

Doctrine and Covenants 49–50

“THAT WHICH IS OF GOD IS LIGHT”

Summary:

Doctrine and Covenants 49. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and Leman Copley, at Kirtland, Ohio, May 7, 1831. Leman Copley had embraced the gospel but still held to some of the teachings of the Shakers (United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing), to which he had formerly belonged. Some of the beliefs of the Shakers were that Christ’s Second Coming had already occurred and that He had appeared in the form of a woman, Ann Lee. They did not consider baptism by water essential. They rejected marriage and believed in a life of total celibacy. Some Shakers also forbade the eating of meat. In prefacing this revelation, Joseph Smith’s history states, “In order to have [a] more perfect understanding on the subject, I inquired of the Lord, and received the following.” The revelation refutes some of the basic concepts of the Shaker group. The aforementioned brethren took a copy of the revelation to the Shaker community (near Cleveland, Ohio) and read it to them in its entirety, but it was rejected.

1–7, The day and hour of Christ’s coming will remain unknown until He comes;

8–14, Men must repent, believe the gospel, and obey the ordinances to gain salvation;

15–16, Marriage is ordained of God;

17–21, The eating of meat is approved;

22–28, Zion will flourish and the Lamanites blossom as the rose before the Second Coming.

Doctrine and Covenants 50. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, May 9, 1831. Joseph Smith’s history states that some of the elders did not understand the manifestations of different spirits abroad in the earth and that this revelation was given in response to his special inquiry on the matter. So-called spiritual phenomena were not uncommon among the members, some of whom claimed to be receiving visions and revelations.

1–5, Many false spirits are abroad in the earth;

6–9, Wo unto the hypocrites and those who are cut off from the Church;

10–14, Elders are to preach the gospel by the Spirit;

15–22, Both preachers and hearers need to be enlightened by the Spirit;

23–25, That which doth not edify is not of God;

26–28, The faithful are possessors of all things;

29–36, The prayers of the purified are answered;

37–46, Christ is the Good Shepherd and the Stone of Israel.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How is eternal marriage a profound covenant for the House of Israel?

One of the greatest rituals and covenants that Jews maintain is that of marriage and, subsequently, family life. Notice in the following excerpts (and more in-depth discussion in the lessons of 17–30, November 2025, Doctrine and Covenant Sections 132–133) the similarities of LDS practices to the Jewish practices that obviously come from ancient times. The ritual of marriage in Judaism is considered without end; there is no statement, “Until death do you part.” The canopy or *Huppah* is reflective of the ancient temple. In some cases, the *Huppah* is a *Tallith*,

the garment that reminds a Jew of the covenants and commandments he and she have bound to themselves. Another *Tallit* is placed over the heads of the bride and groom and their first intimacy is the kiss under the *Tallit*. A *Minyan* or “prayer circle” is formed at the marriage. Two witnesses are also present. As in all religious ceremonies, men are separated from women on two sides of the room or hall. Head covering is also required. Blessings are given to the bride and groom. Where polygamy was once accepted, it later was rescinded. “In Jewish teaching, marriage is considered the ideal human state and a basic social institution established by God at the time of Creation. Both the Bible and the

rabbis reject celibacy as unnatural and harmful to the human personality, and insist upon the need for marriage, not only for purposes of procreation, but also for companionship and human self-fulfillment: 'It is not good that man be alone; I will make a help meet for him' (**Genesis 2:15**) and 'He who has no wife is not a proper man; he lives without joy, blessing and goodness.' The successful marriage in the eyes of the prophets and the rabbis was the most perfect symbol of a meaningful and purposeful relationship and was taken by them as the closest approximation to the idealized relationship between God and Israel, and between Israel and the *Torah*. The laws of marriage and the customs and practices of the marriage ceremony which developed over the generations are numerous and varied, but all take as their goal the glorification of marriage as a sanctified state and the desire to facilitate to the greatest possible extent the maintenance of a successful and harmonious marriage." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How ancient is God's Law of Health?

In the Garden of Eden, there was a law of health – things you should and should not eat. The Lord gave the Children of Israel a code of healthiness. It could be called a "Word of Wisdom." The Jews call it the correct, proper or fit way of living, the *Kashrut*, or being *Kosher*. The word *Kosher* is also used as meaning correct. The *Kashrut* has been modified throughout the ages, yet some basics still remain as was given at Mount Sinai. In this modern age, there are some Jews who will not eat meat because there are no sacrifices, and the meat cannot be prepared in the correct biblical way. Others will only eat meat that is *Kosher*, that is, slaughtered in the way sacrifices were done, and only eating the parts of the animal as prescribed in the Law of Moses. It may be very enlightening to know the modern explanation of *Kashrut*, so it will be included for your reference in the August 18-24, 2025, Lesson, Doctrine and Covenants 89–92. "The dietary laws affect a Jew every day of his life and aim to ensure that the holiness of the Jewish nation will be preserved through the consumption of food which is fit and proper." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Clearly, the biblical

account of the Prophet Daniel shows his humble dedication to the Lord's principles of proper living. His unswerving obedience to the "Word of Wisdom" is an example for many people today who are committed to keeping the Lord's health code.

