

Aug 23-29, 2021

# Doctrine and Covenants 93

“RECEIVE OF HIS FULLNESS”

**Summary:** *Doctrine and Covenants 93. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, May 6, 1833. 1–5, All who are faithful will see the Lord; 6–18, John bore record that the Son of God went from grace to grace until He received a fulness of the glory of the Father; 19–20, Faithful men, going from grace to grace, will also receive of His fulness; 21–22, Those who are begotten through Christ are the Church of the Firstborn; 23–28, Christ received a fulness of all truth, and man by obedience may do likewise; 29–32, Man was in the beginning with God; 33–35, The elements are eternal, and man may receive a fulness of joy in the Resurrection; 36–37, The glory of God is intelligence; 38–40, Children are innocent before God because of the redemption of Christ; 41–53, The leading brethren are commanded to set their families in order.*

## Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

### What are the meanings of the “word?”

The Bible is holy to Jews because it

represents the Word of God. “This is particularly true of the *Torah* which is, so to speak, God's direct statement. The *halakhah*, or Jewish law, which is the authoritative guide for a Jew's life, is mainly based on the *Torah* (first 5-books), so obviously study of the *Torah* as well as the rest of the Bible is one of the prime religious duties. “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 *Nevi'im* was added; this corresponding passage from the Prophets is known as the *Haftarah*.”

**(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)** The Latter-day Saints' use of the Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price and the Book of Mormon is like an LDS *Haftarah*. Literally it is the reading of the *Nevi'im*, the “Prophets,” with their explanations and heavenly insights. “On *Shabbat ha-Gadol*, a special *haftarah*, [reading from the Prophets] taken from the Book of Malachi and referring to the day on which Elijah the Prophet will reappear as forerunner of the great day of the Lord, is read.”

**(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

### How did the forerunner, John, describe and teach about the “Word?”

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” **(John 1:1-5)** John knew very well who the creator, the Son of the living God was, and his mission was to testify of Him. “Why did John send two of his disciples to Jesus to ask if he were the promised Messiah? **(Matt. 11:2-6; Luke 7:19-23)** Any inference that the Baptist was uncertain or doubtful in his own mind, as to the identity and mission of the Master, is totally unwarranted. In reality, the imprisoned Elias and forerunner of our Lord was using this means to persuade his disciples to forsake him and follow Jesus.” **(Bruce R. McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Vol.1, p.251)**

### How did Jesus describe his cousin and forerunner?

“But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy

way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” (Matthew 11:9-11) “The phenomenon of prophecy is founded on the basic belief that God makes His Will known to chosen individuals in successive generations. A prophet is a charismatic individual endowed with the divine gift of both receiving and imparting the message of revelation. A prophet does not choose his profession but is chosen, often against his own will, as in the case of Jonah, to convey the word of God to the people regardless of whether they wish to hear it. The prophet, although conscious of being overwhelmed by the divine word and of being involved in an encounter with God, is still capable of reacting and responding, and may even engage God in dialogue.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **What has happened to the Jews’ perception of “revelation?”**

“A prime function of the prophet was to defend his people and to act as a mediator on their behalf. He constantly pleaded with Israel to seek God that they might live. He prayed that repentance might have the desired effect of invoking mercy. A prophet was not charged with religious innovation: his function was to clarify the teachings of the Bible. Moses was the ‘master of the prophets.’ No prophet after him succeeded as he did in penetrating the nature of the Divine.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) In the New Testament, John knew who the Savior was. Like all prophets, he bore witness of the Lord and desired to bring people to Him. For Judaism, “looking to God” and “revelation” are almost figurative and in modern times have become unexplainable. For this lesson, let’s review some previous quotes. “Revelation, the act by which the hidden, unknown God

shows himself to man. There is no specific term corresponding to ‘revelation’ in the Bible or in rabbinic Hebrew. God is said to ‘appear’ to the patriarchs and prophets, and the appearances are described by a series of anthropomorphic (i.e., human) expressions and concrete images. Sometimes God manifests Himself ‘in a vision’ or ‘in a dream’ or he appears through the mediation of an angel. However, the Bible emphasizes that no direct, sensory perception of God is possible. Thus, various phrases are used when describing appearances of the Divine, for example *kavod* (‘glory’) or *shekhinah* (. . . ‘Divine Presence’) or *davar* (‘word’ of God).” “The individuality of the prophet is never affected. No two prophets prophesied in the same style. God speaks to the prophet and the prophet in turn speaks out.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **How do Jews treat the scroll or books of the Bible?**

With a lack of present-day revelation, the Jews have turned to revere the scripture scrolls in a more fastidious manner. To the Jews, the scriptures, the words of God, are so special they 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. It is often that I have noticed the reverence in knocking, then parting the curtain in order to open the “ark” containing the scriptures, the “word” of God, even the “Divine Presence” as they call it. 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 oddities because they might mean something that might be understood better at a later time.

