

Come Follow Me Class Insights 20 D&C Sec. 49 – 50

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 49 and 50.

So in section 49 we're introduced to Lemman Copley or Copley, and he is an interesting character in Church history. He joined the Church probably in early 1831 in Ohio. He has been associated with a group that we refer to as the Shakers. What can you tell us about the Shakers?

Well, it's a really fascinating Christian group. They got started as a break-off from the Quakers, and you may be familiar with the Quakers. You may have purchased Quaker Oats at some point, and the man depicted on many of the Quaker products is actually William Penn, for whom Pennsylvania or "Penn's woods" is named, and he was one of the most famous Quakers. And one of their beliefs was if you've been saved, or you have the Spirit of God, you should be able to visually and physically manifest that the Spirit is with you. So you might be quaking at times when the Spirit is with you. And the Shakers kind of have that same idea and so they -- to distinguish between those who quake to the Spirit, who shake with the Spirit, they use those different words, but let me just share a word here that you might be familiar with.

The word enthusiasm, or another word that you might be quite familiar with, inspiration. Okay, what I want to point out is what the word inspiration – the word "spirit" shows up in this word, and anciently, belief was when you're inspired, you literally have God's spirit in you, acting in you, and this one is similar, the word comes from "Theo" which means God -- God in you, and the idea if you're super enthusiastic, or under normal circumstances you don't act like that, so if you're that energetic, that must come from God. And the idea was, enthusiasm is God is in you.

So, we see with the Shakers and Quakers that they must have God with them when they're doing all these rapturous like loud, even like I'm doing right now, is going to have the Spirit. And it raises some questions that we'll be discussing here in section 49 and 50. How – we talked about the gifts of the Spirit just a few sections ago, and now the question is, how do you build a unified community of believers? Well, it's through the gifts of the Spirit. Well, how do you manifest those gifts and how do you detect what comes from God and what doesn't, and just as a preview, you go to section 50 verses 22 to 23, but the gifts of the Spirit are meant to edify all, and this is one of the big questions, like, if somebody's doing things that seem a bit off and not edifying. Now you can start to discern. Right.

Now it's important that we – that we note something here, that when you use a term like the Shakers, that that's kind of a – it's a nickname. Their official name is the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, a much longer, but that's their official name, but because of what happens it's easy to put a label on them as, oh, they're just the Shakers.

And yet what's interesting is that they are very focused on a belief in Christ and a deep interest in let's be prepared for when he comes again, and you think as members of the Church, we also want

to be known by the name that we believe in Jesus Christ, and what's in our name: of Latter-day Saints. In some ways, the members of the Church, Latter-day Saints, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Shakers, well, the United Society of Believers in Christ, struggle with the same challenge is that they're known by their nicknames, right, Shakers, Mormons, even though they probably would prefer to be known by their full, official name.

Now, just so that we – we lay a foundation of understanding for the context of section 49, let's talk about a couple of their underlying beliefs and their approach to life and their approach to religion, their approach to God. Some of these are going to sound very familiar, to being very closely related to what we believe. Others are going to be totally opposite, so watch as this comes through.

They believe in direct revelation to individuals. They aren't as big into a hierarchical setting in their church traditionally as other Christian denominations at the time and in the region, hence, they would often in their meetings sit in quiet meditation for long periods of time until somebody would be overcome by the Spirit – that God would get into them – get into them and they would start manifesting that Spirit by pacing, walking, running, contorting, shouting, hollering, hanging from the rafters, speaking in a language that nobody understood - speaking in tongues. And so they would leap for joy.

They also believed that the Second Coming had already occurred, the second appearing had already occurred, in their mind, in the character, in the person of Ann Lee, this woman who from 1772 to 1784 had led the group. There was at that time a somewhat of a hierarchy because they all looked to Ann Lee as the embodiment of Christ having come to the earth again.

It's interesting that you didn't see a lot of this in Christianity to have female leadership, so they really believed very much in equality, that everybody is God's children and God can inspire anybody. And they actually got started in England, and Ann Lee, right, because of her preaching and telling people that they needed to repent, they need to fully let go of all their sins, they got thrown in prison, she got persecuted, and so she and her followers actually came to North America for religious freedom, and this is actually where she died, and she also got persecuted here, too, so it wasn't like you leave one country for another and suddenly, everything is glorious, was great.

They believe that the church that Jesus Christ established in the New Testament had completely fallen away, that there was an apostasy. Consequently, they claimed that in order for it to be Christ's church, it would require a new revelation, a new dispensation, if you will, a new opening of his gospel, rather than just a rearranging of the different Protestant or Catholic faith that was in existence at that time. They also believe that marriage is worldly and that marriage relationships were evil, so to speak, and ungodly.

