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## Revelation

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**Abstract:** Value of the Spirit of Revelation—The Spirit of Inspiration—The Spirit of Revelation Enjoyed by All—New Revelation—When to Expect New Revelation—How the Lord Reveals His Purposes Concerning the Church—Modern Revelation is Necessary—Theory and Divine Revelation—Revelation and Legal Evidence—Proper Channels for Revelation—The Doctrine and Covenants—How to Read the Bible—Persecution Follows Revelation

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## CHAPTER III

### Revelation

VALUE OF THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION. The man who possesses the spirit of revelation can realize whether he is a sinner, whether he is prone to evil, whether he is magnifying his standing before the Lord, or not, better than a man who has not the Spirit of the Lord in him, can he not?—*Apr. C. R.*, 1912, p. 7.

THE SPIRIT OF INSPIRATION—OF REVELATION—BY WHOM ENJOYED. And the spirit of inspiration, the gift of revelation does not belong to one man solely; it is not a gift that pertains to the Presidency of the Church and the Twelve apostles alone. It is not confined to the presiding authorities of the Church, it belongs to every individual member of the Church; and it is the right and privilege of every man, every woman, and every child who has reached the years of accountability, to enjoy the spirit of revelation, and to be possessed of the spirit of inspiration in the discharge of their duties as members of the Church. It is the privilege of every individual member of the Church to have revelation for his own guidance, for the direction of his life and conduct; and therefore I aver—and I believe I may do so without any reasonable chance for it being gainsaid or opposed—that there is not another church in the world, or an organization of religious people, who are so universally spiritual in their lives, and who are so universally entitled to the gifts of the Spirit of God as are the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You are all entitled to revelation. It is your privilege to have it revealed to you whether I am a servant of God or a servant of men; whether I am in the discharge of my duty or not; whether I, as a

presiding officer in the Church, am acting in the discharge of my duty acceptably to you and the Lord. It is your privilege to have revelation in regard to this, and to know the truth yourselves. And it is my privilege to have revelation from God, as an individual, for my own temporal guidance, and I repeat again that there never was a time in the earth, since the Church was organized, when the spirituality of the people of God was greater than it is today.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1912, p. 5.

THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION ENJOYED BY ALL. I believe that every individual in the Church has just as much right to enjoy the spirit of revelation and the understanding from God which that spirit of revelation gives him, for his own good, as the bishop has to enable him to preside over his ward. Every man has the privilege to exercise these gifts and these privileges in the conduct of his own affairs, in bringing up his children in the way they should go, and in the management of his farm, his flocks, his herds, and in the management of his business, if he has business of other kinds to do; it is his right to enjoy the spirit of revelation and of inspiration to do the right thing, to be wise and prudent, just and good in everything that he does. I know that this is a true principle, and I know that I know it, too; and that is the thing that I would like the Latter-day Saints to know.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1912, pp. 9, 10.

NEW REVELATION. So far as I know there is not an ordinance of the Church now enjoyed or practiced that was not revealed to the Church by the Prophet Joseph Smith. I know of no new doctrine that has been revealed. Principles that were revealed to the Prophet Joseph have grown and developed more fully and clearly to the understanding; but we have received nothing new that I know of. Yet if we should receive something new, through the proper channels of the Church, we should be as ready and willing to receive it as we were, or would be, to receive the same at

the hands of the Prophet Joseph himself.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1900, p. 47.

