

GD Lesson 42 --Continuing Revelation to Latter-day Prophets

(Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 68:1-4; 84:109-10; 107:25, 34, 93-98; 132:8)

LESSON GOAL: To show us that the Lord continues to guide the Church through revelation to latter-day prophets, seers, and revelators.

Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and **lean not unto thine own understanding.** In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

D&C 121: 33: "What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints."

This promise was given on day 111 of Joseph's imprisonment in the Liberty Jail! In the midst of the darkness of this world, the Almighty will not forget His people. **He will continue to pour out knowledge and revelation upon them.**

D&C 1:38: 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.

President Harold B. Lee: "If you want to know what the Lord has for this people at the present time, I would admonish you to get and **read the discourses that have been delivered at this conference**, for what these brethren have spoken by the power of the Holy Ghost is the mind of the Lord, the will of the Lord, the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto Salvation" (April 8, 1973).

President Harold B. Lee: "As the Latter-day Saints go home, it would be well if they consider seriously the importance of taking with them the report of **this conference** and let it be **the guide to their walk and talk** during the next six months. **These are the important matters the Lord sees fit to reveal to this people in this day ...**" (April 1946).

President Ezra Taft Benson once listed "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet." Some of those points underline the importance of continuing revelation in the Church through the living prophet of God: **Point 2: "The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works. Point 3: "The living prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet." Point 9: "The prophet can receive revelation on any matter, temporal or spiritual."** (Ezra Taft Benson, "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet" Liahona, June 1981, 1-8).

James E. Faust: I do not believe members of this Church can be in full harmony with the Savior **without sustaining His living prophet on the earth**, the President of the Church. **If we do not sustain the living prophet, whoever he may be, we die spiritually.** Ironically, some have died spiritually by exclusively following prophets who have long been dead. Others equivocate in their support of living prophets, trying to lift themselves up by subtly putting down the living prophets.

In our lifetime we have been favored with ongoing communication from the heavens, which have been open to the prophets of our time... **This process of revelation comes to the Church very frequently. This is necessary for the Church to fulfill its mission. Without it, we would fail**" ("Continuing Revelation," *Ensign*, Aug. 1996, 5).

President Ezra Taft Benson: "God's revelations to Adam did not instruct Noah how to build the ark. Noah needed his own revelation. **Therefore, the most important prophet, so far as you and I are concerned, is the one living in our day and age to whom the Lord is currently revealing His will for us**" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 335).

1. Church correlation

D&C 132:8: Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and **not a house of confusion.**

What is priesthood correlation? It is that system of Church administration in which we take all of the programs of the Church, wrap them in one package, operate them as one program, and involve all the members of the Church in that operation. It is a system, which requires us to operate within the existing framework of the Church to preserve "the right way of God." **Ultimately it is intended to help accomplish the mission of the Church, which is to invite all people to "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him."**

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve oversee correlation in the Church. Correlation includes:

- Maintaining **purity of doctrine**.
- Emphasizing the importance of **the family and the home**.
- Placing all the work of the Church under **priesthood** direction.
- Establishing **proper relationships** among the organizations of the Church.
- Achieving **unity** and **order** in the Church.
- Ensuring **simplicity** of Church programs and materials.

THE CHURCH'S CORRELATION EFFORTS BLESS OUR LIVES:

Importance of the family—FHE, teach gospel, organizations for family, control activity demands

Operation of Church auxiliaries—initially independent (funding, magazines, lessons) now correlated

Preparation of Church publications—scripturally based, doctrinally accurate, appropriate for audience

Home teaching—

D&C 20:53-55: The teacher's duty is to **watch over the church** always, and be with and **strengthen them**; And see that there is **no iniquity** in the church, **neither hardness with each other**, neither **lying, backbiting**, nor **evil speaking**; And see that the church **meet together often**, and also see that **all the members do their duty**.

2. Revelation extending the priesthood to every worthy male member of the Church

- Read D&C Official Declaration #2

3. Publication of new Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures

Boyd K. Packer: "I cannot possibly describe in detail or even list all that has been put in place by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in recent years. In them you will see continuing revelation, open to the Church and to each individual member.

"To cross-reference more than 70,000 verses of scripture and provide footnotes and helps was known to be enormously difficult, perhaps even impossible. But it was begun. It took 12 years and the help of over 600 people to complete. Some were experts in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew or had a knowledge of ancient scriptures. But most were ordinary, faithful members of the Church. The spirit of inspiration brooded over the work. The project would have been impossible without the computer. A remarkable system was designed to organize tens of thousands of footnotes to open the scriptures to every ploughboy and every ploughgirl.

"With the foundation doctrines in place as solid as the granite in the Salt Lake Temple and open to everyone, more could witness the constant flow of revelation to the Church" (*Conference Report*, October 2005).

