

## **D&C#05 "This Is the Spirit of Revelation"**

Outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. What is Revelation?
- III. Our Need for Personal Revelation
- III. Necessary Steps for us to Receive Revelation
- IV. Conclusions

### **I. Introduction**

Several years ago, a friend of mine who is computer savvy, received a call from an elderly sister. She had just purchased her first home computer. The store had delivered and set it up, while she was busy doing household chores. When the computer was in place, she signed the necessary papers, and they left. She sat down at her new computer, complete with monitor, keyboard, and an object to the side with its connecting cord, she later learned was called a "mouse." She took her seat and proceeded to push buttons in hopes of making it work. After almost an hour passed, with no success, she, in frustration, called my friend for his expert assistance. After a few brief moments trying to diagnose the problem over the phone, my friend made a visit to her home.

He sat in front of the computer and tried the switches and nothing happened. The woman, with increased frustration, wondered if maybe she had just made a big mistake. My friend said, "Let me see if everything is correctly connected." He got down from his chair, and while on floor, began to check out the numerous cords and their various connections. Just then the woman said, with both excitement and relief, "A light just came on the screen! What did you do?" He said, "I plugged in the electric cord." They both had a good laugh.

Obtaining personal revelation for many is similar to our sister's introduction into the world of computers. For some it may seem too complicated, even impossible. For others, they endeavor to get all the cords connected, and even when they do, the light still doesn't come on. In their discouragement, they express words similar to those spoken by Laman and Lemuel to their brother, Nephi. He had asked them, "Have ye inquired of the Lord? And they said unto [him]: We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known

unto us" (1 Nephi 15:8-9). Laman and Lemuel had falsely concluded that God does not speak to man, or at least not to them. Hopefully, as we proceed with this lesson and the next, you will gain some insight regarding the meaning of revelation, its importance, the steps necessary to obtain revelation, and some helpful suggestions when the light doesn't come on.

## **II. What is Revelation?**

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"As used in the gospel, 'revelation' signifies the making known of divine truth by communication from the heavens,' (*Articles of Faith*, pp. 296-313.)" (*Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition], 643).

Richard O. Cowan and Craig K. Manscill state,

**Revelation.** Communication from God to man, just as PRAYER is communication from us to Him... [While revelation has] come by various means [including] personal visitations...visions...[it] mostly comes directly from the HOLY GHOST to the PROPHET. This is also the means by which we may--and should--receive divine communication in answer to our prayers. The 'spirit of revelation' is when the Holy Ghost speaks to a person in both the mind and the heart (D&C 6:2-3)." (*The A to Z Of The Doctrine And Covenants And Church History*. Sandy, Utah: Leatherwood Press, 2008, 306-307).

Beginning in the Garden of Eden, God has sought to communicate with his children. Prior to the Fall, He spoke to Adam and Eve in person. Following the Fall, He has spoken through His designated prophets by visits of angels, visions, dreams, or personal inspiration through the promptings of the Holy Ghost. He also encouraged His children to call upon Him, in the Name of Jesus Christ, through individual prayer that they may receive personal revelation.

God today, as in the past, makes His will known to mankind, through His designated prophets. It is a truism that when there is not a prophet upon the earth, the Church of Jesus Christ is not upon the earth. The Prophet Mormon bore his witness of this revealed truth.

Mormon 9:7-8

7 And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healing, nor speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues;

8 Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so, he does not understand them.

Revelation, prophecies, gifts of the spirit including healing, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues are all found when the Church of Jesus Christ is upon the earth.

The importance of prophets to receive revelation was taught by the Old Testament Prophet, Amos.

Amos 3:7

7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Despite God's efforts to give his children guidance and direction through his chosen prophets, similar to the actions of a kind and loving parent, his children often chose not to listen to his words, ignored his counsel, and even killed His prophets. Therefore, He warned his children that if they did not heed his counsel and directions, but instead continued to walk in forbidden paths, the time would come when He would withdraw his prophets from amongst them. It was again Amos who prophesied the downfall of Israel and the loss of the word of God.

Amos 8:11-12

11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

Following the death of the Lord's designated prophets and apostles, the light of the gospel grew dim and the dark

ages followed. The Church that Jesus Christ had organized, while He was upon the earth, and the authority to act in God's name, was not to be found. In its place, man began to walk by the light of their own intellect, mingled with scriptures, and established their own religion. While many were sincere, and well-meaning, they lacked the divine authority necessary to baptize and to act in God's name.