They weren't necessarily against marriage, but they did not believe in – they believed that sexual relations were the foundation for all evil in the world. For sure, be married, but you're going to live a completely celibate life, even if you're married.

Even if you're married. And they would call – they actually referred to that doctrine as taking up the cross, or carrying their cross, this complete celibacy.

They believed Adam and Eve were the cause of the evil. They believe that Adam and Eve were the ones who brought all that evil into the world, and you know, we feel differently, that Adam and Eve were instruments in God's hands to help usher in – carrying forth his plan. Yeah.

They also believe that there is no such thing as the resurrection. They believe that the Spirit is – once the body dies, the spirit can then soar and have a holy, spiritual afterlife. So, no resurrection for them. They also believe that you need to confess, you need to repent, but you don't have to be baptized. There is no such thing as receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and ordinances are not required, in their view.

Many of them believed that meat should not be eaten, and many of them preached the doctrine of being vegetarian as kind of the ideal. They also believed in consecration and stewardship, hence, you get a lot of crossover with these early groups of Shakers with some of the early members of the Church in Ohio. They're living all in the same region, they're trading with each other, they're doing business with each other. Some of them have family members and vice versa in both congregations; they're very well acquainted with each other in this area, and so there's going to be a lot of crossover in the way the early members of the Church try to live the law of consecration, kind of following some of the same patterns learned there.

The other thing that they believe regarding the godhead is, they envision God as Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother, and they refer to the eternal Mother in Heaven. The foundation that they use for that is coming from Genesis chapter 1 verse 26 and 27, which is a very, very famous passage in the Old Testament referring to the creation of man and woman. Listen to verse 26: "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air," and he finishes all the dominion, and then verse 27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." And they go back to the Old Testament Hebrew word for God being Elohim, which is plural.

Right, to do the plural in Hebrew, one of the ways is add an "im", you get it in the words Urim and Thummim – those are actually the plural and "el" or "elo" just literally means God, but here it's Gods, and our English translation has God as a singular, even though the verb is plural. Yes. So if you actually look at the Hebrew, it's the plural throughout, and so they're taking that idea and they're seeing that Gods said, let us make man in our likeness and image, and they end up doing that, creating man and woman, male and female, in the image of God.

So the Shakers' doctrine is very, very comfortable with this – this neither the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord, and so I hope you're seeing as we've gone through this list, that on many points we, we're totally divergent from their beliefs. But on other

doctrines, we could say, yeah, I understand where you're coming from here, and we would – we would agree with many of the things that they're – that they're teaching.

And for the early saints who are seeing both commonalities and divergences, the question arises, like, well, what's true? What should we be focusing on, which necessitates the need for revelation which we find in D&C 49 and also in 50.

Now, so the first time that we run into this group of United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing is with those four missionaries who left New York to go out to the – to preach to the Lamanites in the frontiers. They had stopped at various places on their way coming through Ohio. One of the places is North Union, where there's a body of what we would call the Shakers living there. They left – they preached a few days, many days, then they left some copies of the Book of Mormon with that group, and then they continued on their journey. So Ashbel Kitchell, or Kitchell, however you want to pronounce his name, is kind of the leader of that group in North Union, and he took seriously, I think, the idea that he wanted to read the Book of Mormon and find out if it was true. His request to know if this was true isn't going to come full circle until we get another group of missionaries coming to him which, they get their mission call to go do that in section 49 that we'll cover in just a moment here.

In the meantime, most of the Shakers that had heard that preaching and that had seen those missionaries come through, most of them rejected their message. But there was one guy who actually believed and gets baptized in early – in 1831, and that is Lemman Copley which is kind of the center focal point for our historical context here in section 49. So Lemman Copley, when -- once Joseph Smith comes to Ohio, he is fully in the Church, but he's still holding onto some of these, these Shaker beliefs, and he's wondering which - which ones should I believe from my past and which ones should I embrace from my present and how do I bring those together? And he comes to Joseph with this question of, what should I believe, what shouldn't I believe and what do they have that's right, what do they have that's wrong, and hence section 49 comes along.

With the command, after this revelation is given, Lemman Copley, Sidney Rigdon, and Parley P. Pratt are told, now go to the Shaker community and read this full revelation to them. Now, can you imagine somebody coming into one of our ward buildings some day and, like, I have a revelation to read to you guys and it's actually, you all need to repent? Like, you can imagine how people respond. What's interesting about Lemman Copley is that he's very sincere, but really, throughout his life, he was basically part member and part Shaker. Like, he found himself out of the Church at one point, gets rebaptized, and after the saints after persecution head west, he stays behind, and our best evidence is that he rejoins the Shaker community later in life.

