

# DOCTRINE & COVENANTS & CHURCH HISTORY GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

\* GREEN MOUNTAIN 1<sup>ST</sup> WARD \* LAKEWOOD, COLORADO \* 01/04/09 \* PAGE 1 \*

## Lesson 1: Introduction to the Doctrine & Covenants and Church History, D&C 1; Introduction to *Our Heritage*

### Introduction



Laying of the Capstone - 6 April 1892

If you were to look closely at a picture of the Salt Lake Temple, you might notice the ball on top of the temple that the statue of angel Moroni stands upon. The upper half of that ball is the capstone of the Salt Lake Temple. On 6 April 1892, the Church held a general conference in the Tabernacle. Shortly before noon, President Wilford Woodruff dismissed the meeting. Forty thousand people gathered on Temple Square, with thousands more surrounding it. President Woodruff then pressed a button, and the capstone was lowered into place. Down below, the Tabernacle Choir, accompanied by a band, began singing the hymn *"The Spirit of God,"* and the Saints joined in. Then they gave the Hosanna Shout and waved white handkerchiefs, showing their joy that the Salt Lake Temple was near completion.

**President Ezra Taft Benson**, the 13th President of the Church, explained that the Doctrine and Covenants can be described as the capstone of our religion:

*"The Doctrine and Covenants brings men to Christ's kingdom, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 'the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth' [D&C 1:30]. . . . The Book of Mormon is the 'keystone' of our religion, and the Doctrine and Covenants is the capstone, with continuing latter-day revelation. The Lord has placed His stamp of approval on both the keystone and the capstone"* (Ensign, May 1987, 83). The keystone and the capstone teach us about the Savior, who is the cornerstone of our religion (Ephesians 2:20). These scriptures also testify of the Savior and of the truthfulness of His gospel.



Today's lesson is designed to introduce this year's study of the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history and to help us understand our place in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

### The revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants address the needs of our day.

The Explanatory Introduction, found at the beginning of the Doctrine and Covenants, teaches us that *"the Doctrine and Covenants is unique because it is not a translation of an ancient document, but*

*is of modern origin and was given of God through his chosen prophets for the restoration of his holy work and the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth in these days."*

### Lesson Highlights

- The revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants address the needs of our day.
- The Lord authored the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants.
- This course will discuss major events of the dispensation of the fulness of times.
- We can each help to move forward this great latter-day work.

**A study of this lesson introduces us to this year's study of the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history and will help us understand our place in the dispensation of the fulness of times.**



The Explanatory Introduction also teaches us how the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were received. *"These sacred revelations were received in answer to prayer, in times of need, and came out of real-life situations involving real people. The Prophet and his associates sought for divine guidance, and these revelations certify that they received it. In the revelations one sees the restoration and unfolding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times."*

It is helpful to understand that most of the revelations came as answers to prayers because it underscores the importance of continuing revelation in guiding the Church.

### The Lord authored the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants.

On 1 November 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith presided at a special conference of elders, held in Hiram, Ohio. Those in attendance decided to compile some of the revelations the Prophet had received and publish them in a book called the Book of Commandments. Following the first session of this conference, the Lord signified His approval for the publication by giving Joseph Smith a revelation that He called *'my preface unto the book of my commandments'* (D&C 1:6). This revelation is now section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

**President Ezra Taft Benson** said: *"The Doctrine and Covenants is the only book in the world that has a preface written by the Lord Himself. In that preface He declares to the world that His voice is unto all men (see v. 2), that the coming of the Lord is nigh (see v. 12), and that the truths found in the Doctrine and Covenants will all be fulfilled (see vs. 37-38)"* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 79).

**D&C 1:4** In D&C 1, the Lord raises a *"voice of warning,"* which He continues throughout the Doctrine and Covenants.

**D&C 1:7-10, 12-16, 31-33** Warnings the Lord issued in this section include: *"the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure"; "the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his work"; "the*

Another paragraph in the Explanatory Introduction highlights some of the doctrines of the gospel that are explained in the Doctrine and Covenants. You may wish to select two or three of these doctrines and consider how our lives would be different without the truths that are revealed about them in the Doctrine and Covenants. *"In the revelations the doctrines of the gospel are set forth with explanations about such fundamental matters as the nature of the Godhead, the origin of man, the reality of Satan, the purpose of mortality, the necessity for obedience, the need for repentance, the workings of the Holy Spirit, the ordinances and performances that pertain to salvation, the destiny of the earth, the future conditions of man after the resurrection and the judgment, the eternity of the marriage relationship, and the eternal nature of the family. ... 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."*

*anger of the Lord...shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth";* they who will not listen to the Lord or his servants will be cut off from among the people; Babylon will fall; the Lord will not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; and the Lord will not always strive with man. These warnings apply to us if we do not harken and repent.