In 1820, after years of God's preparation among the people of the earth, the darkness was lifted. God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to a young boy named Joseph Smith. A new day had dawned. Once again, the heavens were opened. God had again spoken to man in these latter-days, through his appointed prophet.

Today, God does speak to his designed prophet regarding the establishment and direction of His Church on earth though divine revelation. He also continues to give guidance and directions to those who sincerely seek to know his will.

Joseph Smith states,

"God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them."

(*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, 149).

### **III. Our Need for Personal Revelation**

The LDS Bible Dictionary states,

"Divine revelation is one of the grandest concepts and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for without it, man could not know of the things of God...Continuous revelation from God to his saints [members]...makes possible daily guidance along true paths and leads the faithful soul to complete and eternal salvation in the celestial kingdom...Without revelation, all would be guesswork, darkness, and confusion" (Bible Dictionary: **Revelation**. *The Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 762).

Boyd K. Packer states,

"No one of us can survive in the world of today, much less in what it will soon become, without personal inspiration" ("Reverence Invites Revelation," in *Ensign*, November 1991, 23).

\*What must we prepare for today?

Heber C. Kimball, a counselor to Brigham Young, made the following remarks,

"An army of Elders will be sent to the four quarters of the earth to search out the righteous and warn the wicked of what is coming. All kinds of religions will be started and miracles performed that will deceive the very elect if that were possible. Our sons and daughters must live pure lives so as to be prepared for what is coming. After a while the gentiles will gather by the thousands to this place, and Salt Lake City will be classed among the wicked cities of the world. A spirit of speculation and extravagance will take possession of the Saints, and the results will be financial bondage. Persecution comes next and all true Latter-day Saints will be tested to the limit. Many will apostatize and others will still not know what to do. Darkness will cover the earth and gross darkness in the minds of the people...Before that day comes, however, the Saints will be put to tests that will try the integrity of the best of them. The pressure will become so great that the more righteous among them will cry unto the Lord day and night until deliverance comes." (*Deseret News*, May 23, 1931)." (Heber C. Kimball in Blaine and Brenton Yorgason. *Spiritual Survival in the Last Days*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990, 41-42).

As we interpret the scriptures and listen to the words of our Prophets and Apostles, we are now living in the latter days. Our spiritual and physical survival will, therefore, depend upon our being able to draw upon revelation from heaven if we and our families are to survive the events of the future.

\*Why do you think personal revelation is so important in our day?

a. Personal revelation is the way we receive our testimonies of Jesus Christ, His gospel, and the divine

calling of Joseph Smith.

- b. Personal revelation is the way we learn divine truth.
- c. Personal revelation is the way we receive guidance beyond our own limited understanding in answering life's questions, meeting challenges, and making decisions that will affect our lives, both spiritually and temporally.

\*What are some decisions in which personal revelation can help us? In our personal and family responsibilities; our Church responsibilities, and in other areas of our lives?

### **III. Necessary Steps for us to Receive Revelation**

#### **A. Doctrine and Covenants 9:8; PGP, Joseph Smith History 1:8-10. (Study the matter in your mind.)**

Just as it was essential, in order for the computer to operate, all the cables were properly connected, it is also important that we are personally prepared to receive revelation. Let us turn to the scriptures in order to guide us in our preparation.

May I suggest that as you read these scriptures that you ask the Lord to enlighten your mind regarding the truth. Then listen with your heart, as well as with your intellect, for the promptings and feelings of the Holy Ghost as they enlighten you. In this manner, you will begin to understand things you did not know or previously did know, but now understand with additional clarity. This is an example of how the spirit of revelation works in your life.

Doctrine and Covenants 9:7-8

**7 Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.**

**8 But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.**

Section 8 and 9, address the experience that Oliver Cowdery had when he sought to fulfill the gift he had been given to translate (see D&C 6:25.) In Section 8, Joseph inquired of the Lord on Oliver's behalf, and Section 9, was the response to Oliver's inability to translate. It is particularly instructive for each of us as it reminds us that the receipt of revelation from the Lord requires more than just our request. We must prepare ourselves beforehand.