WHEN TO EXPECT NEW REVELATION. We have nothing that is not in common with the Latter-day Saints. We know nothing, and we will preach nothing to the people except that which the Lord God has revealed, and we advise and counsel those who are in authority, and whose duty and business it is to teach and preach the principles of the gospel to the world and to the Latter-day Saints, to confine their teachings and their instructions to the word of God that has been revealed. There is a great deal that has been revealed that has not yet been lived up to, I assure you. There is a great deal yet remaining to be learned. There is a great deal that is yet to be taught in the spirit of instruction, and there is a great deal that has been revealed through the Prophet Joseph and his associates that the people have not yet received in their hearts, and have not yet become converted to as they should. When we obey and are capable of observing the precepts of the gospel and the laws of God and the requirements of heaven, which have already been revealed, we will be far better off and nearer the goal of perfection in wisdom, knowledge and power than we are today. When that time comes, then there are other things still greater yet to be revealed to the people of God. Until we do our duty, however, in that which we have received, until we are faithful over the things that are now committed into our hands, until we live our religion as we have it now, as the Lord has given it to us, to add commandments, to add light and intelligence to us over that which we have already received, which we have not yet fully obeyed, would be to add condemnation upon our heads. It is enough for us to live in the light of present inspiration and present revelation and for each individual member of the Church to keep the commandments of the Lord and labor in the Church as the Spirit may give him and her guidance in the

performance of duty. Every soul of us is entitled to inspiration from God, to know what is our duty, and how we are to do it. We have not learned it yet, not all of us, but we are in a fair way to learn. The Lord is still patient; he is long-suffering; he is full of love and graciousness towards all, and we are doing a little better all the time. I believe we are a little more faithful in the performance of our duties than we have been in the past; yet there is great room for improvement.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1917, p. 5.

HOW THE LORD REVEALS HIS PURPOSES CONCERNING THE CHURCH. And I know this, that God has organized his Church in the earth, and I know that when he designs or purposes to make any change in the matter of governing or controlling or presiding over the affairs of his Church, that he will make the change, and he will make it in such a way that the whole people of the Church, who are doing right, will understand and accept it. I know that the Lord will not raise up "Tom, Dick, or Harry," here, there and everywhere, claiming to be Christ, or "one mighty and strong," claiming to be inspired and called to do some wonderful thing. The Lord will not deal with men in that way; that while the organization of the Church exists, while quorums and councils of the Priesthood are intact in the Church, the Lord will reveal his purposes through them, and not through "Tom, Dick, or Harry." Put that in your little note books now, and remember it; it is true.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1912, p. 10.

MODERN REVELATION IS NECESSARY. We are to understand, then, that God does not, and will not further make known his will to men; that what he has said suffices? His will to Moses and Isaiah and John is abundant for modern followers of Christ? The Latter-day Saints take issue with this doctrine, and pronounce it illogical, inconsistent, and untrue, and bear testimony to all the world that God lives and that he reveals his will to men who believe in him and who obey his commandments, as much in our day as at any

time in the history of nations. The canon of scripture is not full. God has never revealed at any time that he would cease to speak forever to men. If we are permitted to believe that he has spoken, we must and do believe that he continues to speak, because he is unchangeable.

His will to Abraham did not suffice for Moses, neither did his will to Moses suffice for Isaiah. Why? Because their different missions required different instructions; and logically, that is also true of the prophets and people of today. A progressive world will never discover all truth until its inhabitants become familiar with all the knowledge of the Perfect One. How shall men become acquainted with the knowledge of the Father? Only as he reveals it to them. Now if we are permitted to believe that the Lord revealed himself to the ancients of whose deeds we read in the Holy Scriptures, it seems to me that there is no good reason for believing that it is not necessary that he should reveal himself in this day to others who desire to be guided by his Spirit and inspiration. Every new truth which grows into living action in the lives of men is a revelation in itself from God, and without the revelation of additional truth, men would not progress in this world, but, left to themselves, would retrograde, being cut off from the light and life of the great fountain of all intelligence, the Father of all.

What is revelation but the uncovering of new truths, by him who is the fountain of all truth? To say that there is no need of new revelation, is equivalent to saying that we have no need of new truths—a ridiculous assertion.

Now, as to the usefulness of modern revelation, that has been referred to above, in the brief treatment of its need; and it is no sign that revelation is useless because it is not proper that it should be accepted in the courts. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Revelation given for the personal knowledge or guidance of any person should not be given

to the public, either in a civil or religious capacity; but because it might be (and in such cases is) considered improper for public use, it is no sign that even such revelation is useless to the person for whom it is intended. It might be said in passing, however, that the revelation which the ministers were so troubled about, turned out to be correct and in conformity with the evidence, and the decision of the court and jury.

