutz-like united order came into effect only after a two-year trial period. The Essenes kept copies of the scriptures, interpretations of the scriptures, and their own scrolls of doctrines and covenants. A similar unity and community bond can be seen in the scriptures. “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as

every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:44-47) “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” (Acts 4:32) “And they taught, and did minister one to another; and they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly, one with another.” (3 Nephi 26:19)

### **What can I learn from this kind of unity?**

The valuable lesson is that unity, represented in the scriptures, is always connected with a central belief and faith in the Lord. That focus assures a unity because His directive powers are the same for everyone. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:6) “. . . you would not criticize a group of people who sought the same high ground in the midst of a flood; you would not see their presence in one place as an unintelligent act, for they came together in order to be saved. So it is here. Life here is life in a large, affectionate, and unified family. Love in a family does not diminish the freedom of each member thereof; our unity does not jeopardize our individuality. Undivided, we are multiplied. Being of one heart and one mind permits no divorce between knowing and feeling in the City of Enoch.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Of One Heart*, p.51) A beautiful principle of Jewish unity can be sensed in the repeated prayers said when a “prayer circle” (minyan – at least 10-people) is formed in Jewish ritual. The request for forgiveness should include all. “The rabbis placed great emphasis on the relationship of the individual to the community during prayer. Almost all

prayer, for example, was written in the first person plural – ‘Forgive us,’ ‘Teach us,’ ‘Bring us to our Land.’ Although private prayer was certainly permitted, the individual was urged to join a congregation (*minyan*) when he prays and to incorporate the needs of the *minyan* in his prayers.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The Latter-day Saints’ concept of focusing on the Lord has promoted a unified way of community life that can still be expressed individually. The modern Kibbutz system in Israel is a lesser derivation of the principle of holding things in common and working for the common good of the entire community. “There is no private wealth whatever. Once a new member is accepted after a year’s trial period, he gives everything he owns (apart from personal possessions) to the kibbutz. In addition, he is expected to put in his honest day’s work in whatever field the kibbutz planning committee finds most useful for the kibbutz as a whole.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The law of consecration, in a celestial sense, is a stewardship of doing without being instructed to do so. Those that have to ask, “What must I do to inherit life?” must grasp the opportunity to reach higher so that the spirit can dictate the “Law of Consecration.” In the days of the Savior, all believing members committed their time, talent and even their lives to “the kingdom.” I participated in an archaeological survey close to Jericho where we were discussing the peculiar nature of a beautiful synagogue floor of the first century. What was odd about it was the signature. Almost every ancient mosaic floor found in Israel has the signature of the donor with his family name and title. This one simply had an inscription that indicated that the “entire community” had done this work. I had the distinct feeling we were standing on the remains of a worship center used by early saints, “former-day Saints,” people who committed themselves first – to the building of the Kingdom of God.