



# DOCTRINE & COVENANTS

## & CHURCH HISTORY GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

\* GREEN MOUNTAIN 1<sup>ST</sup> WARD \* LAKEWOOD, COLORADO \* 11 OCTOBER 2009 \* PAGE 1 \*

### Lesson 37: "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," D&C 21; 43:1-7; Articles of Faith 1:9; Our Heritage, Page 131.

#### Introduction

Before **President Hugh B.**

**Brown** was called as a General Authority, he spent some time in England working as a barrister, or attorney. He befriended a prominent Englishman who was a member of the House of Commons and a former justice of the supreme court of Britain. The two men often discussed various subjects, including religion.

In 1939, when it appeared that World War II would soon break out, the English gentleman called Brother Brown into his office. He asked Brother Brown to defend his religious beliefs in the same way he would discuss a legal problem. In a general conference address, President Brown recalled part of their conversation:

*"I began by asking, 'May I proceed, sir, on the assumption that you are a Christian?'"*

*"I am."*

*"I assume that you believe in the Bible—the Old and New Testaments?"*

*"I do!"*

*The English gentleman said that he believed the biblical accounts of the Lord speaking to prophets. However, he maintained that such communication had stopped soon after the Resurrection of Christ. The conversation continued with another question from Brother Brown: "Why do you think it stopped?"*

*"I can't say."*

*"You think that God hasn't spoken since then?"*

*"Not to my knowledge."*

*"May I suggest some possible reasons why he has not spoken. Perhaps it is because he cannot. He has lost the power."*

*"He said, 'Of course that would be blasphemous.'"*

*"Well, then, if you don't accept that, perhaps he doesn't speak to men because he doesn't love us anymore. He is no longer interested in the affairs of men."*

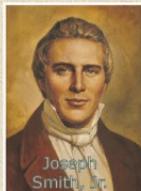
*"No," he said, "God loves all men, and he is no respecter of persons."*

*"Well, then, ... the only other possible answer as I see it is that we don't need him. We have made such rapid strides in education and science that we don't need God any more."*

*"And then he said, and his voice trembled as he thought of impending war, 'Mr. Brown, there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God was needed as it is needed now. Perhaps you can tell me why he doesn't speak.'"*

*"My answer was, 'He does speak, he has spoken; but men need faith to hear him' "*

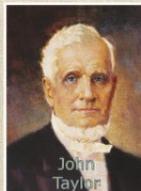
*(Improvement Era, Dec. 1967, 36-37).*



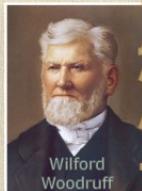
Joseph Smith, Jr.



Brigham Young



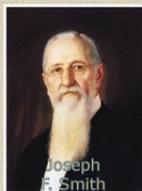
John Taylor



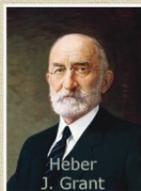
Wilford Woodruff



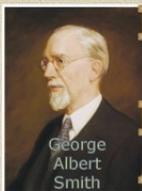
Lorenzo Snow



Joseph F. Smith



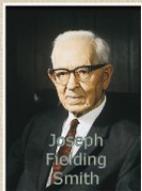
Heber J. Grant



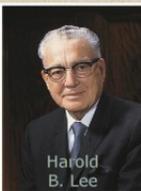
George Albert Smith



David O. McKay



Joseph Fielding Smith



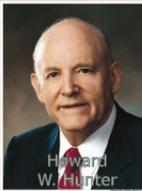
Harold B. Lee



Spencer W. Kimball



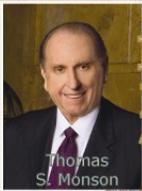
Ezra Taft Benson



Howard W. Hunter



Gordon B. Hinckley



Thomas S. Monson

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#### Lesson Highlights

- Our need for a living prophet
- The roles of our living prophet
- Heeding the words of our living prophet
- Latter-day prophets' example of Christlike love

**A study of this lesson will help us recognize the need for our living prophet, understand his roles, and more faithfully obey his counsel.**

#### Next Week

#38 "In Mine Own Way" (D&C 38:30; 42:30-31, 42; 58:26-28; 104:13-18; Our Heritage, pp. 108-9, 111-14)

## Our need for a living prophet

The counsel of the living prophet helps us respond to all the major problems and needs of our day.