Leaun G. Otten and C. Max Caldwell state,

"These two revelations [Sections 8-9] combined describe a process for seeking and receiving divine revelation. The process was revealed to Oliver, but the principle is applicable to all mankind. In fact, the entire work of the restoration of the Lord's kingdom is a process of the Lord communicating with man. It is not man's initiative to organize--but only to inquire. In order that man might properly seek revelation and know how to obtain divine direction, the Lord gave these two revelations as instructions to Oliver and to all His children who would seek His mind and will.

"The process referred to above might be called the Lord's formula for revelation. This formula will be presented in two categories--asking and answer." (*Sacred Truths of the Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 1. Springville, Utah: LEMB, Inc. 1982, [Second Editon], 46)

#### **Chart 1. Lord's Formula for Receiving Revelation**

Asking Formula	Answer Formula
<b>1. Ask in Faith (See D&amp;C 8:1) 2. Honest heart (See D&amp;C 8:1) 3. Believe answer will come (See D&amp;C 8:1) 4. Study problem in own mind (See D&amp;C 9:7-8)</b>	<b>1. Impressions on the mind-- ideas (See D&amp;C 8:2) 2. Impression in the heart-- feelings (See D&amp;C 8:2; 9:8-9) (Both of the above are given by the power of the Holy Ghost) (See D&amp;C 8:2)</b>

Reference: Leaun G. Otten, and C. Max Caldwell. *Sacred Truths of the Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 1. Springville, Utah: LEMB, Inc. 1982, [Second Editon], 46)

8 During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

9 My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided again the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

10 In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall know it?

\*What can we do to study out a question in our own minds?

\*What steps did Joseph Smith take?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

- a. "My mind was called up to serious reflection."
- b. "My feelings were deep and often poignant [emotionally touched or moving]."
- c. "I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit."

"...Joseph Smith gave deep thought to settling the question of which church was right. He also invested much time and effort, attending meetings, studying the scriptures, and searching longer than two years for an answer." (Doctrine

*and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual.* Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 25-26).

\*Why does the Lord expect us to study matters out in our own minds before receiving revelation?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"...the Lord intends for us to be active, not passive, as we seek revelation from Him. [As we do so, we demonstrate our sincere desire to receive his direction.] He also expects us to use our agency. We grow as we use the gifts and resources He has provided to help us study matters out in our minds.]" (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 26).

\*How has studying matters out in your mind helped you grow spiritually?

**B. Doctrine and Covenants 138:1-11; PGP, Joseph Smith History 1:11-12. (Ponder and meditate on the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 138 is an excellent example of revelation that came to a prophet while he was pondering upon spiritual matters and seeking answers from the Lord.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 138 states, "A vision given to President Joseph F. Smith in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 3, 1918. In his opening address at the 89<sup>th</sup> Semiannual General Conference of the Church, on October 4, 1918, President Smith declared that he had received several divine communications during the previous months. One of these, concerning the Savior's visit to the spirits of the dead while His body was in the tomb, President Smith had received the previous day. It was written immediately following the close of conference. On October 31, 1918, it was submitted to the counselors in the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Patriarch, and it was unanimously accepted by them." (Heading: Section 130. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 286).

President Joseph F. Smith had been ill during the last six months of his life and had spent much of his time confined in his room in the Beehive House where he lived. He told the General Conference, October 3, 1918, that "...Although somewhat weakened in body, my mind is clear with reference to my duty. (see *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [Second Edition, 2001], 356).

Joseph F. Smith states,

Doctrine and Covenants 138:1

- 1 On the third of October, in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen, I sat in my room pondering over the scriptures;
- 2 And reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice that was made by the Son of God, for the redemption of the world;
- 3 And the great and wonderful love made manifest by the Father and the Son in the coming of the Redeemer into the world;
- 4 That through his atonement, and by obedience to the principles of the gospel, mankind might be saved.
- 5 While I was thus engaged, my mind reverted to the writings of the apostle Peter, to the primitive saints scattered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and other parts of Asia, where the gospel had been preached after the crucifixion of the Lord.
- 6 I opened the Bible and read the third and fourth chapters of the first epistle of Peter, and as I read I was greatly impressed, more than I had ever been before, with the following passages:
- 7 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
- 8 "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
- 9 "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." (1 Peter 3:18-20.)
- 10 "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Peter 4:6.)