### **When are the scriptures read in Jewish public gatherings?"**

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, and related parts of the *Neviim*, the prophets, are read. Every congregation, whether Orthodox, Conservative or Reform reads the same *Torah* and other sections 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*, the Prophet's 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 B.C., the foreign occupying government of the Greeks and Syrians forbade the Jews to read the Torah, so they began reading the Psalms, and parts of the *Ketuvim*, instead. Nowadays, selected Psalms and other writings of the Old Testament constitute a regular part of daily Jewish reading. As stated in a previous lesson, 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. By the way, when Jesus lived, apparently the Jews read the "Law and the Prophets" just once a week. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." (Luke 4:16)

### **How can I better understand the terms "grace" and "grace to grace?"**

The Prophets of God progressed to know God and His creations. From grace to grace, unknowing to a fullness of understanding, they grew to accomplish their callings. Even Moses said, "For behold, I could not look upon God, except his glory should come upon me, and I were transfigured before him." (Moses 1:14) Moses increased grace to grace, "And behold, the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face." (Moses 1:31) And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven, and this earth; write the words which I speak. I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things; yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest." (Moses 2:1) The promise stands even for us; ". . . Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18)

### **How important is "teaching the children?"**

Let's take a look at Jewish culture as it applies to family, family leadership, children and their responsibilities and reverence for each other. One of the most consistent rituals includes, at the Sabbath's beginning, a weekly pouring of "kosher wine" (or juice) by the eldest male in the family. He will say a blessing, take a

sip of the wine and then each family member partakes thereafter. Another part of the Sabbath's beginning is to bless a piece of broken bread. Again, the eldest male partakes first, and the rest of the family partakes thereafter. "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward' (Psalm 127:3). In Jewish tradition, the central purpose of marriage is to have children. Children are considered a great blessing; they are the hope and the promise of continuing life. "Responsibilities of a man, a woman and of children are stated in the scriptures, Talmudic and oral traditions. In many religious Jewish families, the father blesses his wife and children on a weekly basis. Women and children are to be cherished and blessed. They have different responsibilities, yet they should share an honorable status without preference." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) As Judaism spread without the guidance of living prophets, some discrimination became evident. "The woman's legal status, as defined in the Bible, is generally the same as that of man, as is her moral responsibility but certain laws do discriminate both for and against her. For example, special attention was paid to injury suffered by a pregnant woman, and the conditions applicable to a woman sold into slavery were far better than those of a male slave. The owner was expected to marry her himself or have one of his sons marry her and he had to treat her as a daughter-in-law." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **What is the place for a woman in Jewish Life?**

The strong Jewish tradition about women places them on a lofty pedestal. "It is said that a man without a wife lives without joy, blessing and good, and that a man should love his wife as himself and respect her more than himself. Women have greater faith than men and greater powers of discernment. The *Torah*, the greatest joy of the rabbis, is frequently pictured as a

woman and is represented as God's daughter and Israel's bride. "In modern Israel, the Declaration of Independence ensures complete equality of political and social rights to all its inhabitants, regardless of religion, race, or sex, but the real Magna Carta of the Israeli woman was the Women's Equal Rights Law of 1951, giving women equal legal status with men. The only field of law in which there remains a degree of discrimination against women is that of personal status. Matters of marriage and divorce come within the exclusive jurisdiction of the religious courts and thus, for example, a divorce must be given by the husband to the wife. On the other hand, in accordance with the *halakhah* (Jewish law), children take the national identity of their mother and not that of their father." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **How similar are the concepts of raising children in Jewish and Latter-day Saint homes?**

Jewish tradition places a strong responsibility on the husband and father. Further details of Jewish custom in the family parallel the Latter-day Saints' lifestyle. "The father's duty is to provide for his children, to give them a proper education, to teach them a trade, and to prepare them for marriage. Some authorities require that the father teach his son to swim. The father is morally accountable for the behavior and the sins of his children until they reach the age of their own responsibility—bat mitzvah at the age of 12 for girls, and bar mitzvah at the age of 13 for boys. The father retains responsibility in legal matters for his son until the age of 20 and for his daughter until she marries." "Great emphasis is placed on the importance of education and religious training, which should begin early in the home. The mother's role is vital since she is the one who creates the home atmosphere in which basic values are fostered and transmitted. She trains her sons and daughters in *mitzvot*



(commandments/blessings) and prepares them for formal education. The rabbis advised parents to be loving but firm in the upbringing of their children and warned against showing favoritism.”