Yeah, he never seems to be really – he's in and out and in and out and in and out of his – his engagement with the Church and actually does some things that cause intense persecution for the Prophet and for other members and then later apologizes and asks to be rebaptized and Joseph forgives him, he gets rebaptized, but then he just stays there. He seems more focused on being torn

between these two ideals or between these two approaches to religion, and he ends up staying there as the Church keeps moving – moving west, he never comes with them.

All right, with that introduction, let's open up to section 49. Let's start in verse 1: "Hearken unto my word, my servants Sidney, and Parley, and Leman," so those are the three who are now called on this mini-mission to go to visit the Shakers up in North Union, Ohio: "For behold, verily I say unto you, that I give unto you a commandment that you shall go and preach my gospel which ye have received, even as ye have received it, unto the Shakers. Behold, I say unto you, that they desire to know the truth in part, but not all." Huh, that's interesting because it kind of sounds like what we've just finished describing with Leman Copley, a desire to know the truth, but a reticence to embrace all of it. You kind of want to know, but you don't want to fully engage or fully change.

Rather than having this lesson be all about Leman Copley and this group of Shakers back in 1831, what about us today? Has there ever been a time in your life where you've – you've wanted to know what God wants you to do, or your family, you individually or collectively, but not completely? You're reticent to ask him because you kind of already know what the answer's going to be and you're – you don't know if you're ready to actually do it yet? I think we can relate to this, this human element of a struggle to move forward with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength and to engage in the work of loving God and building his kingdom.

Notice the last part of verse 2: "They are not right before me and must needs repent." So there are some things that God wants this group of his children to do, and he's calling these three missionaries to go and do it. "Wherefore, I send you, my servants Sidney and Parley, to preach the gospel unto them." That's interesting. Sidney and Parley, you're going to go preach the gospel to them. I thought three were being called. Well, look at the role of Leman in verse 4: "And my servant Leman shall be ordained unto this work, that he may reason with them, not according to that which he has received of them, but according to that which shall be taught him by you my servants; and by so doing I will bless him, otherwise he shall not prosper."

Interesting that you have these two – can we call them seasoned veterans of the Church? The Church is, you know, barely a year and a few months old at this point, and Sidney hasn't been in the Church from the very beginning, neither has Parley. This is – this is a young group as far as the gospel's concerned, but Sidney and Parley have much more experience in the gospel than Leman, and so God is telling him, learn what you can from these other two missionaries who have maybe a little more experience. Look at verse 5: "Thus saith the Lord; for I am God, and have sent mine Only Begotten Son into the world for the redemption of the world, and have decreed that he that receiveth him shall be saved, and he that receiveth him not shall be damned."

Did you notice something interesting in verse 5 that we haven't seen a whole – a whole lot of in the Doctrine and Covenants up to this point? "I am God and have sent mine Only Begotten Son into the world." Huh. It sounds like the voice of the Father here. Previously in your Doctrine and

Covenants we've heard mostly the voice of Jesus Christ speaking to people through Joseph Smith the prophet, but here it comes out as, I am God and have sent my Only Begotten Son.

So we have a couple of options available. We have the option that it is the Father speaking. Another option is that it's the Son speaking, but it's still the voice of Jesus Christ as it is in the other revelations, but here it's possible that he's speaking under divine investiture of authority, because we have other places in the scriptures where certain prophets have told us that's what's happening. The interesting note here is to say, where else do we know in scripture that the voice of the Father is speaking? The clearest place that I know of anywhere in scripture is when the Father and the Son are standing together side by side in the Sacred Grove and the Father says to young Joseph, Joseph, this is my Beloved Son, hear him. That's very clearly the Father. There are other places like the baptism of Christ, the Mount of Transfiguration, the Nephites and Lamanites in 3 Nephi 11, at the coming of Christ when they hear the voice of the Father, those are very clear cases of where the voice of Heavenly Father is being heard by people on the earth.

You get other places. For fun, a cross reference you could put next to verse 5 there, is 2 Nephi chapter 31, and in this section of the scriptures you're at the very end towards the end of Nephi's life. Let's start with verse 10. This is Nephi writing, remember: "He said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?" And verse 11: "And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son." So there, Nephi is scribing and the voice of the Father says what? What was his message? Repentance and baptism in the name of his Son.

