

GD23 - "Seek Learning, Even by Study and Also by Faith"  
Goose Creek Ward, Ashburn, VA Stake  
S. Kurt Neumiller  
July 1, 2001

**Context of the Quote** - D&C 88:118 and later D&C 109:7, 14.

In D&C 88 the general context is that of the Lord's command to build the Kirtland Temple:

D&C 88:117 Therefore, verily I say unto you, my friends, call your solemn assembly, as I have commanded you. 118 And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; **seek learning, even by study and also by faith.** 119 Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God; 120 That your incomings may be in the name of the Lord; that your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord; that all your salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the Most High.

The Lord tells the Church they need to gather together in solemn assemblies in the Temple. Presumably v. 118 indicates not everyone is where they need to be in their faithfulness that point to accomplish the work of building the Temple so those with the faith and learning should teach those who don't have it.

It is plain the Temple was intended to be the center of this learning as Joseph included the very same statements in his dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple:

D&C 109:6 And as thou hast said in a revelation, given to us, calling us thy friends, saying--Call your solemn assembly, as I have commanded you; 7 And as all have not faith, **seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom;** yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and also by faith; ... 14 And do thou grant, Holy Father, that **all those who shall worship in this house may be taught words of wisdom out of the best books, and that they may seek learning even by study, and also by faith,** as thou hast said;

The Kirtland Temple was more multipurpose than are our present day Temples. The main floor of the Kirtland Temple was used for various services of worship. The second floor was a school for the ministry. The third floor contained rooms for the "Kirtland High School," during the day and Church quorum meetings in the evening. The west third floor room was Joseph Smith, Jr.'s office. (Modified quote from <http://www.kirtlandtemple.org/about.htm>)

## Learning

What is this "learning" we are to seek by study and faith? We can compare some similarly worded passages from the Scriptures to determine this:

Daniel 1:3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring [certain] of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; 4 Children in whom [was] no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as [had] ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might **teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans**.... 6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:...8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself....17 As for these four children, **God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.**

Acts 26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; **much learning doth make thee mad.**

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written **for our learning**, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

2 Timothy 3:1 THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 **Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

1 Nephi 1:1 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. 2 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 19:23 And I did read many things unto them which were written in the books of Moses; but that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, **that it might be for our profit and**

learning.

2 Nephi 9:28 O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. 29 But **to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.**

2 Nephi 9:42 And whoso knocketh, to him will he open; and the wise, and the learned, and they that are rich, who are **puffed up because of their learning**, and their wisdom, and their riches--yea, they are they whom he despiseth; and save they shall cast these things away, and consider themselves fools before God, and come down in the depths of humility, he will not open unto them.

2 Nephi 26:20 And the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that they have built up many churches; nevertheless, they put down the power and miracles of God, and **preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning**, that they may get gain and grind upon the face of the poor.

2 Nephi 28:4 And they shall contend one with another; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall **teach with their learning**, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance.

3 Nephi 6:12 And the people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and **their chances for learning; yea, some were ignorant** because of their poverty, and others did receive great learning because of their riches.

This quick review indicates "learning" can be a good thing or a bad thing depending on what people do with it and how they feel about it. Learning can be spiritual or secular, it can help a person or hurt them. Some knowledge saves, some knowledge damns.

### **Saving Knowledge and Damning Ignorance**

The glory of God is intelligence.

It is **impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.**

Whatever principles of intelligence we attain unto in this life will rise with us in the resurrection. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 6, Page xliv) [D&C 131:6]

There are a great many wise men and women too in our midst who are too wise to be taught; therefore **they must die in their ignorance**, and in the resurrection they will find their mistake. Many seal up the door of heaven by saying, So far God may reveal and I will believe. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 5, page 424)

Sunday, April 10.-I preached in the Grove, and pronounced a curse upon all adulterers, and fornicators, and unvirtuous persons, and those who have made use of my name to carry on their iniquitous designs.

[The following brief synopsis of the Prophet's remarks is from the journal of Elder Wilford Woodruff:]

Synopsis of Remarks of the Prophet - Reproof of all Wickedness.

Joseph the Seer arose in the power of God; reprovved and rebuked wickedness before the people, in the name of the Lord God. He wished to say a few words to suit the condition of the general mass, and then said: I shall speak with authority of the Priesthood in the name of the Lord God, which shall prove a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. Notwithstanding this congregation profess to be Saints, yet I stand in the midst of all [kinds of] characters and classes of men. If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God, or possess the principles which God possesses, for if we are not drawing towards God in principle, we are going from Him and drawing towards the devil. Yes, I am standing in the midst of all kinds of people.

Search your hearts, and see if you are like God. I have searched mine, and feel to repent of all my sins.

We have thieves among us, adulterers, liars, hypocrites. If God should speak from heaven, he would command you not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to covet, nor deceive, but be faithful over a few things. As far as we degenerate from God, we descend to the devil and lose knowledge, and **without knowledge we cannot be saved**, and while our hearts are filled with evil, and we are studying evil, there is no room in our hearts for good, or studying good. Is not God good? Then you be good; if He is faithful, then you be faithful. Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, and seek for every good thing.

