

# Doctrines of Knowledge and Revelation Confirmed

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## DOCTRINES OF KNOWLEDGE AND REVELATION CONFIRMED

NOTE: CAPITALIZATION IN THESE STUDIES IS FOR EMPHASIS.

We learn from the Prophet Joseph Smith that "It is the privilege of the children of God to come to God and get REVELATION...when any person receive a vision of heaven, he sees things that he never thought of before." (Dahl p. 571) and "The Melchizedek Priesthood is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is REVEALED from heaven...It is the channel through which the Almighty commenced REVEALING His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to REVEAL Himself to the children of men to the present time, and through which He will make known His purposes to the end of time." (Dahl p. 572) "for without REVELATION religion is a mockery and a farce." (John Taylor)

Joseph Smith said "A man is saved no faster than he gets KNOWLEDGE, for if he does not get KNOWLEDGE, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more KNOWLEDGE, and consequently more power than many men who are on this earth. Hence it needs REVELATION to assist us, and give us KNOWLEDGE of the things of God." (Dahl pp. 573-574) This is reference not to the worldly knowledge flowing from research [the Holy Ghost is also the source of such knowledge] but to the eternal KNOWLEDGE coming by REVELATION, "for it needs REVELATION to assist us...and give us KNOWLEDGE of the things of God." (Teachings of Joseph Smith, p. 217) "This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by REVELATION adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed." (Dahl p. 575) "Jesus in His teachings says, 'Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Which rock? REVELATION." (HC 5:258) Joseph also said "that God had often sealed up the heavens [no revelation] because of the covetousness in the Church." (Dahl p. 564) No REVELATION, no restoration! But we do have a restoration! Is the vast and varied content of

the doctrines restored by REVELATION agreeable to what we now find in ancient documents for the most part made available in our life time and not available to Joseph smith 170 years ago?

"If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence through his obedience & diligence than another he will have so much the advantage in the world to come." (Ehat p. 173) "It is the knowledge of God that brings salvation." (McConkie p. 426) "It is the knowledge of God and his laws that leads to high reward in the hereafter." (see 2 Ne. 9:28-29, 42). "The LDS are expected to specialize in the knowledge of the truth, the KNOWLEDGE that makes known the mysteries of the kingdom and the wonders of eternity" (McConkie p. 427, see also D&C 76:1-10)." Knowledge of the arts, sciences, mathematics, chemistry, history, medicine, astronomy, and the like, are desirable and useful, but what is most needed is KNOWLEDGE that has immediate bearing on the attainment of salvation. We find in the Nag Hammadi:

"( 1) not-knowing, forgetfulness, oblivion of the Father is the real 'original sin'; (2) Jesus is set forth as a Saviour, but a Saviour by gnosis [knowledge], ....(3) man is saved by KNOWLEDGE for 'whosoever has KNOWLEDGE understands from whence he has come and whether he goes'....Another typically Gnostic [knowledge] motif, the ASCENT OF THE SOUL to the heavens or to the Father, is missing or only faintly referred to [in early systems]." (Helmbold p. 43) "who we were, what we have become, where we were, whereinto we are cast; whether we are hastening, from what we are delivered; what ...birth is, [and] what ....rebirth is...an attempt to get man to know and to accept his true ...situation...and thereby to be saved." (Helmbold p. 43) "having one's eyes opened and becoming like the Deity is as old as the Garden of Eden." (Helmbold p. 42)

We will return again and again to this doctrine of "the ascent of the soul to the heavens or to the Father." (Helmbold p. 43) The ancient documents confirm how it is done and the details of what happens and what is required. The LDS call it the Temple Endowment.

