

Doctrine and Covenants Lesson # 1  
Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History  
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidence supporting the Restoration)

I. D&C 1 resounds with an amazing, even startling, boldness.

A. Here is indeed “The Voice of the Lord.”

B. The Lord is proclaiming the contents of the forthcoming revelations are His Words, and all must hear.

1. “Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I the Lord have decreed in them shall be fulfilled.

C. For any mortal to pretend to speak as if he were God Himself, would be the greatest of blasphemies. But **because they are the Lord’s Words, Joseph Smith dares write them.**

II. The Restoration was essential, and its announcement meant for all men.

A. Doctrine and Covenants Section 1 should be recognized for what it is --- **the voice of God speaking to the whole earth after centuries of silence and dark apostasy.**

B. Thus the Lord declares: "Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

“For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and **there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated**” (D&C 1:1-2).

C. Remember this is just the Preface, the Preface to a book and a time when He will speak again and again. And we know from additions that He has not ceased to speak.

III. The Restoration did not happen in a vacuum. God previously foretold this time when His voice and His Light would suddenly come forth after centuries of darkness --- to Israel.

A. Many prophets foretold it.

1. Paul, writing to the Romans, showed how the Lord had planned it all from the beginning.

2. Paul tells the Gentiles that **Israel has fallen from the grace of the Lord so that the Gentiles might have the Gospel.** He then warned the Gentiles if they did not stay worthy, **they would then lose the Gospel, and it would return to Israel** (Romans 11:25).

3. **He then prophesied this would in fact happen** “There shall come out of [Zion] the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Romans 11:26).

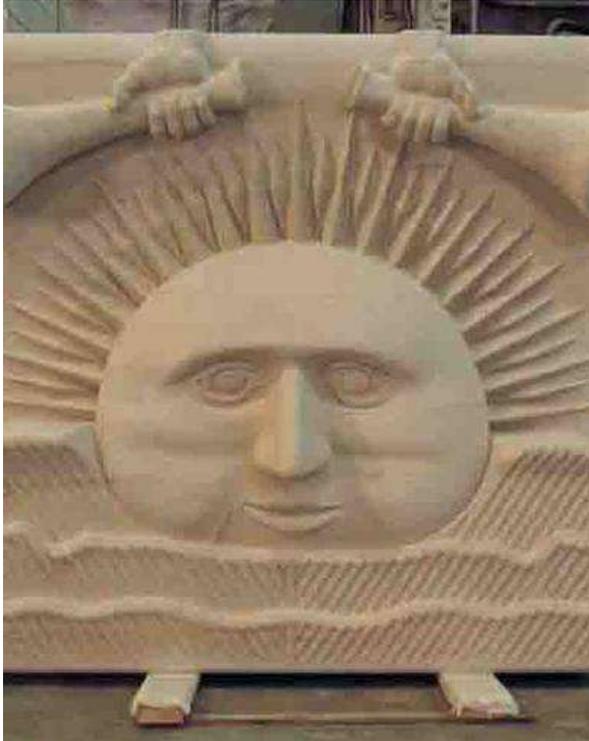
B. The whole history of Christianity shows there was indeed a falling away from truth. It is not only acknowledged, but apologized for.

1. But the apologies are not only too late but not enough.

2. Paul and many prophecies made very clear that if the things apologized for happened, the Gospel would be lost to the Gentiles; it would go back to a regathered Israel.

IV. **Paul used the term “Deliverer” because of earlier prophecies of a Deliverer who would end Gentile dominion and restore Israel. The Book of Judges was full of such prophecies.**

A. Gideon was just one witness of many that in the future someone would “deliver” Israel from the power of the Gentiles and restore Israel --- in the Latter-days.



1. Upon instructions of the Lord, Gideon and his men used trumpets, and lamps hidden in jars. In the **midst of the night's darkness**, they **blew the trumpets**; they gave a great shout; they broke the jars **letting light burst forth**. As a result, Israel was delivered (Judges 7).

B. This event prophesied of the Restoration. In the Meridian of Time, after Christ left, the Gentiles did become dominant, inheriting Israel's covenants after they were rejected by Israel.