**D&C 1:1-4, 11, 34-35** The messages of the Doctrine and Covenants are intended for 1) the people of His church, 2) people from afar, 3) those on islands of the sea, 4) all men, 5) the rebellious, 6) all people, 7) the ends of the earth, 8) the inhabitants of the earth, and, 9) all flesh.

**D&C 1:4.** These messages will go to all people through the Lord's chosen disciples.

**D&C 1:23, 30** In D&C 1, the Lord foretells the great destiny of His latter-day work. When the Lord revealed this section, the Church had been organized for only one and one-half years and had only a few hundred members. Consider how the prophecies of the Church's growth are now being fulfilled in our day.

**D&C 1:17-28** In D&C 1, the Lord explains some of the purposes for the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. As recorded in these verses, some of the purposes of the revelations include:

- *"That every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world"* (D&C 1:20).

### Doctrine and Covenants 1

is placed first in that book of scripture because it was designated by the Lord as his "preface" to the revelations (D&C 1:6).

A preface, of course, is where a book's author sets forth his purposes in writing and explains what the reader should expect to gain.

Chronologically, however, section 1 was received in November 1831 after section 66 and before section 67.



- "That faith also might increase" (D&C 1:21).
- "That mine everlasting covenant might be established" (D&C 1:22).
- "That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed" (D&C 1:23).
- To help the Lord's servants "come to understanding" (D&C 1:24).
- "And inasmuch as they erred it might be made known" (D&C 1:25).
- "And inasmuch as they sought wisdom they might be instructed" (D&C 1:26).
- "And inasmuch as they sinned they might be chastened, that they might repent" (D&C 1:27).

**This course will discuss major events of the dispensation of the fulness of times.**

**Prophet Joseph Smith:** *"Prophets, priests and kings . . . have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; but they died without the sight; we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory, 'the dispensation of the fulness of times'"* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 231).

Our dispensation is different from any of the previous ones because this dispensation will not end in apostasy and the Church will continue to grow until it fills the earth and the way is prepared for

**We can each help to move forward this great latter-day work.**

Look around the room at the people in your class. We are not here on earth at this time by accident. We have been sent by God to help build His kingdom in this last dispensation. **President Ezra Taft Benson** said, *"There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us"* (quoted by Marvin J. Ashton, Ensign, Nov. 1989, 36).

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** said, *"The most serious challenge we face, and the most wonderful challenge, is the challenge that comes of growth"* (quoted in "President Gordon B. Hinckley," Ensign, Apr. 1995, 6).

Some examples of the Church's efforts to meet these challenges of growth include

- "And inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time" (D&C 1:28).

**D&C 1:37-38 and 18:34-36** The Lord's preface to the Doctrine and Covenants concludes with a commandment to search His words. The Lord teaches us about His words and His voice in these verses, reminding us that true prophets speak for Him. "Searching" the scriptures is far different from merely reading them, so consider how you have benefited from searching the Lord's words in the Doctrine and Covenants.

the Lord's Second Coming. Consider both the blessings and the responsibilities of living in this dispensation.

This dispensation can be divided into six historical periods:

<b>New York Period</b> 1820-1830	<b>Ohio-Missouri Period</b> 1831-1838	<b>Nauvoo Period</b> 1839-1846
<b>Pioneering the West</b> 1846-1898	<b>Expansion of the Church</b> 1899-1950	<b>The Worldwide Church</b> 1951-present

Many important events in these periods are summarized in *"Church History Chronology"*, pages 27-28, Class Member Study Guide.

the dramatic increase in temple building, efforts to build priesthood leadership, and the hastening of the translation of scriptures into many languages. We can see and feel the excitement of the Church's growth. However, the Lord needs more than onlookers who cheer from the sidelines; we must ask ourselves if we are keeping pace and doing our part as families and as individuals.

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** said: *"This is a season of a thousand opportunities. It is ours to grasp and move forward. What a wonderful time it is for each of us to do his or her small part in moving the work of the Lord on to its magnificent destiny"* (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 67).

We are privileged to live in the dispensation of the fulness of times. We can see the Church rolling forth as prophesied anciently (Daniel 2:44-45; see also D&C 65:2). We enjoy the blessings of the restored gospel. We hear the voice of the Lord as we read the Doctrine and Covenants. We are led by a living prophet. The course of study this year will help us understand more about the opportunities and blessings of living in this dispensation.

**Gospel Doctrine Notebook**

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What are the consequences of a failure to listen to the Lord?
- How shall we know what the Lord requires?