While serving as President of the Quorum of the Twelve, **President Ezra Taft Benson** said: *"The most important prophet, so far as we are concerned, is the one who is living in our day and age. This is the prophet who has today's*

*instructions from God to us today. God's revelation to Adam did not instruct Noah how to build the ark. Every generation has need of the ancient scripture plus the current scripture from the living prophet. Therefore, the most crucial reading and pondering which you should do is of the latest inspired words from the Lord's mouthpiece"* (in Conference Report, Korea Area Conference 1975, 52).

## The roles of our living prophet

The members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are all prophets, seers, and revelators. However, only the President of the Church is authorized to receive revelation for the entire Church and to exercise all the priesthood keys necessary to govern the Church.

The Doctrine and Covenants provides important information about the roles of our living prophet.

### The prophet speaks for the Lord and reveals the Lord's will.

**Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 21:4-5; 43:2; 68:3-4.** We have received guidance from recent prophets regarding building strong families, doing temple work, helping new members of the Church, staying out of debt, and reading the Book of Mormon, among other things.

### The prophet testifies of Jesus Christ and teaches the gospel.

**Doctrine and Covenants 20:21-26; Mosiah 13:33.** Consider how has your testimony of the Savior been strengthened by the words of our living prophet.

## Heeding the words of our living prophet

**D&C 21:4-6** teach about members' responsibility to give diligent heed to the prophet and promise us certain blessings if we are obedient and faithful in following his inspired counsel.

**President Harold B. Lee** taught: *"The only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized [see D&C 21:4-5]... There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against you' [D&C 21:6]"* (Improvement Era, Dec. 1970, 126).

### The prophet is a seer.

**Doctrine and Covenants 21:1; Mosiah 8:13-18.** A seer is a prophet upon whom God bestows great power to know the past and the future. He can know of things that are not known or are hidden. He also can have the power to translate ancient records.

**D&C 101:43-54.** Think about how this parable teaches us a lesson about giving attention to the counsel of the President of the Church.

### The prophet presides over the Church.

**Doctrine and Covenants 107:91-92.** The President of the Church is chosen by God and receives direction, inspiration, and guidance from God for the Church. It is our opportunity and responsibility to sustain the prophet by word and deed--See D&C 107:22.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson taught, *"Keep your eye on the Prophet, for the Lord will never permit his Prophet to lead this Church astray"* (in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 123).

Inspired counsel from the prophet can be found in General Conference talks, First Presidency messages, and other articles in Church publications as well as any direction given in Church meetings and passed along from the First Presidency.

Closing one general conference, **President Ezra Taft Benson** said, *"For the next six months, your conference edition of the Ensign should stand next to your standard works and be referred to frequently"* (Ensign, May 1988, 84).

This is similar counsel as that given by **Elder Harold B. Lee** in 1946 when he stated that the conference report should *"be the guide to [our] walk and talk during the next six months"* (Conf. Rpt., April 1946, 68).



We never fail to gain blessings when we follow the counsel of the prophet, as demonstrated in this story related by **Elder Bruce D. Porter** of the Seventy when he was a young married college student in Boston: *"My [home teaching] companion and I arrived at their modest apartment one evening to home teach them. They had just completed a home evening with their little baby. I made a mental note that it would be a good idea for my wife and I to start holding home evenings so...when a child arrived we would already have the habit. Then they eagerly showed us their Book of Remembrance in which they had collected many names of ancestors from both sides of their family. I remembered that it had been a long time since I had looked at my Book of Remembrance. After our lesson they took us out to the screened back porch where were stacked ice cream*

*buckets filled with wheat, sugar, flour, and other food—a complete year's supply of food. I had supposed, somehow, that as students that counsel didn't apply to us! By now I was feeling very humble. I had come to teach them, but they were teaching me in every point. As we left their little apartment I noticed a picture of the temple hanging near their door. I remembered that Pres. Spencer W. Kimball said that every Latter-day Saint family should have a picture of the temple prominently displayed in their home, and I remembered that we didn't have one... I went home, filled with a spirit of repentance, and found a small picture of the Swiss Temple in a mission brochure. I cut it out and taped it to our wall. Since that time we have always had a picture of the temple in our home. Every time I look at it, it reminds me of a young convert couple who taught us what it meant to 'follow the prophet'." (address given in the Bountiful Mueller Park Stake conference, 17 Jan. 1999).*

### **Latter-day prophets' example of Christlike love**

The Presidents of the Church have served others selflessly and with great love. We can learn much from their example.

