

D&C Lesson # 42
“Continuing Revelation to Latter-day Prophets”
(D&C 1:38; 68:1-4; 84:109-10; 107:25, 34, 93-98; 132:8; Official declaration 2)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and supportive true accounts)

I. Belief in Continuing Revelation is a precious Article of our Faith, as established by the First Prophet of the Last Dispensation --- Joseph Smith, Jr.

A. “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, **and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.**”

II. Almost always the Lord’s revelations have come line upon line.

A. When revelation was received which granted the priesthood would go to all worthy males in 1978, this seemed to contradict some things said by other General Authorities, past and contemporary. One of those, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, **acknowledged that the word of the Living Prophet must always supersede words of the past when new revelation is received.**

B. He said: “There are statements in our literature by the early brethren that we [members of the church] have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say, ‘You said such and such, and how is it now that we [the Church] do such and such?’ **And all I can say to that is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet.** Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young ... or whosoever has said in days past that are contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.

We get our truth and our light line upon line and precept upon precept. We have now added a new flood of intelligence and light on this particular subject, and it erases all the darkness and all the views and all the thoughts of the past. They don’t matter anymore.

It doesn’t make a particle of difference what anybody said about the Negro matter before the first day of June 1978. It is a new day and a new arrangement, and **the Lord has now given the revelation that sheds light out into the world on the subject.** As to my sliver of light or any particles of darkness of the past, we forget about them. We now do what meridian Israel did when the Lord said the gospel should go to the gentiles. We forget all the statements that limited the gospel to the house of Israel, and we start going to the gentiles.” (Bruce R. McConkie, “All are Alike Unto God,” The Second Annual Church Educational System Religious Educators’ Symposium, August 17, 1978, p. 4). (Emphasis added).

III. In fact, Elder McConkie not only humbly accepted that this revelation superseded all past beliefs about the matter, but he came to rejoice in what he saw was the fruit of the revelation:

A. “[This] was a revelation of such tremendous significance and importance which would reverse the whole direction of the Church, procedurally and administratively: one that would affect the living and the dead; one that would affect the total relationship that we [the Church] have with the world.... This affects our missionary work and all our preaching to the world. This affects our genealogical research and all of our temple ordinances. This affects what is going on in the spirit world, because the gospel is preached in the spirit world preparatory to men’s receiving the vicarious ordinances which make them heirs to salvation and exaltation.” (*Ibid.*)

B. Statistics show the results of the revelation were highly positive in terms of growth of the Church. But more important, the lives of so many, not only those of African lineage, came to be greatly blessed.

The Lord spoke, the Prophets and faithful Saints listened, and great blessings resulted.

IV. But **why was there a delay in receiving this full revelation?**

A. Some see the delay in granting the priesthood as fulfillment of another prophecy. That prophecy is contained in Jesus' parable of the Last Laborers.

B. Jesus told a parable of a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers. At differing times of the day, he saw more who wanted to work and hired them as well. Finally, at **the eleventh hour he hired even more**. When it came time to pay them, He gave them all the same pay. Among the points He was making was that "the Last shall be First!" (Matthew 20:1-16).

While there are more than one truth which can be drawn from this parable, there are many who feel it points to the situation of those who have African heritage.

For they suffered a delay in being called to serve in the Lord's Kingdom. Nevertheless, their service will be rewarded just as greatly as anyone else's. And from the great diligence shown of those who are coming into the Kingdom, many will indeed be among "the first" in His blessings. (Elder Bednar has spoken of how the African's sacrament attendance is highest of any in the church; and their retention rate after baptism is also highest of any in the church).

And why was there a delay in this group as a whole being called to serve in God's Kingdom?

One very good reason may be that their calling was reserved --- to be a **witness that it was the Eleventh Hour. And that means the End of the Lord's Harvest is fast approaching. It was a special witness that these are the Very Last Days.**

While this should not be taken as church doctrine, Elder McConkie himself seemed to favor this understanding. And some of those who are of the black race do as well. (See *Last Laborer* by Keith N. Hamilton).

They do so **because they know that the Lord had His purposes. And they feel certain those purposes will eventually be revealed to have been righteous purposes.**

V. In fact, as the Last Days grow shorter and shorter, we are definitely in need of more and more revelation. And the Lord continues to bestow that blessing upon us!

A. Elder Dallin H. Oaks on Saturday, September 30, 2017, told General Conference listeners how The Family Proclamation **came to us by revelation.**

Twenty-three years before, President Gordon B. Hinckley had told the apostles of a need to make such a statement of belief. The apostles were surprised, because to them there seemed to be no need to stress what seemed to be principles almost everyone adhered to.

Nevertheless, they undertook the task of seeking the Lord's will in regard to such an edict. Elder Oaks specifically shared how the process included revelation as this statement of Eternal Truths was developed. The Family Proclamation was then released by President Hinckley in 1995. And he specifically issued it as revelation to "warn and forewarn" the world of principles that must be adhered to or our civilization would face the judgments of God.

Of course, since that time, the need for such a proclamation has been clearly demonstrated, as the world has undertaken to vastly change principles the Lord has established from the beginning and which are in fact, The Lord's Eternal Principles.

Not only does this Proclamation give us comfort in firming the Foundation of God's moral laws, but **knowing that it was revealed with foreknowledge of its need is also of great comfort.**

The Lord has not ceased caring about His children. He will continue to guide us through all the trials and tribulations of the Very Last Days.

We just need to know that He does care. And then we must be willing to receive His continuing guidance through His living prophets.