"The Lord has placed no premium upon idleness or indifference here [on earth]... 'seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; ....seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning even by study and also by faith' such is the admonitions God gives in reference to our pursuit of knowledge of divine things. [and

all knowledge as well] ...achievement in divine things, progress in the knowledge of them, comes only with hard striving, earnest endeavor, determined seeking." (Roberts p. iv) ... "it is in much fashion to laud 'the simple faith' ....and plea before the bar of effort---'this far and nor farther'...when men do not really wish to go farther they find it an honorable convenience sometimes to sit down on the outmost edge of the 'holy ground' on the pretext of taking off their shoes....but making a virtue of reverence, we [may be] not merely excusing ignorance; or under the plea of 'mystery' evading a truth which has been stated (Roberts p. v) [over and over in the revelations of the Standard Works and the teachings of the Great Joseph]. ...humility [may be] couched in 'I don't know,' which so often really means 'I don't care, and do not intend to trouble myself to find out.'" (Roberts p. v) Sometimes it hurts to try to learn. Indeed learning can be a painful process.

President Faust said: "I counsel and testify 'ye shall declare the things which have been received [revealed] to my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., and his successors [all the subsequent prophets] in interest.'" (Faust p. 9) Elder Oaks said: "I can identify eight different purposes served by communication from God: (1) to testify, (2) to prophesy, (3) to comfort, (4) to uplift, (5) to inform (6) to restrain, (7) to confirm, and (8) to impel" (Oaks p. 10) He then goes on to explain each of those purposes.

Dr. Hans Jonas, a specialist in ancient doctrines and documents, after prolonged studies, (Jonas I, p. xv) particularly of Egyptian texts, such as the Nag Hammadi, says:

"A natural starting point is the term 'gnosis'[knowledge] itself. Its verbal meaning is 'knowledge', is in our context specified as secret, REVEALED, and SAVING KNOWLEDGE. This is to say that it is of mysteries [ordinances] that is not come by in a natural manner, and that its possession decisively alters the condition of the knower...it is specified by a particular theoretical content, the object-world of this knowledge, and this object-world significantly includes the role of KNOWLEDGE itself within its scheme....This broad metaphysical, theologico-cosmological underpinning of the SAVING power of 'KNOWLEDGE', signaled by the appearance of the term on both the subject and objective side of the system, is the first distinctive feature...What system of reality, then is it that thus provides for its knowledge as an intrinsic theme of itself? With this question we are inquiring into the objective content of the gnosis [KNOWLEDGE]. (Jonas 2 p. 264

So, what are the Great Themes, the Grand Design? We would like Jonas to extract from his vast studies of the ancient documents a succinct outline of knowledge that agrees with some of the great revelations of the restoration, and establish the necessity of revelation. Is that too much to ask? I don't think he knows anything about the LDS beliefs! He is an independent witness. Jonas writes:

"It is, first of all, a transcendental genesis, narrating the spiritual history of creation as a history of the upper worlds, i.e., ultimately of the Deity itself: beginning with the first beginnings, it unfolds the inner-divine drama in whose course the lower world originates. [Think Temple]

"There is, secondly, the outcome of this transcendental genesis: the existing system of the universe as a power structure which determines the actual condition of man. The emphasis here is on its stratification along a vertical axis, on the antithesis of the heights and the depths, on the distance between the terrestrial and the divine world, and the plurality of worlds in between. [This is an astonishing concept. Jonas, however, derives it from the ancient sources.]

"The third themes, prepared by the first two and implicit in their logic, is man—his nature, and his place in both the past history and this present system: his origin 'beyond' [pre-existence] in connection with the precosmic divine drama; his composite and sunken condition here; his true destination.

"Finally, the doctrine of salvation, individual and universal: the last things answering to the first, the reversal of the fall, the return of all things to God." (Jonas 2, pp. 264-265)

When we examine these themes carefully, they seem to be "formally classifiable as theology, cosmology, anthropology, and eschatology, and as such are shared," (Jonas, p. 265) [by almost all religious systems, including Mormonism?]. Indeed they are shared, but Jonas asks the question:

"What makes them uniquely gnostic'? [or for that matter even more so uniquely Mormon? ] One factor...is the peculiar status of KNOWLEDGE in everyone of the stages through which the metaphysical argument moves. A LOSS of knowledge is suffered ....in the primordial drama that affects part of it and modifies the condition of the whole. A LACK of knowledge is at work in the arrogance and delusion of demiurgical creation and is permanently embodied in the resulting world. A WANT of knowledge, inflicted by the world and actively maintained by its powers [satan], characterizes man's innerworldly existence; and a RESTORATION of knowledge is the vehicle of salvation...the whole can be considered as one grand movement of 'knowledge'...from the beginning of things to their end....