Our testimony is that God lives, and that he speaks by his power to men who seek him and believe in him, thus making known his will to them in matters that pertain, not only to his true Church, but in matters that pertain to each individual who seeks him.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 5, p. 805, 1902.

THEORY AND DIVINE REVELATION. Our young people are diligent students. They reach out after truth and knowledge with commendable zeal, and in so doing they must necessarily adopt for temporary use, many theories of men. As long, however, as they recognize them as scaffolding useful for research purposes, there can be no special harm in them. It is when these theories are settled upon as basic truth that trouble appears, and the searcher then stands in grave danger of being led hopelessly from the right way.

There are so many demonstrated, practical, material truths, so many spiritual certainties, with which the youth of Zion should become familiar, that it appears a waste of time and means, and detrimental to faith and religion to enter too extensively into the undemonstrated theories of men on philosophies relating to the origin of life, or the methods adopted by an Allwise Creator in peopling the earth with the bodies of men, birds and beasts. Let us rather turn our abilities to the practical analysis of the soil, the study of the elements, the productions of the earth, the invention of useful machinery, the social welfare of the race, and its material amelioration; and for the rest cultivate an abiding

faith in the revealed word of God and the saving principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which give joy in this world and in the world to come eternal life and salvation.

Philosophic theories of life have their place and use, but it is not in the classes of the Church schools, and particularly are they out of place here or anywhere else, when they seek to supplant the revelations of God. The ordinary student cannot delve into these subjects deep enough to make them of any practical use to him, and a smattering of knowledge in this line only tends to upset his simple faith in the gospel, which is of more value to him in life than all the learning of the world without it.

The religion of the Latter-day Saints is not hostile to any truth, nor to scientific search for truth. "That which is demonstrated, we accept with joy," said the First Presidency in their Christmas greeting to the Saints, "but vain philosophy, human theory and mere speculations of men we do not accept, nor do we adopt anything contrary to divine revelation or to good common sense, but everything that tends to right conduct, that harmonizes with sound morality and increases faith in Deity, finds favor with us, no matter where it may be found."

A good motto for young people to adopt, who are determined to delve into philosophic theories, is to search all things, but be careful to hold on only to that which is true. The truth persists, but the theories of philosophers change and are overthrown. What men use today as a scaffolding for scientific purposes from which to reach out into the unknown for truth, may be torn down tomorrow, having served its purpose; but faith is an eternal principle through which the humble believer may secure everlasting solace. It is the only way to find God.

Science and philosophy through all the ages have undergone change after change. Scarcely a century has passed but they have introduced new theories of science and phil-



osophy, that supersede the old traditions and the old faith and the old doctrines entertained by philosophers and scientists. These things may undergo continuous changes, but the word of God is always true, is always right. The principles of the gospel are always true, the principles of faith in God, repentance from sin, baptism for the remission of sins by authority of God, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost—these principles are always true, and are always absolutely necessary for the salvation of the children of men, no matter who they are and where they are. No other name under heaven is given but that of Jesus Christ, by which you can be saved or exalted in the kingdom of God. Not only has God declared them, not only has Christ declared these principles, by his voice to his disciples, from generation to generation, in the old time, but in these latter days, they have taken up the same testimony and declared these things to the world. They are true today as they were then, and we must obey these things.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 14, p. 548.

