

# Doctrine and Covenants 67–70

“WORTH . . . RICHES OF THE WHOLE EARTH”

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**Summary:**

*Doctrine and Covenants 67. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, early November 1831. The occasion was that of a special conference, and the publication of the revelations already received from the Lord through the Prophet was considered and acted upon (see the heading to section 1). William W. Phelps had recently established the Church printing press in Independence, Missouri. The conference decided to publish the revelations in the Book of Commandments and to print 10,000 copies (which because of unforeseen difficulties was later reduced to 3,000 copies). Many of the brethren bore solemn testimony that the revelations then compiled for publication were verily true, as was witnessed by the Holy Ghost shed forth upon them. Joseph Smith’s history records that after the revelation known as section 1 had been received, some conversation was had concerning the language used in the revelations. The present revelation followed.*

*1–3, The Lord hears the prayers of and watches over His elders;*

*4–9, He challenges the wisest person to duplicate the least of His revelations;*

*10–14, Faithful elders will be quickened by the Spirit and see the face of God.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 68. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, November 1, 1831, in response to prayer that the mind of the Lord be made known concerning Orson Hyde, Luke S. Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, and William E. McLellin. Although part of this revelation was directed toward these four men, much of the content pertains to the whole Church. This revelation was expanded under Joseph Smith’s direction when it was published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.*

*1–5, The words of the elders when moved upon by the Holy Ghost are scripture;*

*6–12, Elders are to preach and baptize, and signs will follow true believers;*

*13–24, The firstborn among the sons of Aaron may serve as the Presiding Bishop (that is, hold the keys of presidency as a bishop) under the direction of the First Presidency;*

*25–28, Parents are commanded to teach the gospel to their children;*

*29–35, The Saints are to observe the Sabbath, labor diligently, and pray.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 69. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, November 11, 1831. The compilation of revelations intended for early publication had been passed upon at the special conference of November 1–2. On November 3, the revelation herein appearing as section 133, later called the Appendix, was added. Oliver Cowdery had previously been appointed to carry the manuscript of the compiled revelations and commandments to Independence, Missouri, for printing. He was also to take with him money that had been contributed for the building up of the Church in Missouri. This revelation instructs John Whitmer to accompany Oliver Cowdery and also directs Whitmer to travel and collect historical material in his calling as Church historian and recorder.*

*1–2, John Whitmer is to accompany Oliver Cowdery to Missouri;*

*3–8, He is also to preach and to collect, record, and write historical data.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 70. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, November 12, 1831. The Prophet’s history states that four special conferences were held from the 1st to the 12th of November, inclusive. In the last of these assemblies, the great importance of the revelations that would later be published as the Book of Commandments and then the Doctrine and Covenants was considered. This revelation was given after the conference voted that the revelations were “worth to the Church the riches of the whole Earth.” Joseph Smith’s history*

*refers to the revelations as “the foundation of the Church in these last days, and a benefit to the world, showing that the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of our Savior are again entrusted to man.”*

*1–5, Stewards are appointed to publish the revelations;*

*6–13, Those who labor in spiritual things are worthy of their hire;*

*14–18, The Saints should be equal in temporal things.*

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### **Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights**

#### **What makes history so valuable in the restoration?**

History is always  
prejudiced, prophecy

is not . . . it hasn’t happened yet! So, the scripture’s history is accurate because it was chosen to teach us in the future.

“Verily I say unto you, blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fulness of my gospel, sent forth unto the children of men, that they might have life and be made partakers of the glories which are to be revealed in the last days, as it was written by the prophets and apostles in days of old.” (**Doctrine and Covenants 66:2**)

#### **What determines our fulfillment of prophecy?**

Our God-given gift to fulfill prophecy includes: “Think and it shall be.” There is depth in the counsel of President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Russel M. Nelson (1924-) in urging us to “Think Celestial!” The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805-1844) was teaching the same principle understanding that faith is thinking about things you want to happen (faith in the Lord is thinking about the things He wants to happen!) and fear is thinking about the things you don’t want to happen. “Ye endeavored to believe that ye should receive the blessing which was offered unto you; but behold, verily I say unto you there were fears in your hearts, and verily this is the reason that ye did not receive. And now I, the Lord, give unto you a testimony of the truth of these commandments which are lying before you. Your eyes have been upon my

servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and his language you have known, and his imperfections you have known; and you have sought in your hearts knowledge that you might express beyond his language; this you also know. Now, seek ye out of the Book of Commandments, For ye know that there is no unrighteousness in them, and that which is righteous cometh down from above, from the Father of lights.” (**Doctrine and Covenants 66:3-9**)

#### **Who are some of the people that were able to see God?**

“And Jacob called the name of the place *Peniel*: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” (**Genesis 32:30**) “And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.” (**Exodus 33:11**) “And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood. And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;” (**Ether 12:38–39**) “And from that time forth Enoch began to prophesy, saying unto the people, that: As I was journeying, and stood upon the place Mahujah, and cried unto the Lord, there came a voice out of heaven, saying—Turn ye, and get ye upon the mount Simeon. And it came to

pass that I turned and went up on the mount; and as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory; And I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face, and he talked with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face; and he said unto me: Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations." (Moses 7:2–4) "Thus I, Abraham, talked with the Lord, face to face, as one man talketh with another; and he told me of the works which his hands had made;" (Abraham 3:11) "After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—