The dynamism is visible already in the doctrine of divinity itself which, from the repose of ETERNAL PREEXISTENCE, is stirred into what becomes the 'inward' history of creation. Thus, the history of creation—a history of the divine self... is a dualism ...between man and world, and again between the world and God...starts with a doctrine of divine transcendence ...then traces the genesis of the world from some primordial disruption [rebellion in heaven] of this blessed state, a loss of divine integrity which leads to the emergence of lower powers who become the...rulers of this world....[Lucifer emerges as evil on this world] as a crucial episode in the drama...recounts the creation and early fate of man, in whom the further conflict becomes centered; the final theme, in fact the implied theme throughout, is man's salvation, which is more than man's as it involves the overcoming and eventual dissolving of the cosmic system..." (Jonas 2, pp. 264-267)

The above quote offers terms for further attention says Jonas: [such as] "divine transcendence, lower powers, man, salvation." (Jonas 2, p. 267) He then reviews these:

"The transcendence of the supreme deity is stressed to the utmost degree....he is transmundane, dwelling in his own realm entirely outside the physical universe, at immeasurable distance from man's terrestrial abode....because of this transcendence and otherness of his being, and since nature neither reveals nor even indicates him, he is naturally unknown [but not unknowable], ineffable, defying predication, surpassing comprehension...Some positive attributes and metaphors do apply to him: Light, Life, Spirit, FATHER, the Good—but not Creator, Ruler, Judge. [these attributes are restricted to another being, Jesus] Significantly, in some systems, one of his SECRET NAMES is 'MAN'." (Jonas 2, 268) "Some important points ...should be made explicit. One is the identity, or consubstantiality, of man's innermost self with the supreme and transmundane God, himself often called 'MAN'..." (Jonas 2: 270)

During the period 1830-1831 revelations were given to the infant LDS Church that stipulated one of the names of God the Father was Man: "Behold, I am God, MAN of Holiness is my name; MAN of Counsel is my name; endless and eternal is my name. (Moses 7:35) "For in the language of Adam, MAN of Holiness is his name, and the name of his only Begotten is the Son of MAN, even Jesus Christ, a righteous JUDGE..." (Moses 6:57) This is mighty confirmation that the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price is not a conjured up writing of an uneducated young man! It is great Truth!

Jonas continues: "The downward movement that breaches the self-containment of the divine world may be occasioned by the action of dark forces from without implying a preexistent dualism or, more typically, by an INTERNAL CRISIS and TRANSGRESSION in THE DIVINE REALM ITSELF." (Jonas p. 268)

Indeed there was a crisis in the divine realm: "Lucifer and one-third of the hosts of heaven came out in open, organized rebellion in pre-existence" (McConkie p. 618, & Rev. 12:7-10) "and the second was angry, and kept not his first estate at that day, many followed after him." (Abraham 3:27-28) There are very few LDS who do not know the doctrine of the rebellion in heaven and its awful consequence. And in the Mortal Drama we call life, knowledge first came, in the Garden, from "the Serpent, which as the first bringer of 'KNOWLEDGE' in defiance of the creator, turns from seducer to a revered symbol of the acosmic spiritual power that works for the awakening of its captive kin in the world." (Jonas 2, p. 275)

"This figure of an imperfect, blind, or evil creator [satan] is a gnostic symbol of the first order. ..Pride, ignorance, and malevolence ...are recurring themes....he tries vainly to imitate the perfect order....the motif is turned into that of illicit imitation (counterfeiting) which is at once presumptuous and bungling." (Jonas 2, p. 269) See my tape on the SECRET BOOK OF JOHN.