4. Additional Quorums of the Seventy

As the Church has grown, the Lord has revealed how general Church administration should change to meet the needs of members all over the world, especially evident in the organization of additional Quorums of the Seventy.

D&C 107:25, 34: The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. **The Seventy are to act in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Twelve or the traveling high council**, in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations, first unto the Gentiles and then to the Jews.

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "With these respective quorums in place, we have established a pattern under which the Church may grow to any size with an organization of Area Presidencies and Area Authority Seventies, chosen and working across the world according to need. Now, the Lord is watching over His kingdom. **He is inspiring its leadership to care for its ever growing membership**" (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1997).

Important Dates of Recent Revelations:

- 1950 – Early morning seminary began in California and expanded
- 1952 – First official proselyting plan (7 discussions)
- 1953 – Church Educational System (CES) established
- 1960 – Home teachers officially named
- 1961 – Missionary Language Training Center (LTM) began
- 1961 – Correlation Committee formed
- 1964 -- The Priesthood Executive Committee and the Ward Council were established at the ward level to coordinate/correlate efforts at the local level
- 1964 -- Home Teaching was established
- 1965 -- Family Home Evening manuals were published
- 1969 – Church Social Services set up (adoption, foster care, etc)
- 1971 – Church incorporated 3 magazines in English: *The Friend*, *The New Era*, *The Ensign*
- 1975 – The First Council of the Seventy
- 1978 – The priesthood available to every worthy male member
- 1978 – The LDS version of the King James Bible with the Topical Guide and the Bible Dictionary
- 1980 -- Consolidation of ward meeting schedules.
- 1981 – One-volume triple combination: Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price
- 1989 – The Second Council of the Seventy
- 1995 – Area Authorities called to replace Regional Representatives; Sept. 23, Proclamation on the Family
- 1997 – Area Authorities called as Seventies
- 2000 – April General Conference held in the Conference Center

The process of the Lord communicating regularly with His Church is called continuing revelation.

GENERAL CONFERENCE ADDRESSES – October 2013 Conference

Elder Robert D. Hales: “Strengthening Faith and Testimony”

I testify that we are gathered in His conference, that we will hear His word, for He has said, “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” These conferences are always under the direction of the Lord, guided by His Spirit. . . Heavenly Father wants us to regularly study and apply what we have learned in conference.”

Elder David A. Bednar: “The Windows of Heaven”

Spiritual and temporal blessings come into our lives as we live the law of tithing.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson “The Moral Force of Women”

My plea to women and girls today is to protect and cultivate the moral force that is within you. . . Sisters, it is your relationship with God, our Heavenly Father, the source of your moral power, that you must always put first in your life.

Elder S. Gifford Nielsen “Hastening the Lord’s Game Plan!”

What would you do if the prophet of the Lord really called you? President Thomas S. Monson, as he did this morning, has called each one of us to a very important work. . . This work is not going to move forward in the Lord’s intended way without us!

Elder Arnulfo Valenzuelo “Small and Simple Things”

As members of the Church, we are able, through our own small and simple things, to “[convince] many of the error of their ways” and help bring “them to the knowledge of their God unto the salvation of their souls”. . . I testify that many of those who need our help are there waiting for us to rescue them through small and simple means.

Elder Timothy J. Dyches “Wilt Thou Be Made Whole?”

As we repent and become converted to the Lord, we become whole, and our guilt is swept away. Do you remember the moment you found your testimony or when God confirmed to you that you were His son or daughter and that He loved you very much—and you felt whole? If that time seems lost, it can be found again. The Savior counsels us on how to be made whole—to be complete or become healed.

Elder Quentin L. Cook “Beware of Bondage”

Our challenge is to avoid bondage of any kind, help the Lord gather His elect, and sacrifice for the rising generation. We do not save ourselves. We are liberated by the love, grace, and atoning sacrifice of the Savior.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “Like a Broken Vessel”

Peter wrote that disciples of Jesus Christ are to have “compassion one of another.” I wish to speak to those who suffer from some form of mental illness or emotional disorder, whether those afflictions be slight or severe, of brief duration or persistent over a lifetime. . . Broken minds can be healed just the way broken bones and broken hearts are healed. While God is at work making those repairs, the rest of us can help by being merciful, nonjudgmental, and kind.

Elder M. Russell Ballard “Put Your Trust in the Lord”

Today I want to speak to all members of the Church, because there is an urgency for each one of us to be engaged in sharing the gospel. . . My message this afternoon is that the Lord is hastening His work.

