

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS/CHURCH HISTORY
LESSON #2
by Ted Gibbons
“BEHOLD, I AM JESUS CHRIST, THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD”

INTRODUCTION: If the major purpose of all scripture is to bear testimony of Christ, (and I believe it is) then the D&C makes a remarkable contribution to that testimony. With few exceptions, everything the D&C teaches us about the Savior is taught in the actual words of the Savior. Almost all scriptures is in some way *about* Christ. But the D&C is *by* Christ. The words are *His* words. The voice is *His* voice. Most of the information in the *Doctrine and Covenants* is given in the first person singular by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Much of the information in the following lesson is taken from a paper prepared by Robert J. Matthews for the CES Symposium held at BYU In August of 1989.

1. THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS TESTIFIES OF CHRIST.

Turn to the “Explanatory Introduction” and note (mark?) the final sentence of the eighth paragraph:

Finally, the testimony that is given of Jesus Christ—his divinity, his majesty, his perfection, his love, and his redeeming power—makes this book of great value to the human family and of more worth than the riches of the whole earth.

Perhaps one of the most dramatic descriptions of the Divinity and Power of Christ ever recorded is in the beginning of D&C 76. In the first five verses the Lord speaks of Himself in stunning language.

“Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior. Great is his wisdom, marvelous are his ways, and the extent of his doings none can find out. His purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand. From eternity to eternity he is the same, and his years never fail. For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end” (D&C 76:1-5).

I hope to examine these verses in detail in a later lesson, but think for a moment of the insights we receive in the words and witness of the Savior Himself.

1. "The Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior"
2. "Great is his wisdom"
3. "Marvelous are his ways"
4. "The extent of his doings none can find out"
5. "His purposes fail not"
6. "Neither are there any who can stay his hand"
7. "From eternity to eternity he is the same"
8. "His years never fail"
9. "I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me"
10. "I, the Lord . . . delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end"

The D&C contains at least 66 names and titles for the Savior. They are terms the Lord uses to identify himself in these revelations, And they are used in all their forms to teach us about his character and reliability and love and power. As you read, watch for these names and titles and consider what they tell you about you Redeemer.

2. JESUS CHRIST 'SUFFERED THE PAINS OF ALL MEN, THAT ALL MEN MIGHT REPENT AND COME UNTO HIM.'

These revelations bear a pure and powerful first generation testimony of the mission and the atonement of Jesus Christ.

"There is not a single word, not even a hint, that he is lacking in anything, either in knowledge, or in power, or in mercy or in love; not in character, nor in character, nor in intellectual ability. . . .

These revelations are forthright declarations, from the Lord himself, most of them in first person language, telling of his mission, how he is and what he means to us. ("What the Doctrine and Covenants Says about Jesus Christ"; Robert J. Matthews, CES Symposium, BYU, August 16,17, 1989, underlining in original)

Review some of these references and consider some of the things the Lord has told us about himself. In D&C 93:19 we learn that the Lord has told us these things

I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.

1. 93:21
2. 93:11
3. 93:15
4. 38:3; 76:24; 93:9-10
5. 43:34; 88:42-63
6. 38:1
7. 95:7
8. 88:42
9. 133:26
10. 20:22
11. 62:1
12. 45:8
13. 29:12
14. 76:69
15. 18:21-24
16. 50:29

D&C 20:17-28 outlines many points of the plan of salvation, with an emphasis on the central importance of the atonement.

*D&C 18:10,23-25 tells of the great worth of souls.

*D&C 19:1-5 tells who Christ is and that He will judge us.

*D&C 19:16-20, 23-24 describes the pain suffered by the Savior in Gethsemane.

*D&C 29:40-48 explains the relationship between the fall of Adam and the Atonement

*D&C 43:3-10 shows how the shedding of His blood enabled the Savior to become our advocate with the Father. It also shows that His gospel is a messenger.

*D&C 43:17-20, 27, 29-35 tells of the Second Coming and related events

*D&C 76:20-24 is a wonderful testimony of the Savior: that He lives and is the Savior not only of this world but others also.

There is so much of this in the D&C, and all of it is worthy of time and evaluation. But we do not have the time and space for more. As you read, let the words of Christ and His Spirit teach you of him.

3. THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS HELPS US UNDERSTAND THE SAVIOR'S ROLE AND ATTRIBUTES.

One of the sweetest characteristics of the Doctrine and Covenants is the record it provides of a great number of promises made by the Lord to his followers. These are not necessarily the promises inherent in the organization of the plan of Salvation: rather they are the simple affirmations of commitment made by one who said

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, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same. (D&C 1:38)

These promises are so pervasive (there must be hundreds of them) and so simple that they will go unnoticed unless you are paying attention as you read. I encourage you to watch for them and to mark and ponder them. As you do so, remember another of His promises: "Therefore, what I say unto one I say unto all . . ." (D&C 82:5; see also 61:18; 61:36; 92:1; 93:49; 25:16, etc.)

Here are a few from the first 12 sections for you to consider:

--D&C 6:7

--D&C 6:20

--D&C 11:12-14
--D&C 19:23, 38-41
--D&C 38:39-40
--D&C 39:7-10,23
--D&C 6:12
--D&C 12:10

Verses in the D&C that use the word promise are also spectacular. For example D&C 62:6; D&C 67:10; D&C 82:10; D&C 89:21; D&C 98:3; D&C 100:8; D&C 104:2; D&C 107:31; D&C 113:10; D&C 118:3 . . . etc.

CONCLUSION:

Along with its other remarkable contributions, the D&C tells us many things which we would not otherwise know, or understand without the clarifying contributions of this record. A few examples follow:

- > Jesus appeared to Adam and others at Adam-ondi-Ahman. (107:54-55)
- > Jesus is the Savior of other worlds. (88:42-63)
- > He saves animals and other forms of life (29:23-25; 77:2,3; 101:23,24)
- > The earth will become a celestial world (88:17-19, 25, 26)
- > Christ will partake of the sacrament on the earth again with the righteous of all dispensations (27:4)
- > Jesus visited the spirit world but did not go among the wicked (138)
- > Jesus looked upon the "wide expanse of heaven and all the seraphic hosts of heaven before the world was made." (38:1,2)
- > The Light of Christ fills all of space and lightens our eyes and our understanding. (88:7-13)
- > He commanded the construction of temples for the salvation of the living and the dead. (124)

With what wondering awe ought we to give thanks in our prayers for this book—this *latter-day testament* of Christ!

Copyright © 2005 by Ted Gibbons <tedgibbons@yahoo.com>. All rights reserved. No part of this text may be reproduced in any form or by any means

for commercial gain without the express written consent of the author. Digital or printed copies may be freely made and distributed for personal and public non-commercial use.