11 As I pondered over these things which are written, the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great.

Through the process of pondering upon the love and mercy of God and the redemption of His Son on behalf of his children and while seeking to understand the scriptures, this aged prophet received a vision of the Spirit World. By this means of revelation, he was given insight regarding the Spirit World being organized by the Savior for missionary work so that his servants might go amongst the wicked and teach them the gospel. (see vs. 37)

PGP, Joseph Smith-History 1:11-12

11 While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth [rebuke, censor] not;...*

12 Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine...I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know;...

Joseph's answer through revelation came by him first pondering upon the scripture and then taking action. He went to a grove of trees to ask God.

\*What is it important to study and ponder the scriptures when we seek revelation?

\*How has scripture study helped you when you have sought revelation from the Lord?

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"Scripture reading may...lead to current revelation on whatever [subject] the Lord wishes to communicate to the reader at that time. We do not overstate the point when we say that the scriptures can be a Urim and Thummim to assist each of us to receive personal revelation."

"Because we believe that scripture reading can help us receive revelation, we are encouraged to read the scriptures again and again. By this means, we obtain access to what our Heavenly Father would have us know and do in our personal lives today. This is one reason Latter-day Saints believe in daily scripture study." ("Scripture Reading and Revelation," in *Ensign*, January 1995, 8).

Marion G. Romney adds,

"There are special gifts and endowments reserved for those who study and ponder the scriptures; for those who treasure up the Lord's word; for those who fast and pray and seek knowledge of the Spirit. They receive guidance and enlightenment that can be gained in no other way. They become men [and women] of sound understanding. They gain the spirit of revelation and of prophecy and teach and speak with power from on high." (*Learning for the Eternities*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977, ii).

Will we be like the five virgins who were foolish in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), and someday need oil for our lamps? Maybe the oil we will need in order to keep our lights lit can only be accumulated, along with other areas of obedience, as we daily study and ponder the scriptures.

**C. Doctrine and Covenants 6:5, 14; 8:1; 42:61; 88:63-64.  
(Inquire of the Lord in faith, with an honest heart,  
believing that you will receive.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 6:5

**5 Therefore, if you will ask of me you shall receive;  
if you will knock it shall be opened unto you.**

Doctrine and Covenants 8:1

**1 Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily, I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts of my scripture of which has been spoken by the manifestation of my Spirit.**

Doctrine and Covenants 42:61

61 If thou shalt ask thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things--that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:63-64

63 Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 64 Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient [useful effecting desired result] for you;

PGP, Joseph Smith-History 1:13-14

13 At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to "ask of God," concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

14 So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet make the attempt to pray vocally.

In each of the verses noted from the Doctrine and Covenants and three times in the excerpt from the Joseph Smith-History as found in the Pearl of Great Price, we find a three letter word. The word is "ask." It is important that we take the necessary and essential steps preparatory to our "asking of God," but if we omit "ask," or only "ask," we will disappointed in our quest. It is our asking, preceded by our preparation that brings heaven's direction. Oliver Cowdery's error was that he asked, not unlike many of us, without his or us having completed the necessary preparations. It would, however, yield the same result, if we were to error by only preparing, but then never asked.

Boyd K. Packer states,

"No message appears in scripture more times, in more ways than 'Ask, and ye shall receive' ("Reverence Invites Revelation," in *Ensign*, November 1991, 21).

In the scriptures, [D&C 8:1; 1 Nephi 15:11; Moroni 10:4; James 1:5] directs us to "ask in faith."

\*What does it mean to "ask in faith"?

1 Nephi 15:11, adds "believing that ye shall receive and with diligence in keeping my commandments." James 1:5 adds, "nothing wavering." It is important that we trust God will hear our humble petition, and we believe and are sure, that He will respond to our sincere desire for guidance or blessing.

Spencer W. Kimball asks,

"Do you offer a few trite words and worn-out phrases, or do you talk intimately to the Lord? Do you pray occasionally when you should be praying regularly, often constantly?... When you pray, do you just speak, or do you listen?... Do you give thanks or merely ask for favors?" ("Prayer," in *New Era*, March 1978, 17).

Doctrine and Covenants 8:1 states that we should ask "with an honest heart"?

\*What does it mean to ask "with an honest heart"?

- a. We should honestly seek to understand the Lord's will and ask only for those things that are in accordance with it.
- b. We should remember that our motives for asking are pure.
- c. We should be repentant.
- d. We should be sincerely striving to keep the commandments and covenants we have made.
- e. We must be willing to follow the revelation we receive.