REVELATION AND LEGAL EVIDENCE. Recently a man charged with the murder of another man was examined before a committing magistrate in Salt Lake City. The father-in-law of the murdered man, during the examination on the part of the State, related a conversation had between himself and the accused soon after the commission of the crime. During the conversation, according to newspaper report, the father-in-law of the murdered man laid the crime at the door of the accused. In the cross-examination the attorney for the defendant pressed the witness as to how he knew that the accused was guilty of the crime. The reply, as given in the press, was, because God had revealed it to him. It does not appear from the further proceedings in the case that the testimony was excepted to or withdrawn, or that the magistrate informed the witness that such evidence was incompetent and could not be received. The statement

gave rise to comment in the press and has been the subject of discourse from the pulpit. Of course, every person must know that such evidence is not admissible in a court of law, and if it had been in a trial before a jury it would have been the duty of the judge to order the testimony stricken out, and in the charge to the jury, they would have been warned to disregard it altogether. In view of the probability that there are those who may persist in the association of such evidence with the religious body of which the witness is a member, it may be proper to say, without discrediting in the least the witness' conviction of the revelation he had received, that no member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should, for one moment, regard such testimony as admissible in a court of law, and to make the case perfectly clear it may be further stated that such evidence would not be permissible even in a Church court, where rules of evidence, though not so technical, are founded largely upon the same principles that govern the rules of evidence in a court of law. Any attempt, therefore, to make it appear that such evidence is in keeping with the tenets of the "Mormon" faith is wholly unjustified.—*Juvenile Instructor*, p. 114, Feb. 15, 1902, Vol. 37.

PROPER CHANNELS FOR REVELATION. It has sometimes been sorrowful to see respected members of the Church, men who should know better, allow themselves to become the tools of seductive spirits. Such men seem, for the time at least, to lose sight of the fact that the Lord has established on earth the Priesthood in its fulness; and that by direct revelation and commandment from heaven; that he has instituted an order or government that is beyond the capacity, and that is superior to the wisdom and learning and understanding of man, so far, indeed, that it seems impossible for the human mind, unaided by the Spirit of God, to comprehend the beauties, powers, and character of the Holy Priesthood. It seems difficult for men to comprehend the work-

ings of the priesthood, its legitimate authority, its scope and power; and yet by the light of the Spirit it is easily comprehended, but not understanding it, men are easily deceived by seductive spirits that are abroad in the world. They are led to believe that something is wrong, and the next thing that transpires, they find themselves believing that they are chosen specially to set things right. It is very unfortunate for a man to be taken in this snare; for be it understood by the Latter-day Saints that as long as the servants of God are living pure lives, are honoring the priesthood conferred upon them, and endeavoring to the best of their knowledge to magnify their offices and callings, to which they have been duly chosen by the voice of the people and the priesthood and sanctioned by the approval of God, so long as the Lord has any communication to make to the children of men, or any instructions to impart to his Church, he will make such communication through the legally appointed channel of the priesthood; he will never go outside of it, as long, at least, as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints exists in its present form on the earth.

It is not the business of any individual to rise up as a revelator, as a prophet, as a seer, as an inspired man, to give revelation for the guidance of the Church, or to assume to dictate to the presiding authorities of the Church in any part of the world, much less in the midst of Zion, where the organizations of the priesthood are about perfect, where everything is complete, even to the organization of a branch. It is the right of individuals to be inspired and to receive manifestations of the Holy Spirit for their personal guidance to strengthen their faith, and to encourage them in works of righteousness, in being faithful and observing and keeping the commandments which God has given unto them; it is the privilege of every man and woman to receive revelation to this end, but not further. The moment an individual rises up assuming the right to

control and to dictate, or to sit in judgment on his brethren, especially upon those who preside, he should be promptly checked, or discord, division and confusion would be the result. Every man and woman in this Church should know better than to yield to such a spirit; the moment that such a feeling presents itself to them they should rebuke it, as it is in direct antagonism to the order of the priesthood, and to the spirit and genius of this work. We can accept nothing as authoritative but that which comes directly through the appointed channel, the constituted organizations of the priesthood, which is the channel that God has appointed through which to make known his mind and will to the world.