President Henry B. Eyring “To My Grandchildren”

“What choices could I make that will lead me to happiness?” And on the other hand, “What choices are likely to lead me to unhappiness?” . . . Whatever our personal characteristics or whatever will be our experiences, there is but one plan of happiness. That plan is to follow all the commandments of God.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “No Other Gods”

Have we forgotten to follow the Savior who taught that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments? If so, our priorities have been turned upside down by the spiritual apathy and undisciplined appetites so common in our day. . . We must never dilute our first priority—to have no other gods and to serve no other priorities ahead of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Bonnie L. Oscarson: “Be Ye Converted”

True conversion occurs as you continue to act upon the doctrines you know are true and keep the commandments, day after day, month after month. It is possible to have a testimony of the gospel without living it. Being truly converted means we are acting upon what we believe and allowing it to create “a mighty change in us, or in our hearts.” Mosiah 5:2

Elder Richard J. Maynes “The Strength to Endure”

Our ability to endure to the end will be in direct proportion to the strength of our testimony and the depth of our conversion. We cannot get our bodies into good basketball shape by simply watching basketball on television. Similarly, we won’t get our testimonies in shape by simply watching general conference on television. We need to study and learn the fundamental principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then we must do our very best to live them.

Elder Russell M. Nelson “Decisions for Eternity”

The wise use of your freedom to make your own decisions is crucial to your spiritual growth, now and for eternity. Each day is a day of decision. A pivotal spiritual attribute is that of self-mastery—the strength to place reason over appetite.

Elder Richard G. Scott: "Personal Strength Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ"

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, each of us can become clean and the burden of our rebellion will be lifted. Many of us have allowed weakness to develop in our character. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we, like the Ammonites, can build spiritual fortifications between ourselves and any past mistakes that Satan attempts to exploit.

President Thomas S. Monson "I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee"

Our Heavenly Father ... knows that we learn and grow and become stronger as we face and survive the trials through which we must pass. This should be our purpose—to persevere and endure, yes, but also to become more spiritually refined as we make our way through sunshine and sorrow.

Elder Neil L. Andersen "Power in the Priesthood"

We know that the power of the holy priesthood does not work independently of faith, the Holy Ghost, and spiritual gifts. . . We know that worthiness is central to performing and receiving priesthood ordinances.

Elder Kevin S. Hamilton: "Continually Holding Fast"

Continually holding fast to the rod means that we strive to keep all of God's commandments, to have daily personal and family prayer, and to study the scriptures daily. Continually holding fast is part of the doctrine of Christ as taught in the Book of Mormon.

Elder Terence M. Vinson "Drawing Closer to God"

Our Savior wants us to really love Him to the point that we want to align our will with His. God should be the center of our universe—our literal focal point. How do our behavior and actions reflect the integrity of our intents?

President Thomas S. Monson "Till We Meet Again"

May you constantly nourish your testimonies of the gospel that they will be a protection to you against the buffetings of the adversary. May we show increased kindness toward one another, and may we ever be found doing the work of the Lord.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "This brings us to the great and eternal principle of revelation. **Either God speaks and we hear his voice, or the damning curtain of ignorance, unbelief, and disobedience will forever shut us out from his presence. In this sense revelation is the beginning and the end; it is the first great requisite leading to salvation, **the one principle upon which all others rest**, the rock foundation upon which the whole house of salvation is built. Without revelation there is no witness; with it there is light and truth and knowledge and a hope of eternal life. Revelation is essential to salvation.**

"Whenever the Lord has had a people on earth, they have received revelation from appointed prophets, apostles, and seers. **If at any time they ceased to receive revelation, they ceased to be the Lord's people.** This has been the unvarying course from Adam to the present moment. The receipt of revelation is one of the chief identifying characteristics of the true saints; where there are saints there is revelation, and where there is no revelation the saints of the Most High cease to exist among men.

Revelation is as eternal as God himself; he is the Eternal Revelator. When he speaks, his words are revelation; they set forth what is in his heart and mind, and he cannot exist without speaking. Should revelation cease, God would cease to be God, the purposes of creation would come to naught, and all things would vanish away—all of which is beyond the realm of possibility...**Revelations came in days past; revelations come now; and revelations will continue as long as the earth shall stand.** Those saints whose souls are attuned to the Infinite believe all that God has revealed; they need only be taught that any particular truth came by revelation, and they automatically believe it ... **those who are enlightened by the power of the Spirit know by spiritual instinct, without argument, without persuasion, without debate, that any authoritatively announced revelation came from the Divine Source.**
(McConkie, Bruce R. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1985, pp. 475-77; 481.)

President Spencer W. Kimball: "We testify to the world that revelation continues and that the vaults and files of the Church contain those revelations which come month to month and day to day. We testify also that there is, since 1830 when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, and will continue to be, so long as time shall last, a prophet, recognized of God and his people, who will continue to interpret the mind and will of the Lord.

Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the constant flow of revealed communication. I say, in the deepest of humility, but also by the power and force of a burning testimony in my soul, **that from the prophet of the Restoration to the prophet of our own year, the communication line is unbroken, the authority is continuous, a light, brilliant and penetrating, continues to shine. The sound of the voice of the Lord is a continuous melody and a thunderous appeal.** For nearly a century and a half there has been no interruption" (*Ensign*, May 1977, 78).