From the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith comes this story:

John Lyman Smith and his family came to Nauvoo when it was first being settled by the Saints. The only place the family could find to live at first was a stable made of logs. Everyone in the family except the mother soon came down with fevers as a result of living in the swampy area. **John Lyman Smith** said of the experience:

*"The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum visited us and administered to all of us, father being delirious from the effects of the fever. Their words comforted us greatly, as they said in the name of the Lord 'you all shall be well again.' Upon leaving the hovel, Joseph placed his slippers upon my father's feet and sprang upon his horse from the doorway and rode home barefoot. The next day Joseph removed father to his own house and nursed him until he recovered"* (quoted in *Stories about Joseph Smith the Prophet: A Collection of Incidents Related by Friends Who Knew Him*, comp. Edwin F. Parry [1934], 33–34).

### **Conclusion**

We are led by the word of God given through His prophet. As we listen to the prophet's counsel and act on his instructions, we will receive the direction and strength necessary to meet the challenges of our day.

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** exemplified Christlike love:

In 1998 a devastating hurricane caused great destruction in Central America. The Church sent large amounts of relief food and supplies. President Gordon B. Hinckley felt that he should go to Honduras and Nicaragua to meet with and encourage the people there. Later in a Christmas devotional, President Hinckley spoke of a two-year-old girl he met on this trip who had been orphaned in the disaster. Her mother had died a few months before the hurricane, and when the hurricane hit, the father piled the furniture in his house to avoid the rising water.

President Hinckley related that the father *"took a little mattress and placed it at the top and laid [his daughter] on it. In his frantic and desperate effort he suffered a stroke and died. ... No one knew anything of her, until a young man, two days later, happened to look up in that abandoned house and saw her still alive. He tenderly brought her down and delivered her to the bishop and the bishop's wife. It was there that we saw her. ..."*

*"I would hope that at this Christmas season, when there will be no gift-giving among these devastated people, this small orphan girl might receive perhaps a little taste of candy, something sweet and delicious. I must see that that happens.*

*"God bless the people everywhere ... that their hearts may be opened and their hands extended to help the needy" (Church News, 12 Dec. 1998, 4).*

### **Gospel Doctrine Notebook**

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- How have you been blessed because there is a living prophet on earth today?
- How has your testimony of the Savior been strengthened by the words of our living prophet?