C. But the Gentiles did fall into apostasy, and a time of great spiritual darkness descended.

D. In the last days, through God's Deliverer, **the trumpets of revelation have been sounded. Light has burst forth over clouds of darkness. Israel is receiving back its lost inheritance!**

1. **These are the motifs of the sunstones on the Nauvoo Temple.** Above, trumpets proclaim the truth. Light bursts forth over the clouds of darkness. The Latter-day "Deliverer" has come. Israel is to be Restored!

2. The Restoration of the Gospel was a fulfillment of Romans 11, **the similitudes in the Book of Judges**, and many other Old and New Testament prophecies.

E. Many of our hymns reflect the reality of this work, as shown in the Nauvoo Temple motifs.

1. "The morning breaks, the shadows flee; Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled! The dawning of a brighter day... Majestic rises on the world. The clouds of error disappear Before the rays of truth divine; The glory bursting from afar... Wide o'er the nations soon will shine." (Taken from "The Morning Breaks," written by Parley P. Pratt. **Significantly this is Hymn # 1 in our hymnbook.**)

V. Nature itself has born witness of the Restoration.

A. The Lord testified the things of the earth were created to teach of Him and His works.

1. "behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth,... all things bear record of me" (Moses 6:63).

B. December 21 is the time of greatest darkness in the Northern Hemisphere. Its ending and the **day thereafter**, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, have long been celebrated as the time when light begins to come back into the world.

C. **Thus the winter solstice has been celebrated in many ancient cultures for centuries.**

D. Whether they knew it or not, they were actually celebrating nature's witness of the future restoration of Gospel Light after the darkness of apostasy.

VI. Joseph Smith's very birth was a witness he would bring light back after a time of darkness.

A. Joseph Smith's birth date was December 23<sup>rd</sup>. His birth date reflects his prophetic role. He was called to receive the light of Christ, to bring it back into the world after the darkness of apostasy.

B. Latter day scriptures also clearly testify of these same truths: that Joseph's role as prophet was to restore light after darkness.

1. "And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fullness of my gospel" (D&C 45:28).

VII. Thus while the Book of Mormon is our Keystone, **the Doctrine & Covenants is the Capstone of our Religion. It is the source of new Revelation given to the Lord's Saints in the Latter-days.**

A. In Doctrine and Covenants 1, God hints of more of His great works to come.

B. His latter-day purpose will be to seal up men --- whether to doom or joy!

1. "And verily I say unto you, that they who go forth, bearing these tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth, to them is power given to seal both on earth and in heaven, the unbelieving and rebellious; Yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure --- Unto the day when the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his work, and measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man" (D&C 1:8-9).

C. There will be a final great seal: He shall "come down in judgment upon the world" (D&C 1:35).

1. "Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh; And the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth" (D&C 1:12-13).

2. But the righteous will have joy as He rules over them in goodness and great glory.

a. "And also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst..."

D. **His Latter-day Words, as His Former Words and Warnings, are indestructible.**

1. "What I the Lord have spoken I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and **though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away...** For behold, and lo, the Lord is God, and the Spirit beareth record, and the record is true, and the truth abideth forever and ever. Amen." (D&C 1:36, 38).

VIII. The Word of the Lord in Doctrine and Covenants will all be fulfilled, and most of it has already been fulfilled.

A. When Elder Jeffrey R. Holland dedicated the 3,000th stake in Sierra Leone, he spoke of the miracle that the Church has spread and grown so much since its tiny beginnings in 1830. And now it has reached very far flung nations, as prophesied.

B. But far more than that, as prophesied, it has brought its healing light to people everywhere. Elder Holland said.

1. "It is part of the latter-day miracle, evidence of our 'marvelous work and a wonder,' that the Church has grown to the point where its 3,000th stake is in far-off Sierra Leone.... What is particularly poignant for me is not only that this historic stake is created in a distant land for a people who have only relatively recently had the gospel brought to them, but it is also created in a war-torn and tragic land where there has been so much bloodshed, so much violence and vice in an earlier time" (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, *The Church News*, December 9, 2012, p. 7).

C. And since that time, the church has continued to spread into more dark and hopeless areas, bringing them joyous and wondrous light: that Jesus Christ truly lives! That He truly speaks again!

Above all, that He will soon come to reign and **to heal in every way** those who have prepared themselves to receive Him.