## Supplemental Information on the Doctrine and Covenants

### What is the “Doctrine” and “Covenants”?

- The “Doctrine” was the Lectures on Faith that formed part One of the 1835 edition
- The “Covenants” were revelations that formed part two of the 1835 edition (Revelation is knowledge given from God to man)
- It is the text by which we shall be judged
- It is a compilation of revelations, an account of the martyrdom, statements of policy, prayers (109), minutes of a high council meeting (107), and letters and epistles (124, 85)

### The Doctrine and Covenants was received by:

- Personal Visitation: Heavenly messengers, angels, and resurrected beings delivered messages. The messengers included Moroni (Section 2), John the Baptist (Section 13), an angel (section 27), Moses, Elias, Elijah, and the Savior (Section 110).
- Urim and Thummim: Some of the earlier revelations such as 3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 17.
- Open Vision: Section 76 is a prime example of an open vision providing revelation
- Voice: D&C 130 was a prophecy declared by “a voice”
- Inspiration and confirmation: Through the spirit of prophecy and revelation, the “still, small voice” (D&C 85:6) and the Spirit act directly on the mind, providing inspired thoughts and ideas. This was the most frequent method by which the contents of the Doctrine and Covenants were received.

### Early Editions of the Doctrine and Covenants

- The “Article and Covenants” was essentially Section 20.
- The “Book of the Law of the Lord” was a further compilation of revelations which was published in the Evening and Morning Star
- The “Book of Commandments” was compiled in 1833.
  - Most copies and the printing press were destroyed by a mob
  - 65 chapters—all revelations—were published in one part
  - Section 1 was given by the Lord for the preface
  - Some 3,000 copies were to be printed
  - It measured 2.5 x 4 x 0.5 inches thick
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1835 edition was
  - Printed in Kirtland, Ohio
  - Divided into two parts
  - Composed of 102 sections and the Lectures on Faith (theological lessons)
  - Section 133 was inserted in the appendix of the book
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1844 edition:
  - Printed in Nauvoo, Illinois
  - Contained 111 sections as well as the Lectures on Faith
  - Followed the two-part order of the 1835 edition
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1876 edition was
  - Composed of 136 sections and the Lectures on Faith
    - Sections 2, 13, 77, 85, 87, 108-111, 113-118, 120-123, 125, 126, 129-132, and 136 were added after Joseph Smith’s death
  - The first edition printed in Utah
  - Divided by Elder Orson Pratt into short verses with footnotes and references in 1879
  - The first in which Section 132 replaced Section 109 on marriage (109 was omitted)
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1908 edition
  - Included the “Manifesto”, which was added to the back of the book. It officially replaced the teaching of section 132.
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1921 edition
  - Removed the Lectures on Faith
  - Included headings and footings by Elder James E. Talmage
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1981 edition
  - Added sections 137-138
  - Added the Official Declaration 2 (all worthy male members could now hold the priesthood)
  - Updated the headings and enhanced the cross references

### Individuals involved in receiving the revelations and visions included:

- Joseph Smith, Jr., Brigham Young—Section 136, Oliver Cowdrey—Section 134, John Taylor—Section 135, Wilford Woodruff—The “Manifesto”, Lorenzo Snow—Affirmation of the “Manifesto”, Joseph F. Smith—Section 138, Spencer W. Kimball—Official Declaration 2

## Supplemental Information on the Doctrine and Covenants - continued

### The Importance of the Doctrine and Covenants is stated in the following scriptures:

- D&C 1:37. It contains commandments from the Lord
- D&C 11:22; 26:1. It tells us what we should study
- D&C 18:33-36 tells us the source of the words
- D&C 33:16 tells us why the Lord gave us the scriptures
- D&C 42:12-13 reveals the sources from which the missionaries should teach
- D&C 84:60-61 command us to receive these words
- D&C 88:66 tells us the D&C contains truth
- D&C 88:76-78 teach us what we should learn from studying the D&C
- D&C 88:118 concerns teaching and learning

### Selected verses of D&C section 1:

- D&C 1:14, 38 which emphasize the Lord's speaking and our hearing
- D&C 1:16 warns us against walking in our own way
- D&C 1:23 tells the 18-month-old, 680-member Church was told that the gospel would be proclaimed to the ends of the world
- D&C 1:17-23 contains prophecies being fulfilled in our lifetime
- D&C 1:19, 23 teach that the Lord uses weak and simple servants for great works
- D&C 1:24-28 promises that weak and simple servants become strong
- D&C 1:24-28 contains teachings about the purposes of the revelations in the D&C
- D&C 1:3, 13, 33 warn of the consequences of being rebellious and disobedient
- D&C 1:32 tells us how to find favor with the Lord
- D&C 1:37 teaches that searching the scriptures is different than reading them