<p><b>Joseph Smith Jr.</b> Served 1830–1844</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Dec. 23, 1805, in Sharon, Windsor Co., Vermont, to Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Emma Hale on Jan. 18, 1827.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> May or June 1829 at age 23.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Jan. 25, 1832 at age 26. Served 12 years (1832–1844).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on June 27, 1844, at the age of 38, in Carthage, Hancock Co., Illinois.</p>	<p><b>Brigham Young</b> Served 1847--1877</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born June 1, 1801, in Whitingham, Windham Co., Vermont, to John Young and Abigail Howe.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Feb. 14, 1835, at age 33.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Dec. 27, 1847, at age 46. Served 30 years (1847–1877).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Aug. 29, 1877, at the age of 76, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>John Taylor</b> Served 1880–1887</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Nov. 1, 1808, in Milnthorpe, Westmorland Co., England, to James Taylor and Agnes Taylor.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Dec. 19, 1838, at age 30.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Oct. 10, 1880, at age 71. Served 7 years (1880–1887).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on July 25, 1887, at the age of 78, in Kaysville, Davis Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Wilford Woodruff</b> Served 1887–1898</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Mar. 1, 1807, in Avon (Farmington), Hartford Co., Connecticut, to Aphek Woodruff and Beulah Thompson.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Apr. 26, 1839, at age 32.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Apr. 7, 1889, at age 82. Served 9 years (1889–1898).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Sept. 2, 1898, at the age of 91, in San Francisco, San Francisco Co., California.</p>
<p><b>Lorenzo Snow</b> Served 1898–1901</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Apr. 3, 1814 in Mantua, Portage Co., Ohio to Oliver Snow and Rosetta Leonora Pettibone.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Feb. 12, 1849 at age 34.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Sept. 13, 1898 at age 84. Served 3 years (1898–1901).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Oct. 10, 1901, at the age of 87, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Joseph F. Smith</b> Served 1901–1918</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Nov. 13, 1838, in Far West, Caldwell Co., Missouri, to Hyrum Smith and Mary Fielding.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> July 1, 1866, at age 27.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Oct. 17, 1901, at age 62. Served 17 years (1901–1918).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Nov. 19, 1918, at the age of 80, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Heber J. Grant</b> Served 1918–1945</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Nov. 22, 1856, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah, to Jedediah M. Grant and Rachel Ridgeway Ivins.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Oct. 16, 1882, at age 25.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Nov. 23, 1918, at age 62. Served 27 years (1918–1945).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on May 14, 1945, at the age of 88, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>George Albert Smith</b> Served 1945–1951</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Apr. 4, 1870, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah to John Henry Smith and Sarah Farr.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Lucy Emily Woodruff on May 25, 1892.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Oct. 8, 1903, at age 33.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> May 21, 1945, at age 75. Served 6 years (1945–1951).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Apr. 4, 1951, at the age of 81, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>
<p><b>David O. McKay</b> Served 1951–1970</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Sept. 8, 1873, in Huntsville, Weber Co., Utah, to David McKay and Jennette Eveline Evans.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Emma Ray Riggs on Jan. 2, 1901.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Apr. 9, 1906, at age 32.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Apr. 9, 1951, at age 77. Served 19 years (1951–1970).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Jan. 18, 1970, at the age of 96, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Joseph Fielding Smith</b> Served 1970–1972</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born July 19, 1876, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah to Joseph Fielding Smith and Julina Lambson.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Louie E. Shurtliff on Apr. 26, 1898, (died Mar. 30, 1908); married Ethel G. Reynolds on Nov. 2, 1908 (died Aug. 26, 1937); married Jessie Ella Evans on Apr. 12, 1938 (died Aug. 3, 1971).</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Apr. 7, 1910, at age 33.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Jan. 23, 1970, at age 93. Served 2 years (1970–1972).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on July 2, 1972, at the age of 95, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Harold B. Lee</b> Served 1972–1973</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Mar. 28, 1899, in Clifton, Oneida Co., Idaho to Samuel Marion Lee and Louisa Emeline Bingham.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Fern Lucinda Tanner on Nov. 14, 1923, (died Sept. 24, 1962); married Freda Joan Jensen on June 17, 1963.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Apr. 10, 1941, at age 42.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> July 7, 1972, at age 73. Served 1.5 years (1972–1973).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Dec. 26, 1973, at the age of 74, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Spencer W. Kimball</b> Served 1973–1985</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Mar. 28, 1895, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah to Andrew Kimball and Olive Woolley.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Camilla Eyring on Nov. 16, 1917.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Oct. 7, 1943, at age 48.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Dec. 30, 1973, at age 78. Served 12 years (1973–1985).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Nov. 5, 1985, at the age of 90, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>
<p><b>Ezra Taft Benson</b> Served 1985–1994</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Aug. 4, 1899, in Whitney, Franklin Co., Idaho to George T. Benson and Sarah Dunkley.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Flora Smith Amussen on Sept. 10, 1926.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Oct. 7, 1943, at age 44.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Nov. 10, 1985, at age 86. Served 8.5 years (1985–1994).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on May 30, 1994, at the age of 94, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Howard W. Hunter</b> Served 1994–1995</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born Nov. 14, 1907 in Boise, Ada Co., Idaho to John William Hunter and Nellie Marie Rasmussen.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Clara May (Claire) Jeffs on June 10, 1931 (died Oct. 9, 1983); married Inis Bernice Egan on Apr. 12, 1990.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Oct. 15, 1959, at age 51. Became President: June 5, 1994, at age 86. Served 9 months (1994–1995).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Mar. 3, 1995, at the age of 87, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Gordon B. Hinckley</b> Served 1995–2008</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born June 23, 1910 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah to Bryant S. Hinckley and Ada Bitner.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Marjorie Pay on Apr. 29, 1937.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> Oct. 5, 1961 at age 51.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> Mar. 12, 1995 at age 84. Served (1995–2008).</p> <p><b>Death:</b> Died on Jan 27, 2008, at the age of 97, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.</p>	<p><b>Thomas S. Monson</b> Served 2008–</p> <p><b>Birth:</b> Born August 21, 1927 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah to G. Spencer and Gladys Condie Monson.</p> <p><b>Marriage:</b> Married Frances Beverly Johnson on October 7, 1948.</p> <p><b>Ordained an Apostle:</b> October 10, 1963 at age 36.</p> <p><b>Became President:</b> 2008</p>