*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*  
(Joseph Smith—History 1:15–17)

### **How can priesthood make such a mighty change in people?**

What physical attribute would a “mighty change” have on a person? That might have been explained by the discovery that certain men among Jewish families have a genetic imprint that identifies them not only as part of the original people of Israel, but specifically those who once carried priesthood responsibilities. The following article appeared in the Jerusalem Post as well as the New York Times. “In an unusual marriage of science and religion, researchers have found biological evidence in support of an ancient belief: certain Jewish men, thought to be descendants of the first high priest, Aaron, the older brother of Moses, share distinctive genetic traits, suggesting that they indeed members of a single lineage that has endured for thousands of years. The men are known as Jewish priests, a designation that since the time of Aaron 3,300 years ago has been passed down through the generations, exclusively from fathers to sons. The only way to become a priest is to be born the son of one. They differ from rabbis, though a priest may choose to become a rabbi. Historically, certain blessings and rituals could be performed only by priests, and some congregations today still follow that tradition. Many priests have the surname Cohen or Kohen, which in Hebrew means priest, or related names like Kahn or Kahane. Those with other surnames generally have the words ‘*ha’kohen*,’ for ‘the priest’ inscribed on their gravestones, sometimes with an image of hands raised in a characteristic gesture of blessing. Even in families where priests no longer perform the traditional religious duties, knowledge of the heritage is often preserved.”

### **Lineage stems from the mother, what derives from the father?**

"It was the patrilineal nature of Jewish priesthood that piqued the curiosity of a research team from Israel, England, Canada and the United States. Knowing that another bit of a man's identity is also passed strictly from father to son -- namely, the Y chromosome, which carries the gene for maleness -- they set out to determine whether that chromosome might carry special features that would link the priests to each other and set them apart from other men, confirming the priests' unique paternal lineage. 'I think anybody who knows the biblical story about Aaron and this tradition of the priesthood going from father to son, and is aware that the Y chromosome is inherited in the same way, would think of this question,' said Dr. Michael Hammer, a geneticist at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and an author of a report about the priests in the current issue of the journal *Nature*. A unique aspect of the Y chromosome that lends itself to this sort of research is that the Y does not swap stretches of DNA with other chromosomes. Changes that occur in the Y tend to persist in a lineage over time, and, Dr. Hammer said, 'We can use that to interpret historical events.' In a study published in 1995, he and his colleagues used segments of the chromosome to suggest that all men living today can be traced back to a common ancestor 188,000 years ago. The subjects of the current study were 188 Jewish men from Israel, North America and England. The researchers did not rely on surnames to identify priests, but instead asked the men if they had been told they were priests. Sixty-eight had, and the rest identified themselves as 'Israelites,' a term used to describe laymen. (Men who said they were Levites, members of a different priesthood, were omitted from the study.) The researchers obtained Y chromosomes by extracting them from

cell samples scraped from the men's mouths. They studied two sites, or markers -- known variable regions of DNA -- to find out whether the priests and Israelites differed. They did. Only 1.5 percent of the priests, as opposed to 18.4 percent of the laymen, had the first marker. The other marker, which could appear in five different forms, tended to occur most often in one version in the priests. Fifty-four percent of the priests had this version and 33 percent of the others had it. 'The simplest, most straightforward explanation is that these men have the Y chromosome of Aaron,' said Dr. Karl Skorecki, a coauthor of the report who conducts genetic research at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, in Haifa. 'The study suggests that a 3,000-year-old oral tradition was correct, or had a biological counterpart.' There are at least 350,000 priests around the world today with that same chromosome, he and his colleagues estimate, about 5 percent of the Jewish male population. They are all related, Dr. Hammer said, and could be considered distant cousins on their fathers' side. 'It's a beautiful example of how father-to-son transmission of two things, one genetic and one cultural, gives you the same picture,' Dr. Hammer said."

### **How might Jews view two priesthoods?**

"The study also supports the idea that the priesthood was established before the world Jewish population split into two major groups 1,000 years ago, as a result of migrations. The marker findings in the priests were similar in Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, indicating that the priesthood antedated the division. Asked to comment on the study, Dr. James Lupski, a medical geneticist at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, said: 'It's amazing to think how you can use these technologies to investigate history and evolution. They took a very interesting

