

JANUARY 6-12, 2025

Doctrine and Covenants 1

“HEARKEN, O YE PEOPLE”

Summary:

Doctrine and Covenants 1; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, during a special conference of elders of the Church, held at Hiram, Ohio, November 1, 1831. HC 1: 221—224. Many revelations had been received from the Lord prior to this time, and the compilation of these for publication in book form was one of the principal subjects passed upon at the conference. This section constitutes the Lord’s Preface to the doctrines, covenants, and commandments given in this dispensation. 1—7, The voice of warning is to all people; 8—16, Apostasy and wickedness precede the Second Coming; 17—23, Joseph Smith called to restore to earth the Lord’s truths and powers; 24—33, The Book of Mormon brought forth and true Church established; 34—36, Peace shall be taken from the earth; 37—39, Search these commandments.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What is the key to understanding—beyond the meaning of each word?

The young prophet

Nephi gave us a substantial key to understanding the scriptures. Note how subtly he teaches us through a ‘chiasmus’ (an order of words listed in one direction to a center thought and then listed in the other direction in reverse order).

learning of my father	(1)	I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father ; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God , therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days. Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. (1 Nephi 1:1-2)
highly favored of the Lord	(2)	
knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God	(2)	
learning of the Jews	(1)	

What is the center-point about?

The center point of his instruction is focusing us to our Savior – through the

gift he acknowledges, the knowledge of mysteries. A synonym for mysteries is the “subtle understanding” of God’s word. This is available through the Gift of the Holy Ghost. “For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries 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) “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) The center point testifies of the Lord Messiah.

So, what is the “sandwich?”

The center point – focusing on Christ – is sandwiched by “learning of my father” and “learning of the Jews.” This material suggests some ‘learning of the Jews’ to add insight to the study of the same religion and scriptures that Nephi brought from Israel. Other Jewish insights may simply help Latter-day Saints better understand Judah and thereby bring our two families closer together. It is necessary for the giver and the receiver to

relate and coordinate this information with the material provided in the scriptures.

How does the *Torah* apply to all people?

The basis of Jewish learning is based on the "*Torah*," that is the first five books of the "Old Testament." "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*, 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 *haftarah*, is a series of selections from the books of "*Nevi'im*" (the Prophets and their writings) of the Hebrew Bible that is publicly read in synagogue as part of Jewish religious practice. It may have started as a practice when Jews were forbidden to read the "Law" (*Torah*), Greek/Seleucid Empire Nowadays, the *Haftarah* reading follows the *Torah* reading on each Sabbath and on Jewish festivals and fast days.

How do the Doctrine and Covenants fit in with the *Torah*?

The Latter-day Saints' use of the Doctrine and Covenants is another part of LDS *Haftarah*. Literally, it is the reading of *Nevi'im*, the "Prophets," in the land of America—with their explanations and heavenly insights—based on revelation of eternal truths. The connection to the past prophets is that truth is consistent. The first verse of the Book of Mormon reveals this key of understanding God's will, "learning of the fathers." The Hebrew

word for "going back" is the same as "repent." The Doctrine and Covenants together with all the scriptures teach **Faith** in the Lord as taught by true learning of the fathers. That leads us to **Repent**, make the true covenant of **Baptism** and rewards us with the blessing of the **Gift of the Holy Ghost**. The last verse of Section One in the Doctrine and Covenants is that the ". . . truth abideth forever and ever." In Israel, a statement like, "the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion" conjures a picture of one of the stones in an arch angled to wedge the others in place. The center stone is equivalent to the center point. The center point in a chiasmas is the focusing on the Lord. Stones in a typical five stone Roman archway can be compared to the five "Standard Works (scriptures)" that Latter-day Saints use, the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. Every stone in the arch is necessary to have the advantage of the structure which holds a building in place as well as having the enjoyment of the beauty in something that holds itself together. How then can we connect the terms "cornerstone" and "capstone?" The Doctrine and Covenants are often called the "capstone" of the restoration in these "last days."

How important is the word "stone" in the scriptures?

It is interesting to note that the metaphor of a building was used in ancient times to denote the structure and stability of the Lord's organization in the "last days." "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." (**Psalms 118:22**) "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." (**Isaiah 28:16**) "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone

which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (Matthew 21:42) "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22)

What is a building that has a chief cornerstone?

Since this is a visual image, picture a building fitly framed with all parts of it functioning and without apparent holes or breaks in it. From a western building style architectural view, a cornerstone really cannot be removed, and the building still remain "fitly framed." Therefore, in the scriptures, picture an eastern building style, maybe a pyramid. Its chief cornerstone is the capstone. It can be removed, and the building is still "fitly framed." A United States' one-dollar bill

has that image with the top, cap or chief cornerstone shown with rays beaming forth from an all-seeing eye. The pyramid also has twelve blocks as its foundation.

How can I use the "building" image as a life inspiration?

The imagery continues into the family. As the children start their own family, the parents are "removed" from their former role yet still maintain a spiritual influence through their previous teaching and subsequent prayers and spiritual influence on their children. The unity of the family can still be imaged as "fitly framed." As with any home, protection from unwarranted outside influence is necessary. Security systems or defensive armor are part of the proper stewardship of the family's leaders. Sustaining the Lord as the Chief Cornerstone and following His instructions to defend ourselves with His words in these latter days we can protect our families inside or outside of the home. As exciting as it is to know that heaven is open again, every "new" word from the Lord, as given in modern times, has a basis, a precedent, in the past. That gives an additional meaning to the term "The New and Everlasting Covenant."