"The King of Darkness was fashioned through his own evil nature...he called forth and spread abroad a thousand thousand evil generations....They are artists of every hideous practice. That King of Darkness... is stupid muddled, his ideas are confused, and he knows neither the First nor the Last (albeit) he does know what will happen in all the worlds.....He became arrogant and exalted himself and said: 'Is there anyone who is greater than I [?] ...I will ascend to that shining earth and conduct a war with its king, I will take his crown from him, set it on my head, and I will be king of the heights and the depths....Do not be alarmed at the fury of the stupid, evil dev[il] who is worked up into a rage....In his own container (kanna) [spirit body] he shall be imprisoned....All his plans

shall be spoilt...and his (evil) works will come to nothing', ...for the throne of rest [glory] is prior to the throne of rebellion.....Goodness is prior to the malice of the Place of Darkness." (Foerster pp. 160-165)

..."the conception of the created world as a power system directed to the enslavement ....from the grand cosmic design down to man's...constitution serves this fearful purpose.....a third point is that the chief means of enslavement is ignorance actively inflicted and maintained....and the fourth point, consequently, is the chief means of extrication, the counteraction to the power of the world, is the communication of knowledge....the...function of knowledge...leads to the conception of human history as the growing ingression of KNOWLEDGE in the generations of man, and this requires REVELATION as the necessary vehicle of its progress. The need for REVELATION is inherent in the paralyzed innercosmic condition of the captive spirit [man], and its occurrence alters that condition in its decisive respect. ...Divine REVELATION, then or the 'call', breaking through this power of ignorance, is itself already part of salvation. Beginning with Adam, thwarted time and again by the resistance of the worldly powers, it continues in a SERIES OF MESSENGERS [prophets] through the course of history to a final consummation." (Jonas 2, pp. 270-271) Joseph Smith said:

"..the Lord has never given the world to understand, by anything heretofore revealed, that he had ceased forever to speak to his creatures...why should it be thought a thing incredible that he should be pleased to speak again in these last days for their salvation... we have already in our possession a vast volume of his word... previously given. But you will admit that the word spoken to Noah was not sufficient for Abraham....Isaac, the promised seed, was not required to rest his hope alone upon the promises made to his father Abraham. ..If one man can live upon the revelations given to another, might I not with propriety ask, why the necessity, then, of the Lord's speaking to Isaac as he did,...why this repetition to Isaac? Why was not the first promise as sure for Isaac as it was for Abraham?...Why could not Jacob rest contented upon the word spoken to his father? ....Why ... then not rely upon this promise...when they had remained in Egypt... waiting for further revelations, ... act entirely on the promise given to Abraham..? I may believe that Enoch walked with God...I may believe that Noah was a perfect man ...and also walked with God...I may believe that Abraham communed with God...I may believe that Isaac obtained a renewal of the covenant...I may believe that Jacob conversed with holy angels...I may believe that Elijah was taken to heaven.I may believe that the saints saw the Lord, and conversed with him face to face after his resurrection. I may believe that the Hebrew Church came to Mount Zion...the heavenly Jerusalem...I may believe that they looked into eternity, and saw the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator.But will all of this purchase an assurance for me? ...must I not rather obtain...by my own faith and diligence...an assurance of salvation [by revelation] for myself? ...will not the Lord hear my prayers, listen to my cries as soon as he ever did theirs, if I come to him in the manner they did? Or is he a respecter of persons?" (Dahl, pp. 565-567)

"But note that mankind is not responsible for its plight and for the necessity of divine intervention. There is no ...original sin of

Adam: where he is the first recipient of revelation...And the content of saving KNOWLEDGE? Fundamentally it is ...the transcendent history itself, because this either displays or implies all the enlightening truth that the world withholds and salvation requires: 'the KNOWLEDGE who we were, what we have become; where we were, wherein we have been thrown; whereto we speed, wherefrom we are redeemed; what is birth, and what rebirth,'...By virtue of both, REVEALED content and REVELATORY source, it claims saving power for itself...this KNOWLEDGE of truth is as such held to be liberating as it restores the awakened spirit to its native powers, it usually also includes a body of more practical...we might say, technical—information, an instruction on what to do: the 'knowledge of the way', .i.e., of the sacraments [ordinances] to be performed now, of the 'names' to be employed later when the ASCENDING SPIRIT meets the powers after leaving the body at death", (Jonas 2, 271-271)