approach that will certainly be useful for studying the Y chromosome. And a report like this is going to stimulate interest, stimulate other groups around the world to confirm it in a different way.' Dr. Hammer said he did not know whether the chromosome testing used in the study would be of interest to anyone other than scientists. But, he said, 'I do know someone named Cohen who said he'd be interested, in having the test, just to find out if he was really a priest.' At this point, the test could suggest that a man was a priest, but not prove it. It could, however, rule out the possibility with a high degree of certainty. 'It could say your DNA is not consistent with patrilineal descent from a common ancestor, Aaron,' Dr. Skorecki said. 'Whether the religious community would accept that as grounds for exclusion is not an issue I'd want to get into. It's for the rabbis to debate.' Rabbi Aaron Panken, of the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion in Manhattan, said: 'There's a lot of danger in this for religious fanatics to go off in different directions. It could become a tool for fundamentalists to try to weed out who is not a Cohen, and that would be troublesome.' In addition, Rabbi Panken said, because priests were traditionally banned from marrying divorced women, he could imagine fundamentalist groups demanding DNA testing before permitting any man to marry a divorced woman, to make sure the man was not a priest. 'It would also concern me if we began to look backwards,' he said, 'romanticizing the hereditary model of priestly leadership. Do we want a hereditary leadership pattern in the Jewish community? We haven't had that in 2,000 years.'" (Denise Grady, *The New York Times*, Tuesday, January 7, 1997)

### **"A mighty change," physical, spiritual or both?**

Now, combine the ability to make a genetic identification with the mighty

spiritual change that Alma speaks of (Alma 5-7) and wonder how mighty it is. Does it change you completely, "whole- istically?" How exciting it would be for the same genetic study to be made on Latter-day Saints who have been given the priesthood. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints claim a blood descendency from the biblical tribes of Israel and function in restored priestly Temple rites. "We are the chosen people, the elect of God, those in whose veins flows believing blood. Abraham is our father. We are the children of the prophets and have been born in the house of Israel. Isaac and Jacob are our forebears. We are the children of the covenant God made with Abraham, that Abraham's seed should have the right to the gospel and the priesthood and eternal life. There is no blessing ever offered to the ancients that is not ours to obtain. 'If God be for us who can be against us! Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' (Romans 8:31, 33)." (Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p.40) The latter-day Temples hold the sacred secrets of what was, what is and what will be. Could part of the secret of the mighty change be seen in LDS genetics, in that our blood would be changed - cleansed? "Our work is to . . . to build more temples; to free ourselves from the blood and sins of this generation; to keep the commandments; to stand in holy places; to remain on the highway the Lord has cast up whereon gathered Israel may march to their Millennial Zion. Our work is to prepare a people for the Second Coming. Temples must be built in Old Jerusalem and in the New Jerusalem. And when all things are accomplished, the Great Jehovah will say the work is done. Until then we have no choice but to use our means, talents, and time in the building up of the Lord's work on earth and the establishment of Zion." (Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p.577)



## What Are the Ten Commandments?

The 10 Commandments (*Aseret Hadibrot*, “The Ten Statements,” in Hebrew) were communicated by God to the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, 50 days after the Exodus from Egypt. The event is known as the “Giving of the *Torah*,” an extra High-Day Sabbath called *Shavuot* or *Pentecost*. The Jews portray that is when God then carved the Ten Commandments onto two tablets of stone, which he gave to Moses. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teach that Moses smashed those tablets, the “Higher Law,” and then caused a carving of a “Lesser Law,” the Ten Commandments, onto a second set of tablets, which were subsequently placed in the Ark of the Covenant. Note that the day the Gift of the Holy Ghost (Higher Law) was given in New Testament times was the same *Shavuot* holiday commemorating the giving of the Ten Commandments (Lesser Law). Jewish commentary says that the Ten Commandments are not the entirety of God’s instructions for His people (there are 613 commandments). However, they contain within them the kernel from which the others emerge. The most well-known of these laws are the Ten Commandments. The *Torah* contains a total of 613 commandments or *mitzvot*, covering many aspects of daily life, including family, personal hygiene and diet. There are 365 “do not” commandments and 248 “do”

commandments. However, of the entire 613, 270 of them cannot be kept by the Jews at the present time because those laws deal with temple functions. The *Torah*-following Jews are awaiting the restoration of the priesthood and include a plea to restore temple worship in every prayer at people’s graves, as well as before and after every meal (at a four-cornered table characterizing a temple altar). “The Ten Commandments are read publicly three times a year, twice when it comes up in the weekly *Torah* reading (in the portions of *Yitro* (named after Jethro) and *Va’etchanan* (I entreated), and once again on the first day of the holiday of *Shavuot*. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson (1902-1994), of righteous memory, encouraged every single Jewish person, from babies to senior citizens, to be present at the reading on Shavuot, reliving the original giving of the Torah at Sinai. When the Ten Commandments are read in the synagogue, they are sung in a special tune known as *taam elyon* (“upper inflection”), thus named because the cantillation marks used to guide the reader are found above the words, as opposed to an ordinary *taam*, where marks are also found below the text.” See: ([https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2896/jewish/What-Are-the-Ten-Commandments.htm#:~:text=The%2010%20Commandments%20\(or%20Aseret,the%20Giving%20of%20the%20Torah\).](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2896/jewish/What-Are-the-Ten-Commandments.htm#:~:text=The%2010%20Commandments%20(or%20Aseret,the%20Giving%20of%20the%20Torah).))