How are preachers and hearers to be enlightened or edified by the Spirit?

My father's example of life gave me an understanding that is illustrated by the phrase, "Never let what you cannot do get in the way of what you can do." I'll add to that, "Never let what you do not know get in the way of what you do know." Satan would have you become confused and deceived because you may not know the answers to every question. It is better to hold fast to the truths that have already built part of a solid wall of security. The late Elder Theodore M. Burton (1907-1989) once told me a story which I see around me in Israel. The many natural terraces are constantly being reinforced by rock walls made by the farmers clearing their hillside farms. Elder Burton relates that a farmer was placing the rocks in his "hedge" each one placed on top of or next to another. Somehow they fit and supported themselves until at one location the rocks were just misfit. They were either too large or too small. So, the farmers left a gap and continued. At the end of his "hedge" or fence, there were some extra stones left over. The farmer took them back to the gap and the left-overs were a perfect fit. It is similar to our gospel study. There are times that we just don't understand . . . so, we should continue, leaving a gap. With patience and time there comes a moment when we'll discover the extra "rocks" that will fill the gap. "In biblical times, Jerusalem was surrounded by thick, green forests of almond, olive and pine trees. But in the course of numerous wars and settlements, much of this lush greenery was destroyed and the soil left to dry out in the summer sun and wash away in the heavy winter rains. From earliest times, farmers have therefore been forced to terrace the ground and build stone fences along the slopes to hold back the soil. This stone terracing is still in evidence all along the Jerusalem landscape." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Is it possible that pride creates some of

those gaps in our rock walls? Enlightenment or being edified is an uplifting or upbuilding understanding or awareness that comes from a sudden or sometimes, a gradual realization process.

How does enlightenment replace pride?

The name of the 'Tower of Babel,' the unfinished tower, was called Babel, because God mixed up (Hebrew *balal*) man's language. They "babbled." "According to some modern commentators, the building of the tower was an example of man's extreme pride in his own ability. The building became such an obsession that, according to the *Midrash*, when a builder fell off the tower to his death, the other builders paid no attention, but when a brick fell, they would cry: 'When shall another come in its place?' According to this interpretation, every generation has its own Tower of Babel, when it begins to idolize its technology. The moral of the story is thus as applicable today as it was thousands of years ago." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) The tower people wanted to 'make a name' for themselves rather than take the 'name of God' upon them. The name of God, "*Jehovah*," (English spelling) is unmentionable in Hebrew. It means "I AM." That expression is not even used in modern Hebrew. Yet, Moses asked the Lord's name: "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (*Exodus 3:13-14*) The practice of avoiding the use of "I am" in Hebrew seems to suggest a way to reduce pride. Ancient Joseph overcame his "pride" and served his brothers forgivingly (at first without even identifying himself). He thereby established a pattern for a Latter-day Joseph, who for the time being is keeping his identity from Judah and should avoid all forms of pride as he serves his family forgivingly.

Am I proud, or pleased?

In the Old Testament, Elisha's example was that he was a servant of God. He even refused

payment for healing Syria's highest-ranking officer in the Land of Israel at that time. The complication was that the Children of Israel strongly objected to the Syrian "occupying-forces." The prophet was probably teaching the same principle that Jesus taught and that has been revealed again in our day. Latter-day Saints have been given special counsel. In 1989, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899-1994) said, "Pride is ugly." (*Conference Report, April 1989, 3; or Ensign May 1989, 4-7*) There is no justifiable use of the words pride or proud. Apparently, every mention of pride in the scriptures is negative. As a replacement for the word pride or proud, let us consider the highest compliment and honor given as stated in the scriptures. "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (*Matthew 17:5*) In Hebrew, the root meaning for pride is actually "excellence." Who are we to call ourselves, "excellent?" After I had spoken on this subject in a fireside, a couple named Brother and Sister Pride, came to me and said that they were now considering changing their names to Brother and Sister "Pleased!"

Who is my Shepherd-Stone?

The statement: "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 the 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." 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." **(Psalm 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)** 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." The illustration on a US Dollar-bill has a pyramid with its top corner depicted separated, yet streaming light. It is the Eastern metaphor of the chief corner stone! "But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)" **(Genesis 49:24)**