The Church must be cleansed, and I proclaim against all iniquity. **A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge**, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God.

What is the reason the Priests of the day do not get revelation? They ask only to consume it upon their lust. Their hearts are corrupt, and they cloak their iniquity by saying there are no more revelations. But if any revelations are given of God, they are universally opposed by the priests and Christendom at large; for they reveal their wickedness and abominations. (HofC, Vol. 4, pages 587-588)

## Knowledge

**Spiritual** - revealed, true in an of itself. Can be misinterpreted. We are admonished to obtain this type of knowledge as well:

D&C 90:12 And now, verily I say unto you, I give unto you a commandment that you continue in the ministry and presidency. 13 And when you have finished the translation of the prophets, you shall from thenceforth preside over the affairs of the church and the school; 14 And from time to time, as shall be manifested by the Comforter, **receive revelations to unfold the mysteries of the kingdom;**

**Academic** - arm of the flesh, may be true, then again it may not, subject to misinterpretation and usually very politicized. We are admonished to seek this kind of knowledge:

D&C 90:15 And set in order the churches, and study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people.

It is encouraged, but this is the only place in modern revelation, so it obviously doesn't receive the kind of emphasis spiritual learning does.

**Experiential** - obtaining familiarity and skill by doing and interacting.

This is the most critical type of knowledge we as a Church and we as individuals can obtain. We are warned that if we fail to live a godly walk then the Lord will never "know" us and will reject us despite our outwardly religious trappings:

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

So, what is the "knowing" we must obtain? Below are a series of passages that explain what it is to not "know" false gods and it is contrasted to the Lord God whom Israel's fathers did know.

Deuteronomy 29:24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what [meaneth] the heat of this great anger? 25 Then men shall say, Because they

have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: 26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, **gods whom they knew not**, and [whom] he had not given unto them: 27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:

Deuteronomy 32:15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered [with fatness]; then he forsook God [which] made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. 16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange [gods], with abominations provoked they him to anger. 17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; **to gods whom they knew not, to new [gods that] came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.**

Jeremiah 44:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they [are] a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein, 3 Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, [and] **to serve other gods, whom they knew not, [neither] they, ye, nor your fathers.**

Here are some descriptions of how Israel was to know the Lord was God.

Exodus 6:6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I [am] the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: 7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and **ye shall know that I [am] the LORD your God**, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Deuteronomy 4:31 (For the LORD thy God [is] a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them. 32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and [ask] from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been [any such thing] as this great thing [is], or hath been heard like it? 33 Did [ever] people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? 34 Or hath God assayed to go [and] take him a nation from the midst of [another] nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 **Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he [is] God; [there is] none else beside him.** 36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he

chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; 38 To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou [art], to bring thee in, to give thee their land [for] an inheritance, as [it is] this day. 39 **Know therefore this day, and consider [it] in thine heart, that the LORD he [is] God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: [there is] none else.** 40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong [thy] days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

Their own experience with Him was how they knew the Lord was God. They saw the many mighty miracles, they were taken out of Egypt by Him. They had firsthand experience, so they knew the Lord was God. So, part of knowing God is to have experience with Him where He manifests His power to you and you recognize the act of Providence.

There is another manner in which ancient Israel was to know the Lord was their God.

Exodus 29:43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and [the tabernacle] shall be sanctified by my glory. 44 And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. 45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46 And **they shall know that I [am] the LORD their God**, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I [am] the LORD their God.

Israel will know the Lord is their God because His Tabernacle will be among them and His presence will be there in the Tabernacle.

2 Chronicles 7:12 And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. 13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14 **If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.** 15 Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer [that is made] in this place. 16 For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

Note the Lord states He has accepted the Temple as His, and the admonition for them to repent and turn to Him is bracketed by His acceptance of the Temple. Clearly,

the Temple is the place to sacrifice and worship the Lord. This is where Judah will come to humble themselves before the Lord, and come to know Him as a result of their repentance and His mercy.

Thus, the Lord wants us to gain knowledge of Him by experience with Him. Just as you get to know people by spending time with them and talking to them and listening to them, it is the same with God. In order to get to know Him, you have to have experience with Him. And, one of the main methods in the OT of getting to know God is to worship in the Temple, and that is what takes us right back to the theme of D&C 88:118.

### **Knowledge from the Temple**

D&C 88:118 tells us to obtain knowledge by faith, and it is placed very plainly in the context of Temple worship, as Smith quoted it in D&C 109.

Now, presently, there is a great deal to learn from the Temple simply by attending and paying attention to the ceremonies and the material presented. Historically, in the early Church, Joseph Smith and subsequently Brigham Young lectured extensively in the Temple. This is where the present day movies had their origins. The material today is more organized and not as spontaneous as it was historically.

But, beyond that sort of academic learning, the Temple is where God is present and His Spirit is present there. How much can we learn there when we go there to commune with the Spirit? That is how we learn by faith.