PGP, Joseph Smith-History 1:15-16

**15 After I had retired to the place where I had previously designated 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.

16 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.

These words of young Joseph Smiths describing his experience with the power of Satan in contrast to the pillar of light that descended upon him, add further evidence to the truthfulness of his report. We might expect, given the effect that Joseph's prayer was going to have upon Satan's hold upon the inhabitants of the earth, that Satan would be present to do all in his power to thwart Joseph receiving an answer to his first spoken prayer. It is likewise true that as foreboding and destructive as Satan's power was upon Joseph that it would also be contrasted by Joseph reporting "a pillar of light...above the brightness of the sun," symbolizing the dawning of the new day upon the earth. Light always overcomes darkness and it did with Joseph.

Brigham Young states,

"Some say, 'I do not like to do it, for we never began to build a temple without the bells of hell beginning to ring.' I [say I] want to hear them ring again..."

"I can say, for my comfort and consolation, and for yours, too, that we did build two temples, and commenced another. We completed a temple in Kirtland and in Nauvoo; and did not the bells of hell toll all the time we were building them? They did, every week and every day." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*. Compiled by John A. Widtsoe. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, [Edition of 1961], 410).

B/M, Ether 12:6

6 And now, I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.

Both Brigham Young and Moroni understood well that opposition is one of Satan's most effective tools. He uses it freely in his effort to dissuade all who sincerely seek to know and do the will of the Lord. It has been my experience, at those times when I was most sincere in doing the work of the Lord, that all the bells in hell were ringing as a rally call to all who were against my righteous efforts. I was always grateful that as I persevered, peace and comfort came from the Holy Ghost to lend me support and increased strength.

**D. Doctrine and Covenants 63:23; 76:5-10; 93:1, 28; 101:7-8. (Be obedient and serve God)**

Doctrine and Covenants 63:22-23

22 And now, verily I say unto you, that as I said that I would make known my will unto you, behold I will make it known unto you, not by the way of commandment, for there are many who observe not to keep my commandments.

23 But unto him that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of the my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life.

In these verses, we learn that one benefit in keeping the commandment regarding the law of gathering is that He will then make known to us, "knowledge of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God...If we accept the first principles, we shall receive further light. If we obey the laws given, others will be revealed.

"Why gather the people together in this place (Jackson County, Missouri)? For the same purpose that Jesus wanted to gather the Jews--to receive the ordinances, the blessings and glories that God has in store for His Saints" (Joseph Smith. *History of the Church*, Vol. 5, 423)." (Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl. *Doctrine and Covenants*

*Commentary.* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951,  
[Revised Edition, 1962], 378-379).

It is important to note that blessings always follow our obedience. Just as our disobedience denies us blessings we might have otherwise received.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:5-10

5 For thus saith the Lord--I, the Lord am merciful and gracious unto those who fear [reverence] me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

6 Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

7 And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

8 Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.

9 And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

10 For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will--yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.

These verses from Section 76, are a vision given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon at the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, on February 16, 1832. Many others, as stated by Philo Dibble were present in the room. Both Joseph and Sidney were able to have the heavens opened to them in vision and they learned many important and glorious truths. Most importantly it includes the glory and reward of those who will inherit the celestial, terrestrial and telestial kingdoms.

In the above verses, the Savior states that those who are righteous and seek to serve Him will be given knowledge and understanding regarding His kingdom, even the mysteries of eternity. It is confirmation that the extent to which the Lord is willing to reveal His truths is dependent upon our

worthiness before Him. This would include our willingness to help build His kingdom on earth.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:1, 28

**1 Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;**

**28 He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.**

The qualifications necessary, to see in vision the Son of God, Our Redeemer and Savior, are not dependent upon our holding a position of leadership in His Church. It is dependent upon our individual willingness to forsake our sins, receive his gospel, seek His direction in our lives, be obedient to His will, and be faithful in keeping his commandments. If we are willing to yield our will to His, we may then qualify to see His face and know that He is.

Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"*He that keepeth His commandments.* This is the essential condition, without which we cannot receive truth in its fullness. No amount of study can take the place of obedience." (*Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950, [Revised Edition, 1951], 28).