Through Joseph, then, the Lord revealed himself to the world, and through him he chose the first elders of the Church—men who were honest in their hearts; men who he knew would receive the word, and labor in connection with Joseph in this great, important undertaking; and all that have been ordained to the priesthood, and all that have been appointed to any position whatever in this Church have received their authority and commission through this channel, appointed of God, with Joseph at the head. This is the order, and it could not be otherwise. God will not raise up another prophet and another people to do the work that we have been appointed to do. He will never ignore those who have stood firm and true from the commencement, as it were, of this work, and who are still firm and faithful, inasmuch as they continue faithful to their trust. There is no question in my mind of their ever proving themselves unfaithful, as a body, for if any of them were to become unworthy in his sight, he would remove them out of their place and call others from the ranks to fill their positions. And thus his priesthood will ever be found to be composed of the right men for the place, of men whose backs will be fitted for the burden, men through whom he can work and regu-

late the affairs of his Church according to the counsels of his own will. And the moment that individuals look to any other source, that moment they throw themselves open to the seductive influences of Satan, and render themselves liable to become servants of the devil; they lose sight of the true order through which the blessings of the priesthood are to be enjoyed; they step outside of the pale of the Kingdom of God, and are on dangerous ground. Whenever you see a man rise up claiming to have received direct revelation from the Lord to the Church, independent of the order and channel of the priesthood, you may set him down as an imposter. God has not called you to go out to the world to be taught, or to receive revelations through apostates or strangers; but he has called and ordained you and sent you forth to teach and lead people in the paths of righteousness and salvation.

Now, how should it be? I will tell you. In the first place every person should know that the gospel is true, as this is every one's privilege who is baptized and receives the Holy Ghost. A man may be grieved in his feelings because of some difficulty between himself and President Taylor, or Cannon, or myself; he may have feelings in his heart which lead him to think that he could not sustain us in his faith and prayers; but if this should be the case, what is the course for him to pursue? He should say in his heart, "God has established his kingdom, and his priesthood is upon the earth; and notwithstanding my dislike for certain men, I know that the gospel is true, and that God is with his people; and that if I will do my duty and keep his commandments, the clouds will roll by, and the mists will disappear, the Spirit of the Lord will come more fully to my relief, and by and by I will be able to see—if I am in error, wherein I erred, and then I will repent of it, for I know that every wrong thing will yet be made right." I think all men should feel that way.

Never is there but one appointed at a time to hold the

keys of the Kingdom of God pertaining to the earth. While Christ remained on the earth he held them; but when he departed, he committed them to Peter, he being the president or chief of the apostles; and it was his right to direct and to receive revelation for the Church, and to give counsel to all the brethren. After Satan and wicked men had prevailed against the Church, crucified the Savior and killed the apostles, the keys of the kingdom were taken from the earth. John the Revelator describes it most clearly. And from that time until Joseph Smith was called by the voice of the Almighty, and ordained to hold those keys, no man held them upon the earth that we know of. It is true the Lord did appoint other twelve upon this continent, and his Church flourished and prospered in this land for many years, but the Lord declared that Peter, James and John, and the twelve that walked with him at Jerusalem, held the presidency over them. God may reveal himself to different nations, and establish among them the same gospel and ordinances as he did anciently, if necessity require, but if these nations should be joined together there would be one head, and all the rest would be subordinate. So that from the time that the keys of this priesthood were taken from the earth until they were received by Joseph Smith, no man ever possessed that priesthood, nor the keys thereof, with authority to build up the Zion of God, and prepare a church or people for the second coming of Christ, "as a bride is adorned for the bridegroom," unless it may have been among the lost tribes, yet of this we have no knowledge, but if so they would receive those keys necessary to administer in the ordinances of the gospel for their salvation. We know not of their existence or the condition in which they are placed. The gospel that is given to them is suited to their needs and conditions, and is for their salvation, not ours; and yet, it will be the same gospel. And God will not call one from them to give to us the priesthood, or to give to us the keys

and blessings, or to point out the organizations of the Kingdom of God, because he has established that priesthood here, and we have it. If he has any communication to make to us he will send his messengers to us. And in this way he will deliver his law and give his mind and will to the people. He will do it through the ordained channels of the priesthood which he acknowledges and which he has established in the earth. He will go nowhere else to do it, neither will he send us to them, unless they should be without the priesthood and it becomes necessary to take the blessings of the gospel to them, and I presume that will be the case.

