

July 26-Aug 1, 2021

Doctrine and Covenants 84

“THE POWER OF GODLINESS”

Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 84. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, September 22 and 23, 1832. During the month of September, elders had begun to return from their missions in the eastern states and to make reports of their labors. It was while they were together in this season of joy that the following communication was received. The Prophet designated it a revelation on priesthood. 1–5, The New Jerusalem and the temple will be built in Missouri; 6–17, The line of priesthood from Moses to Adam is given; 18–25, The greater priesthood holds the key of the knowledge of God; 26–32, The lesser priesthood holds the key of the ministering of angels and of the preparatory gospel; 33–44, Men gain eternal life through the oath and covenant of the priesthood; 45–53, The Spirit of Christ enlightens men, and the world lies in sin; 54–61, The Saints must testify of those things they have received; 62–76, They are to preach the gospel, and signs will follow; 77–91, Elders are to go forth without purse or scrip, and the Lord will care for their needs; 92–97, Plagues and cursings await those who reject the gospel; 98–102, The new song of the redemption of Zion is given; 103–10, Let every man stand in his own office and labor in his own calling; 111–20, The Lord’s servants are to proclaim the abomination of desolation of the last days.*

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What is the purpose of the Priesthood of God?
The Priesthoods restored in Latter-days are covenants between God and man. Consider that one of the many names that describe Him is “covenant.” He is the Messenger of the Covenant. “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.” (**Malachi 3:1**) To the Jews who have lost the priesthood and thereby have lost the true understanding of God, comes an encouraging promise—a covenant—that they will receive a “new covenant.” This would also mean that their current concept of God, “old” to them, will be replaced with a “new” yet original understanding of Him. The restoration brings back the Lord and His priesthood-line that was broken. The ancient true religion, which in our culture is called the “Church of God” must always have

priesthood. “Which priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations, and is without beginning of days or end of years. And the Lord confirmed a priesthood also upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations, which priesthood also continueth and abideth forever with the priesthood which is after the holiest order of God. And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.” (**Doctrine and Covenants 84:17**)

What is God’s promise about restoring the covenant?

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward

parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

(Jeremiah 31:31-33) Recalling that the original true religion had an order governed by the priesthood of God, consider the leadership of the children of Israel, a council of three, with Moses, Aaron & Hur, a Council of Twelve Elders and a Council of Seventy. It is comparable to the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The latter-day Israelites led now by the tribe of Ephraim (Joseph) are also organized with a “First Presidency of three, a Quorum of Twelve and a Council of Seventy. “Aaron was clearly given a lesser role than Moses. Aaron experienced revelations from God and, being an eloquent speaker, acted as prophet and miracle-worker before Pharaoh in the matter of the Plagues of Egypt. However, it is significant that even where he plays an active role in performing the miracles, it is not a result of his own ability or initiative, but solely by divine command given through Moses.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) In modern Judaism, there is a powerful cultural and legendary history of Joseph and his future role. Some of these excerpts can give “modern Joseph” a little insight to what the Jews are still anticipating. “Based on the famous story of Joseph and his brothers, the *Talmud* warns against favoring one child over another . . . Jealousy is considered such a serious evil that it is mentioned in the Ten Commandments where the tenth commandment is an outright prohibition of envy: . . . the rabbis of the *Talmud* developed the philosophy that a truly rich

man is one who is happy with his portion in life and does not envy others.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) “According to the *Talmud*, the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph . . .”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How do the Jews cling to the notion of a latter-day Joseph?

Although mentioned previously in this manual, let us recall that when Rabbi, Avraham HaKohen Kook (1865-1935), was appointed as the Chief Rabbi in Palestine in the 1920's, he was asked if the Jews could now build the Temple (destroyed since year 70 A.D.). His response was that the priestly rights were gone and referred to the great 12th century rabbi Moses Maimonides (1136-1204), who said, in effect, “We are waiting for a Messiah Ben-Joseph. To him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel. He will restore Temple worship.” The chiasmus shows that ancient Joseph saved his family when they still did not know who he was. Latter-day Joseph is saving his brothers again, (more foreign aid goes to Israel from the U.S.A., the land of Joseph, than from all other countries combined) and they still don't know that it is “Joseph.” In the meridian of times there was “One” who saved us all and still most people don't know it.

What are some similarities of the “old” and “new” covenants?

As Latter-day Saints consider the restoration of the priesthoods and how priesthood bearers function, they may enjoy the “Aaronic” roles in Jewish culture. “In every town where there are Jews they must appoint 'charity wardens,' men who are well-known and honest that they should collect money from the people every Sabbath eve and distribute it to the

poor . . . We have never seen or heard of a Jewish community which does not have a charity fund.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) It is interesting to see the similarity of young Aaronic Priesthood bearers in years past, gathering “Fast Offerings” at the beginning of the month. By the way, fasting is an integral part of Jewish life, yet never on a Sabbath, unless it is *Yom Kippur* (day of atonement). There is a monthly *Yom Kippur Katan* (lesser), a day before the beginning of every month. It is a fast day, however, monthly fasting is never done on a Sabbath day. *Yom Kippur* is the only exception, it being a High Day, one of the extra seven Sabbaths in the year.