Doctrine and Covenants 101:7-8

**7 They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.**

**8 In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me.**

This revelation was given to Joseph Smith while he was in Kirtland, Ohio, on December 16, 1833. Many of the Saints had been directed by the Lord to locate in Missouri. There were, at this time, two centers of the Church: Ohio and Missouri. While the Saints gathered in Missouri, they were

subjected to great persecution and many lost their lives. This had been of great concern to the Prophet Joseph. How could this happen to the Saints of God? He received Section 101.

In this revelation Joseph learns that part of the problem was the result of the actions of many of the Saints. The Lord states, "I, the Lord, have suffered the afflictions to come upon them, wherewith they have been afflicted, in consequence of their transgressions" (D&C 101:3). These transgressions included, "...jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritance" (D&C 101:6).

John Taylor states,

"We were driven out of Missouri--we were driven from one place to another in Missouri before we were driven out altogether. Then we were driven from Illinois to this Territory [Basin of the Salt Lake]. I know some men who thought the work was at an end...Brigham Young encouraged the people, and Joseph Smith told them to be firm and maintain their integrity, for God would be with His people and deliver them. I never saw a time that the Saints enjoyed themselves better than when they, apparently, were wading through their deepest troubles; I never saw them more full of the Holy Ghost. Why was this? Because they had that spirit within them of which we are speaking, and they knew what would be the result of all these things...all will be peace to those who love God and keep his commandments; because his kingdom is established upon the rock of ages and it is God's business to take care of his Saints, and all is well." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 11. London: Latter-Day Saints' Book Depot, 1867, [Eighth Reprint 1974], 25-26).

Our afflictions often have the effect of bringing us unto repentance and turning to the Lord. As we do, the Lord, in his mercy is willing to forgive us our trespasses and to again bless us with the fullness of His Spirit. In this manner, we are reminded of His love and our need to be ever obedient. The following verse in Section 101, reminds of these truths.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:22

**22 Behold, it is my will, that all they who call on my name, and worship me according to mine everlasting gospel, should gather together, and stand in holy places;**

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"The way to revelation is righteousness" (The Lords Way [1991], 34). He also taught, "We cannot have the companionship of the Holy Ghost--the medium of individual revelation--if we are in transgression or if we are angry or if we are in rebellion against God's chosen authorities" ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," in *Ensign*, March, 1997, 9).

**E. Doctrine and Covenants 5:24; 19:23; 112:10; 136:32-33.  
(Be meek and humble.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 5:24

**24 Behold, I say unto him [Martin Harris], he exalts himself and does not humble himself sufficiently before me; but if he will bow down before me, and humble himself in mighty prayer and faith in the sincerity of his heart, then will I grant unto him a view of the things [the plates] which he desires to see.**

The date of Doctrine and Covenants, Section 5, is March, 1829, in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Martin Harris had humbled himself after losing the 116 pages and now desired to become one of the three witnesses who would be selected to view the plates. The Lord confirmed to Martin that he would be one of those selected to view the plates, but it was conditional upon his becoming more humble, less prideful.

The three witnesses, Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer were gathered together at the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York. Prior to their going to the woods near the Whitmer farm, Joseph spoke to Martin.

Lucy Mark Smith records,

"[Joseph approached him and said], 'Martin Harris, you have got to humble yourself before God this day, that you may

obtain a forgiveness of your sins. If you do, it is the will of God that you should look upon the plates, in company with Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer." (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother Lucy Mack Smith*. Edited by Preston Nibley. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, 152).

When they had gathered in the woods, they joined in prayer. When a sufficient time had passed and they had not received a response, Martin excused himself. He indicated that he may be the reason why there had been no response to their petitions. Shortly thereafter, the Angel Moroni appeared. He displayed the plates and turned them over so the engravings could be viewed. They also heard the voice from heaven confirming the truth of the records.

Upon the conclusion of the manifestation, Joseph went to find Martin. They together knelt in prayer and the same manifestation that Joseph had experienced with Oliver and David, he re-experienced with Martin. The reason for the delay regarding Martin may have been his need for further humility, admonition he had previously received as noted in the above verse and history. (see *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, 54-55).

Doctrine and Covenants 19:23

**23 Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.**

It was during this time that preparations were being made to publish the Book of Mormon. Not until Joseph had approached E.B. Grandin a third time, and Martin had agreed to put up his farm as collateral, did Grandin finally consent to publish the 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon. It would appear in D&C 19:26, that Martin was struggling with this commitment.