When Joseph received the keys of the priesthood, he alone on the earth held them; that is, he was the first, he stood at the head. It was promised that he should not lose them nor be removed out of his place, as long as he was faithful. And when he died, President Young was chosen by the voice of the people, and sanctioned by the voice of God. He held the priesthood which was after the order of the Son of God, with the keys which pertain to the presidency of that priesthood upon earth. He received it from the hands of Joseph, directly from him or by his authority; and he held it until his death. When he died, that mantle fell upon John Taylor, and while he lives he will hold that authority, inasmuch as he is faithful. So it was with President Brigham Young: he held it on condition of his faithfulness. If any man in that position should become unfaithful, God would remove him out of his place. I testify in the name of Israel's God that he will not suffer the head of the Church, whom he has chosen to stand at the head, to transgress his laws and apostatize; the moment he should take a course that would in time lead to it, God would take him away. Why? Because to suffer a wicked man to occupy that position would be to allow, as it were, the fountain to become corrupted, which is something he will never permit.

The moment a man says he will not submit to the legally constituted authority of the Church, whether it be the teachers, the bishopric, the high council, his quorum, or the First Presidency, and in his heart confirms it and carries it out, that moment he cuts himself off from the privileges and blessings of the priesthood and Church, and severs himself from the people of God, for he ignores the authority that the Lord has instituted in his Church. These are the men that generally get crochets in their heads, that get inspiration (from beneath), and that are often so desirous to guide the Church, and to sit in judgment upon the priesthood. The only safe way for us to do, as individuals, is to live so humbly, so righteously and so faithfully before God that we may possess his Spirit to that extent that we shall be able to judge righteously, and discern between truth and error, between right and wrong; and then we shall know when a decision is rendered against us that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, we are in error, and that the decision is right; and although we may, at the time, not be fully able to see and feel its justness, yet will be constrained to say that inasmuch as there are sixteen chances against one for me to be wrong, "I will gracefully and humbly submit." The pith of the matter is: the Lord has established his Church, organized his priesthood, and conferred authority upon certain individuals, councils and quorums, and it is the duty of the people of God to live so that they shall know that these are acceptable unto him. If we begin to cut off this one and that one, and set their authority aside, we may just as well at once set God aside, and say he has no right to dictate.—*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 24, pp. 187-194, 1884, Ogden, June 21, 1883.

THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS. I say to my brethren that the book of Doctrine and Covenants contains some of the most glorious principles ever revealed to the world, some that have been revealed in greater fulness than they were



ever revealed before to the world; and this, in fulfilment of the promises of the ancient prophets that in the latter times the Lord would reveal things to the world that had been kept hidden from the foundation thereof; and the Lord has revealed them through the Prophet Joseph Smith.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1913, p. 9.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE. That which characterizes above all else the inspiration and divinity of the Scriptures is the spirit in which they are written and the spiritual wealth they convey to those who faithfully and conscientiously read them. Our attitude, therefore, toward the Scriptures should be in harmony with the purposes for which they were written. They are intended to enlarge man's spiritual endowments and to reveal and intensify the bond of relationship between him and his God. The Bible, as all other books of Holy Writ, to be appreciated must be studied by those spiritually inclined and who are in quest of spiritual truths.—*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 47, p. 204, April, 1912.

PERSECUTION FOLLOWS REVELATION. I do not believe there ever was a people who were guided by revelation, or acknowledged of the Lord as his people, that were not hated and persecuted by the wicked and the corrupt, and perhaps no people were ever more persecuted than this people would be if it were in the power of the enemy today to persecute us as it was in the power of Nero and the Romans to persecute the Saints in their day. There never was a time when it was more fixed and determined in the heart of the wicked to fight against and destroy the kingdom from the earth than now, and their failure will be due only to the impossibility of the task they have undertaken. And this is an evidence to every one that God's priesthood is here, that many of the Saints are magnifying their callings and honoring the priesthood and also the Lord, both with their lives and with their substance, which are his.—*Deseret Weekly News*, Vol. 24, p. 708, 1875.