

September 20-26, 2021

Doctrine and Covenants 106–108

“TO HAVE THE HEAVENS OPENED”

Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 106. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, November 25, 1834. This revelation is directed to Warren A. Cowdery, an older brother of Oliver Cowdery. 1–3, Warren A. Cowdery is called as a local presiding officer; 4–5, The Second Coming will not overtake the children of light as a thief; 6–8, Great blessings follow faithful service in the Church.*

Doctrine and Covenants 107. Revelation on the priesthood, given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, about April 1835. Although this section was recorded in 1835, the historical records affirm that most of verses 60 through 100 incorporate a revelation given through Joseph Smith on November 11, 1831. This section was associated with the organization of the Quorum of the Twelve in February and March 1835. The Prophet likely delivered it in the presence of those who were preparing to depart May 3, 1835, on their first quorum mission. 1–6, There are two priesthoods: the Melchizedek and the Aaronic; 7–12, Those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood have power to officiate in all offices in the Church; 13–17, The bishopric presides over the Aaronic Priesthood, which administers in outward ordinances; 18–20, The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the keys of all spiritual blessings; the Aaronic Priesthood holds the keys of the ministering of angels; 21–38, The First Presidency, the Twelve, and the Seventy constitute the presiding quorums, whose decisions are to be made in unity and righteousness; 39–52, The patriarchal order is established from Adam to Noah; 53–57, Ancient Saints assembled at Adam-ondi-Ahman, and the Lord appeared to them; 58–67, The Twelve are to set the officers of the Church in order; 68–76, Bishops serve as common judges in Israel; 77–84, The First Presidency and the Twelve constitute the highest court in the Church; 85–100, Priesthood presidents govern their respective quorums.

Doctrine and Covenants 108. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, December 26, 1835. This section was received at the request of Lyman Sherman, who had previously been ordained a seventy and who had come to the Prophet with a request for a revelation to make known his duty. 1–3, Lyman Sherman forgiven of his sins; 4–5, He is to be numbered with the leading elders of the Church; 6–8, He is called to preach the gospel and strengthen his brethren.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What does the term “come as a thief in the night” mean?

“For yourselves

know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

(Thessalonians 5:2) Linguistically, “as a” infers “in the manner of,” in other words, the Lord will come in a manner of calmness, stillness, and quietness.

Knowing that and being a child of the light is being filled with brightness, joy and proclaiming the power of God, yet calmly and with reverent enthusiasm. “Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God,

see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.” **(Doctrine and Covenants 4:2)**

How am I to understand the lines of Melchizedek and Aaronic?

The few biblical mentions of the name “Melchizedek,” have prompted the Jews to make numerous guesses as to the meaning. However, the bible verse clearly states; “The LORD hath sworn (a covenant) and will not repent (go back or return), Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” **(Psalm 110:4)** The Hebrew name Melchizedek “. . . is

composed from the two elements: *melekh(h)*, (king), and *şedeq* (righteousness), which . . . literally translates to “king of righteousness.” **(Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic)** According to Dead Sea Scrolls fragments, Melchizedek will proclaim the “Day of Atonement” “. . . and he will atone for the people . . . also will judge the peoples.” **(11Q13 (11QMelch) The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources p. 85 Fred L. Horton – 2005)** Atonement and judgement are the nature of the Son of God! The other priesthood line or use of “Aaronic” or “Levitical priests,” (*kohanim*,) are traditionally required by *Halakha* (Jewish law) to be of direct father/son descent from the biblical brother of Moses, Aaron. Clearly explaining the priesthood lines is latter-day revelation: “There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood. Why the first is called the Melchizedek Priesthood is because Melchizedek was such a great high priest. Before his day it was called *the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God*. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood. All other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this priesthood. But there are two divisions or grand heads—one is the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the other is the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood. The office of an elder comes under the priesthood of Melchizedek. The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things. The Presidency of the High Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, have a right to officiate in all

the offices in the church. **(Doctrine and Covenants 107:1-9)**

How does a covenant relate to priesthood?