Doctrine and Covenant 19:26

**26 And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the Book of Mormon, which contains the truth and the word of God--**

Like Martin, many of us also find our faith challenged when our temporal means are requested by the Lord. We are often more willing to give of our time, than our means, in order

to help build the kingdom. For some, the commandment of the Lord to the Saints to pay a tenth of their income as a tithe offering, often keeps them from receiving the full benefits their membership offers.

As many have noted, and this verse reminds us, if we walk in meekness or humility, seeking to do the will of the Lord, being obedient to all his commandments, He will bless us with a peace that only He can offer.

Doctrine and Covenants 112:10

**10 Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 112 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Thomas B. Marsh, at Kirtland, Ohio, July 23, 1837, concerning the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. This revelation was received on the day Elders Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde first preached the gospel in England. Thomas B. Marsh was at this time President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles." (Heading: Section 112. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 230-231).

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles was first organized in these latter days on February 14, 1835. The individual had been selected, under inspiration, by the Three Witnesses. They were numbered according to age, therefore, Thomas B. March was the oldest of the twelve, and became the Quorum's First President.

This verse, while initially given to Elder Marsh, is applicable to each of us. The requirements for service in the kingdom of God is that the individual be humble or willing to submit their will to the voice of the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:32-33

**32 Let him that is ignorant [lacking knowledge] learn wisdom by humbling himself and calling upon the Lord his God, that his eyes may be opened that he may see, and his ears opened that he may hear;**  
**33 For my Spirit is sent forth into the world to enlighten the humble and contrite, and to the condemnation of the ungodly.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 136 states, "The word and will of the Lord, given through President Brigham Young at Winter Quarters, the camp of Israel, Omaha Nation, on the west bank of the Missouri River, near Council Bluffs, Iowa." (Heading: Section 136. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 282).

Section 136 is unique in that it is a revelation, not given to Joseph Smith due to his having been martyred, but to Brigham Young. The Church was being directed by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Brigham Young, at the time, was the Senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and its President. The date is January 14, 1847, on the West Bank of the Missouri River, near Council Bluffs, Iowa. It was given by Lord as to how the camp of Israel was to be organized for the westward journey.

As the Church, made its way across the plains to the Great Salt Lake basin, it was essential the members be humble so they could receive the direction from their leaders as they made this great journey. They are equally applicable to us in these latter days as we too must be humble and heed the words of our latter days Prophets and Apostles. Our journey through this mortal world is filled with dangers and temptations which we might not see, but are seen by our leaders. As those who proceeded us, we too must exercise faith and humility if we are to survive the journey.

David Whitmer recalled,

"[One morning when Joseph Smith was getting ready to resume translating the Book of Mormon], something went wrong about the house and he was put out about it. Something that Emma, his wife had done. Oliver and I were upstairs and Joseph came up soon after to continue the translation but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went downstairs, out into the orchard, and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour--came back--to the house, and asked Emma's forgiveness and then came upstairs where we were and then the translation went on all right. He could do nothing save he was humble and faithful." (B.H. Roberts. *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. 1. Provo, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young University Press, 1965, [Reprinted 1977], 131).

\*Why is humility important as we seek revelation from God?

**F. Doctrine and Covenants 25:10; 30:2 (Focus on the things of God rather than the things of world.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 25:10

**10 And verily I say unto thee that thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 25 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, July 1830 (see the heading to section 24). This revelation manifests the will of the Lord to Emma Smith, the Prophet's wife." (Heading: Section 25. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 44).

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 24 states, "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, July 1830. Though less than four months had elapsed since the Church was organized, persecution had become intense, and the leaders had to seek safety in partial seclusion. The following three revelations were given at this time to strengthen, encourage, and instruct them." (Heading: Section 24. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 42).

Section 25 was given to Emma Smith, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, July, 1830. It has been difficult for Emma not to be able to see the plates of the Book of Mormon. (Vs.4.) when others had been allowed to do so. In this revelation, she is admonished to support her husband (Vs.5-6); expound [interpret] the scriptures and exhort the church (Vs.7), and make a selection of sacred hymns for the church (Vs.11). By being faithful to these areas of her life, she would receive special blessings.

Often our focus in life gets misdirected by our desire for the praise and honors of the world. When we do so, we, like

Esau of old (Gen 25:32-34), trade our eternal blessings for that which is of much lesser value.