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What are the responsibilities of parents and children?**

“In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue.” “Children are obliged to treat their parents with honor and respect. Children must provide dependent parents with food, clothing and personal attention if it is necessary. This obligation is removed from a daughter when she marries. “Judaism considers the establishment of a family a holy task. Children are a gift from God and childlessness the greatest misfortune that could befall a marriage. The virtues of domestic bliss have been frequently extolled by the rabbis, and the close knit Jewish family, where the home has been the center of religious practice and ceremony, has greatly helped the survival of Judaism and preserved the moral integrity of the Jews.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) Although there are many variances in Jewish religious interpretations and worship expressions, the family is always the central holding point. The sanctity of family is why Jews—even unobservant—always want to remain Jews. Latter-day Saints share that perspective. Even to His children that wander away from God and the path leading to salvation, He is still “Father” in Heaven.

### **How do I know that a servant of God is a friend of God?**

“Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?” (2 [Chronicles 20:7](#)) “But thou, Israel, art my

servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.” ([Isaiah 41:8](#)) “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.](#)) The monotheism mentioned above grew out of mistaking that the Godhead is characterized by “oneness” in purpose and glory, a glorious friendship!

### **What can I learn about friendship and being a friend?**

A wise Levite told me in Jerusalem, “Being friendly is easy, being a friend is rare.” Jesus used the term friends about those who misunderstood him. “And then shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet? Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.” ([Zechariah 13:6, Doctrine and Covenants 45:51-52](#)) “Greater love hath no man than

this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:13-15) The Old Testament identifies friendship as, “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17) “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24)

### **How can I remind myself to pray always – in my incomings and outgoings?**

For the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the “law” should be written in their hearts, a spiritually led guidance. For the Jews, the “law” is a list of do’s and don’ts. To facilitate adherence to the tenant that Godly things should constantly be sought after, the Jews have some traditional symbols which “keep God’s word in front of them” at all times. Jews remind themselves of God’s words by binding leather phylacteries (*Tfillin*) on the arm and forehead as well as on all Jewish doorposts (*Mezuzah*). These are a summary of words in the *Mezuzah* and in the *Tfillin*: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on

thy gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) “There should be a *mezuzah* at the entrance to every home and on the doorpost of every living room within the home—this of course excludes lavatories, bathrooms, storerooms and stables. It is also customary to place *mezuzot* at the entrances to synagogues and public buildings, including all government offices in Israel. In Israel a *mezuzah* must be put up immediately when a house is occupied by a Jew—outside Israel after the householder has lived in the house for 30 days. If the house is later sold to Jews, the *mezuzot* must be left on the doorposts. Today the *mezuzah* represents one of Judaism’s most widely observed ceremonial commandments.” “The 12th century rabbinic authority, Maimonides, stresses that this commandment is to be observed purely from love of God, and that the *mezuzah* is not a good luck charm with power to ward off evil spirits. Many people, however, are accustomed to kiss the *mezuzah* or to touch it and then kiss the fingers when entering or leaving.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) This instruction is similar to the dedication of the Kirtland Temple and is a model for our home to be worthy for the Lord to come in and go out. “That your incomings may be in the name of the Lord, that your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord, that all your salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the Most High.” (Doctrine and Covenants 109:9)

### **What is the value in obtaining a knowledge of history, countries, kingdoms, laws of God and man?**

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.)” “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.' (**Encyclopedia Judaica, Jr.**) As a reminder, the first two verses of the Book of Mormon give us a key to true learning. The Prophet Nephi gave us the key to understanding the scriptures. We need the "learning of the Jews" along with the "knowledge of the mysteries of God." In this case, the "mysteries" are simply the subtle, God-given instructions known by the gift of the Holy Ghost. "For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round." (**1 Nephi 10:19**). As prophets have taught, the Messiah is through everything and around everything, after all, He is in all things. "He

that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which, it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things." (**Doctrine and Covenants 88:6-13**)