"When they are out of the world, because they are not joined [sealed] by me, said the Lord, neither by my word; when they are out of the world it cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass..." (D&C 132:18)

"and whatever ritual or ethical preparation may assure this future passage .. 'the secrets of the way'...the 'secrets' are understood to epitomize the ...totality of the system as well, as indeed they do: the ASCENT DOCTRINE IN ITS DETAILS, wherever such are given, spells out once more the topography and theological meaning of the ...universe, as the itinerary and adventure of the soul on this occasion lead through the complete order in reversal of the primordial fall." (Jonas 2, pp. 271-272)

Mandaic sources also contribute to understanding of the ASCENT DOCTRINE.

The Manaeans were Christians who escaped the destruction under Titus of the Roman Tenth Legion when the Temple was destroyed 70 AD. Their baggage of learning they carried with them to the present time includes:

"The older writings make frequent mention of the term maskna, 'abode, temple', a word which goes back to the Hebrew name of the tabernacle...In the above-mentioned places the cult life runs its course and to this belong above all baptism (masbuta), mass for the dead (masiqta, carried out in the mandi only), ...weddings, and festival rites. The most important ceremonies and also the oldest are baptism and the 'ASCENT OF THE SOUL CEREMONIES'. ..the neophyte, who wears his white sacral dress throughout, [receives a three-fold signing of the forehead] ... crowning, ...and the laying on of hands: further there is the ceremony ....[which] consists of anointing with oil, the offering of the sacrament of bread (phita) and water (mambuha), and the 'sealing' of the neophyte. Both parts are always concluded by the extension of the right hand between the priest and the neophyte....known as kusta ('truth', 'justice') ... usually performed at all ceremonies and has a special sanctity." (Foerster 2, p.

132) See my tape on the MANDEANS.

"Nearly all ceremonies, including even the wedding ritual, are in some way associated with a rite [ordinance] which has value for the souls of the dead [a wedding ritual that is performed, the same for the dead as for the living!] ...annointed with oil and clothed in ...white ritual garment, and crowned...Since the journey of the soul leads through dangerous demonic sphere certain guarantees are required which involve more than those things which accompany the soul, like baptism, the SIGN, the NAME, and good works." (Foerster, p. 133) "It is a characteristic feature of Mandeian religion to resolve the problem of death by a firm belief in the after-life of the soul. Accordingly, for the Mandeans the fate of the soul is a chief concern." (Foerster, p. 132) It is no less an LDS concern who also have appropriate ASCENT OF THE SOUL ceremonies. That these ceremonies are of ancient origins can in part be derived from an analysis of the Facsimile From the Book of Abraham No. 2 in the Pearl of Great Price, p. 36. See for example the explanation for items 3 and 8 in the Explanation on page 37. It appears that some aspects of the Temple Endowment were derived from the records of Abraham, who was "desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge", (Abraham 1:2) and he certainly had his aspirations fulfilled.

There are other sources that deal with the ASCENT doctrines, including the HEBREW BOOK OF ENOCH, (Odeberg, Chapter XLV) and ALLOGENES, (King, p. 139-147), and there are many others.

"Souls are just as precious in the sight of God today as they ever were, and revelation is still poured out in abundance so that souls may be led to salvation." (McConkie, p. 648)

Nephi said: "thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." (2 Nephi 28:29-30) Moroni was adamant: "...I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healing, nor speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ." (Morm. 9:7-9)

The Gospel of JESUS CHRIST of Latter Day Saints testifies fervently that revelation has been the steady and constant course of the restoration. The cosmic course of man is no longer paralyzed!

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