What makes the new covenant easier to recognize?

One of the witnesses, or echoes for the restoration from ancient times is that the Old Covenant was the same as the New Covenant. “It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world . . . Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world . . . for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.” (**Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44, Pg.308**) “Actually, of course, the law of carnal commandments, the law of performances and ordinances revealed through Moses, was an old covenant as compared with the gospel restored by Jesus and his apostles. But this new testament or covenant, this restored gospel, was the same testament that had been in force between God and his people from Adam to Moses in both the old and the new worlds.” (**Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, Pg.543**) Religious Jews still practice many forms

of ancient rites and rituals whose meanings may have become distorted or lost over many years without priesthood guidance. Now that the priesthood has been restored, we can compare the old practices (the Jews), which at one time were true, to better understand the “Old Covenant,” and how the restored “New Covenant” are like the ancient practices – with true doctrine.

How can I recognize the authenticity of priesthood callings?

“Whenever God has called and authorized men to perform a work in any age or dispensation, it has been done by revelations, and not by mere impressions, or some undefinable, internal feelings, which leave the mind in uncertainty and doubt. Noah was called by the word of the Lord to be a preacher of righteousness, and to build an ark. Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, were called by revelation to perform a great variety of duties. Moses and Aaron were called to the priest's office by the word of the great Jehovah. Seventy elders of Israel were called by revelation to assist Moses. Joshua was appointed by the word of the Lord through Moses to be his successor in leading Israel. The successors of Aaron were appointed to the priesthood by revelation. The Judges of Israel were called by visions, by angels and by the inspiration of the Spirit. Samuel was called by the voice of the Lord. And finally, all their officers, wise men and prophets, down to the days of Malachi, were called by new revelation.” (**Orson Pratt Divine Authenticity of BofM, No. 2 (1850), p.17**)

Who are the angels throughout time and the future?

“In answer to the question--Is not the reckoning of God's time, angel's time, prophet's time, and man's time, according to the planet on which they reside? I

answer, Yes. But there are no **angels** who minister to this earth but those who do belong or have belonged to it.”

(Doctrine & Covenants 130:4-5) “Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.” **(2 Nephi 32:3)** References to **angels** are no exceptions in Middle Eastern religions. Both Moslems and Jews have “**angels**” in their folklore, notwithstanding their sparse understanding or acceptance of an afterlife. “The Bible is full of examples of hospitality. Abraham, for example, broke off a conversation with God Himself in order to receive guests (the three **angels**), and though weak in health, ran out to meet them, personally washed their feet, served them food, and made them feel welcomed and honored.” “In literary tradition the Jewish People is one large family descended from Jacob, who was given the name ‘Israel’ in honor of his mysterious and victorious struggle with the **angel** of God.” “When the first man was to be created, says the *Aggadah* (collection of tradition), God consulted the **angels**. Some favored his creation, because of the love and mercy he would show; others were opposed—because of the falsehood and strife he would stir up. In the end, for reasons best known to Himself, the Holy One decided to create man.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How do I know that God’s angels bring joy?

When angels appeared to frightened shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem, the message was joyful and comforting. “And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round

about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

(Luke 2:10–11) An earthlier view of angels is in this explanation: “A delightful *Talmudic* sermon has it that two **angels** accompany a man on his way back from synagogue, one good and one bad. When they arrive home, if the table is laid nicely and all the Sabbath preparations have been made, the good **angel** says, ‘May it be so next week’ and the bad **angel** is forced to say, ‘Amen!’ If, however, the home is not Sabbath-like, the bad **angel** invokes: ‘May it be so next week,’ and the good **angel** has to answer ‘Amen!’ This *aggadah* is the basis of a special Sabbath hymn recited in the home on return from prayers. It was written by the kabbalists of Safed and welcomes the **angels** into the house.” “. . . **angels** are assigned to countries, and thus there are **angels** who must not leave Erez Israel; **angels** walk upright and speak Hebrew; and they have no needs or free will. Man, because he does have free will and must conquer his evil inclination, is considered more important than the **angels**.” **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

How do Jews and Moslems feel about angel personages?

“Islam, the name given by Muslims to their religion, means ‘submission’ (to the will of God). Muhammad, a seventh century C.E. merchant of Mecca, and founder of Islam, is considered by believers to have been the last of a line of prophets starting with Adam, and the one who revealed to the world the divine doctrine of the Koran, said to have been given him from God by the **angel** Gabriel. Acceptance of Muhammad’s teaching implies belief in Allah as the only god; in the **angels**; in the divine inspiration of the holy books

(including the Bible); in the prophets (including such Jewish and Christian figures as Abraham, 'the merciful friend' and the first to profess monotheism, Moses, and Jesus); in the day of judgment; and in Allah's predetermination of good and evil. Muslims are obliged to recite their creed and to pray five times daily; to fast from dawn to sunset in the month of Ramadan; to pay legal alms

(charity); and to go on at least one pilgrimage to Mecca, site of the holy Black Stone, the Ka'aba." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Jews, on the other hand, feel that Prophets and Prophecy have ended yet they have an expectation of prophets returning, such as a Latter-day Joseph, Son of Joseph, a Latter-day David as well as Elijah and Moses.