Doctrine and Covenants 30:2

**2 But your mind has been on the things of the earth more than on the things of me, your Maker, and the ministry whereunto you have been called; and you have not given heed unto my Spirit, and to those who were set over you, but have been persuaded by those whom I have not commanded.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 30 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jun., and John Whitmer, at Fayette, New York, September, 1830, following the three-day conference at Fayette, but before the elders of the Church had separated. Originally this material was published as three revelations; it was combined into one section by the Prophet for the 1835 edition of the Doctrine of Covenants." (Heading: Section 30, in *Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 53-54).

Steven C. Harper states,

"The Lord is probably not accusing David of being worldly...What, then is the problem? David's priorities. He is a farmer, It is harvest time. He is preoccupied with soil and crops instead of their Maker. David is looking down rather than up. His earthly cares have led him to neglect his commission to harvest souls (D&C 14:17,18)." (*Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2008, 102).

\*Why is it important to focus on the things of [God]...as we seek revelation?

\*How can we free ourselves from the concerns and noise of the world as we seek revelation?

Boyd K. Packer states,

"Inspiration comes more easily in peaceful settings. Such words as *quiet, still, peaceable, Comforter* abound in the scriptures..."

"The world grows increasingly noisy. Clothing and grooming and conduct are loose and sloppier and more disheveled. Raucous music, with obscene lyrics blasted through amplifiers while lights flash psychedelic colors, characterizes the drug culture. Variations of these things are gaining wide acceptance and influence over our youth..."

"This trend is more noise, more excitement, more contention, less restraint, less dignity, less formality is not coincidental nor innocent nor harmless.

"The first order issued by a commander mounting a military invasion is the jamming of the channels of communication of those he intends to conquer.

"Irreverence suits the purposes of the adversary by obstructing the delicate channels of revelation in both mind and spirit." ("Reverence Invites Revelation," in *Ensign*, November 1991, 21-22).

Neal A. Maxwell states,

"Divine guidance is so crucial...that we need to go out of our way to put ourselves in a situation where such special help can be given. President David O. McKay spoke of how the morning hours, before we are cluttered with the cares of the day, are especially conducive to inspiration. Others have felt that solitude and reading the scriptures can create an atmosphere conducive to the Spirit and can be developed. After all to read the words of Christ before is a good thing to do before asking for mere. Sometimes steady importuning is a necessity." (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 121).

#### **IV. Conclusions**

We have just concluded Part I of the subject of revelation. It has included: What "revelation" is, our need for personal revelation, and the necessary steps in order for us to receive personal revelation. Let us briefly review them.

What is Revelation?: "Revelation," is divine truth as communicated from heaven. When it comes on behalf of His organized Church, it come to his holy prophet called of

God. It can also come to His children as it pertains to their own needs for divine guidance and direction.

**Our Need for Personal Revelation:** It is by divine revelation through the gift of the Holy Ghost that members of the Church of Jesus Christ may receive guidance and direction from heaven regarding their own personal lives. While it is true that others may, and have received personal direction from the Lord through the light of Christ or by promptings of the Holy Ghost, only as they then heed his divine direction does the Spirit of the Holy Ghost continue to prompt them.

As we exercise Faith in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and accept baptism by one who has the necessary authority, we can then qualify to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Based upon our righteousness, the Holy Ghost will then abide with us.

**Necessary steps for us to receive revelation:** In Section 8 and 9, the Lord gave us the formula to receive revelation. (see Chart 1, page 7.)

The steps necessary include: To study the problem out in our mind before asking for assistance; Ponder and meditated on the scriptures and teachings of latter-day prophets; Ask in faith, with a sincere heart, believing that you will receive; Be obedient to the commandments and persevere when it is difficult; Help to build God's kingdom on earth; Be meek and teachable and humble or willing to submit your will to God; and, Focus your energy on coming closer to God, and don't get sidetracked by the taunting voices of the world.

In Revelation, Part II [D&C#06], we will address understanding how the Holy Ghost communicates with us; cautions about personal revelation, and when revelation is not received or recognized.

As we come to apply these essential principles in our quest to receive personal revelation, our ability to receive revelation from the Lord will proportionally increase. Today, just as in the past, God desires to communicate with ALL His children, even those who may have given up, like Laman and Lemuel.