The Priesthoods given anciently and 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 guarantee—that they will receive a new “covenant.” This could 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 that was broken. “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)**

How is the order of the Lord administered?

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.” The organization and growth of the Church in the Meridian of Times parallels the organization of the true religion in ancient and modern times. These were and are leaders, in their respective times, who had authority from God to bring light and truth to the people. In the scriptures, the term “judge” has an ecclesiastical connection. Biblically, they were the leading elders of the people. Latter-day Saints have “Elders” (Apostles) who are the “Judges of Israel.” Part of their responsibility is to share the gospel. Hence those brothers that represent the Twelve were called “Elders.”

How is age a consideration of being a judge?

“Because of the experience of the aged, old age and wisdom are sometimes regarded as going together. Thus, throughout the Bible and Talmud, the word ‘elder’ means judge, leader, or sage. On the other hand, the Book of Job also stresses that there are young men who are wiser than old men. “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’ (**Deuteronomy 1:13**). They were charged to ‘hear the causes between your brethren and judge righteously between a man and his brother and the stranger,’ not to be partial in judgment but to ‘hear the small and the great alike, fear no man, for judgment is God’s’ (**Deuteronomy 1:16–17**). A judge was forbidden to accept any gift from a person being tried; no matter how

disinterested he considered his own judgments, since ‘bribes blind the eyes of the righteous . . .’ “Even though the court for trying monetary cases consisted of the simple (*hediyot*) judges, a single expert (*mumheh*) judge, renowned for his judicial capability was sufficient. In the Talmud there are regulations about mistakes made by the court; under which circumstances the judges are required to reimburse a person wrongly made liable. For monetary cases the judges were chosen by the parties involved; each side choosing one and those two together choosing the third. But judges were also appointed by the communities. In the State of Israel, the rabbinical court judges (*dayyanim*, the word *shofet* is used for secular court judges) are appointed by a special committee presided over by the chief rabbis which includes representatives of the Ministry of Justice.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The Latter-day Saints have an ecclesiastical legal system that includes “Judges in Israel.” They are the Branch Presidents, Bishops and the Stake Presidents. The modern Hebrew word for president is “*nasi*.” “In biblical use, *nasi* refers to a person of importance, a leader, a tribal ruler or a king. Under the Roman occupation of Erez Israel toward the end of the period of the second Temple, when there was no independent Jewish leadership, the term *nasi* was used by Jewish rulers to show their authority while not claiming kingship. “The title is best known for its reference to the presiding judge of the Sanhedrin (high court) although some sources claim the term was first applied to Judah *ha-Nasi* (the president) who was head of the *Sanhedrin* toward the end of the second century. The *nasi* presided over court sessions . . .” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How are these authorities chosen to maintain unity and righteousness?

It is worth repeating this insight given by an original member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Orson Pratt (1811-1881). “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 the Book of Mormon, No. 2* (1850), p.17)

What can I do to exercise the principle of unity and righteousness?

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22:32) "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James 5:20) And, when I've done all I can, I must remember: "For thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that

call upon thee." (Psalm 86:5) "For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." (Psalm 86:13) "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid." (Psalm 86:15-16) "The Mercy Seat is the cover of the Ark of the Covenant which was made out of solid gold. In the original Hebrew, this part of the Ark was called '*Kapporet*' which literally means 'covering'. The concept of 'covering' in Biblical Hebrew can be understood also in an abstract way as 'covering sins' – meaning 'to grant atonement'. Precisely as the English name for the holiest day in the Jewish calendar – 'Day of Atonement' which in Hebrew called '*Yom Kippur*.' *Yom Kippur* shares the same Hebrew root as the word '*Kapporet*.' Both of these Hebrew words are strongly connected – not just grammatically. The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the holiest place in the Temple – 'Holy of Holies.' which was strictly forbidden to enter except for by the High Priest and only on the holiest day in the Jewish calendar – 'Yom Kippur'". (<https://www.hebrewversity.com/what-is-the-connection-between-the-mercy-seat-and-yom-kippur-new>)