Keep in mind, before we go any further, brothers and sisters, that baptism and repentance and faith in Christ – these aren't man-made ideas or notions or ordinances. These weren't invented by humans saying, what can we do to try to connect with God? These are things that the Father has given to us as means whereby we can connect with Him and with the Son through these steps that he has laid out for us. Look at verse 12: "And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do." Don't you love the fact that the Father is the one who lays out the path that has to be followed and then Jesus comes to the earth and shows us that path? He lives it. He becomes all of - all of the things that the Father has laid out for us.

Now you turn the page over, look at verse 14: "But, behold, my beloved brethren, thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying," and again he's going to focus on repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost, and how you should **say** on the path, then look at verse 15: "And I heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." I wanted to point that section of the scriptures out to us in 2 Nephi 31 for a very important reason, because it's in that section where you get the voice of the Father and the voice of the Son, so that's verse 11, verse 12, and then in verse 14 and 15 you get

the voice of the Son and then the Father, and they're both sharing the gospel as laid out by the Father and carried forth by the Son to Nephi in that context.

Consequently, as we now flip back in our scriptures to section 49, it shouldn't bother us that Father and Son could both speak to Joseph Smith or through Joseph Smith to other people for varying reasons as there is precedence for that in scriptures that have come before. Here's the point. Regardless of what the reality of whose voice that actually was speaking, I think Jesus would emphasize the oneness, the unity, this idea that they are one, the Father and the Son, and to use Jesus's own phrase from section 1, whether by mine own voice or the voice of my servants, it is the same, I think he would say – I think Heavenly Father would say, whether by mine own voice or the voice of my Son, it is the same.

The work, the glory, the purpose, the perfection, the intent, the effort, the mission, all of it, it's the same, and so some people will get really confused and really frustrated, wait, I can't tell whose voice this is in the scriptures. I love just coming back to the idea that if it isn't really clear, if it doesn't say very clearly which one it is, it's the same. The message is a message of salvation for us of God in Heaven, whether it be the Father or the Son, or interchangeably, both of them moving forward, they're teaching us what we need to know in order to progress. Which, by the way, a must-have cross reference next to verse 5 could be section 50 verse 43. It's also in this lesson for today that we're studying in the very next section. Notice what he tells Joseph in 43: "And the Father and I are one. I am in the Father and the Father in me," pause. Many people would read that and say oh, so members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are trinitarian? Keep reading: "and inasmuch as ye have received me, ye are in me and I in you." You'll notice that little preposition "in", very important two-letter word here.

Back to the beginning: "the Father and I are one. I am in the Father and the Father in me; and inasmuch as ye have received me, ye are in me and I in you." So you get this beautiful relationship, Father in the Son, Son in the Father, to the point where when the Son's going forth because the Father is in him, he can speak as if he were the Father at times and at other times he speaks for himself. Hmm. Then enter you in the picture. Same comparison. The Son can be in you and you in the Son, so this – this whole question of voice of who's speaking in section 49 to me is a beautiful place to pause and focus on what is my relationship with the Savior? Because here he's telling you that if you'll – if you'll receive me, then I will be in you and you will be in me, which is very, very similar to the wording in the intercessory prayer in John 17 verse 21 where he prays to the Father saying, that they may be one, even as we are one, that they may be one in us, that we can all become unified and become one. Is that not the essence of Jesus's whole mission? To take William

Tyndale's coined word, "at-one-ment", it's the process or product of becoming at one or becoming unified, becoming one¹.

Brothers and sisters, that is at the core of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I think we're seeing that portrayed here. Whenever you get deity speaking to the earth, you get this unity and this oneness reflected from heaven, and he's trying to help us on earth do the same. Oh, how our world needs more unity and more oneness and less divisiveness, less polarization, less combativeness and fighting.

The gospel is so beautiful, and I just love how focused God is. There's just so many things he could teach, but he focuses on what truly matters, and his message is consistent throughout the gospel and throughout the scriptures. Repent by believing in the Son, come unto him through baptism, and stay firm on the path through sacrament and faith and enduring to the end.

So let's take a look at the next couple of verses, verses 6 and 7, and we have some interesting things going on here. Remember the Shakers believe that Jesus has already come, they believe that the Second Coming had already happened in the form of Ann Lee, and here Jesus reveals that it has not yet happened. He actually describes himself in an interesting way. He says this phrase, and they have done – I'm in verse 6: "And they have done unto the son of Man even as they wished, or listed; and he has taken his power on the right hand of his glory, and now reigneth in the heavens, and will reign till he descends on the earth to put all enemies under his feet, which time is nigh at hand." So meaning the Second Coming has not happened.

It's an interesting phrase that Jesus uses to describe himself, the Son of Man. Now this phrase, sometimes you see it in the Old Testament with the M lower case. When you see Son of Man with the M lower case, it actually means human, but when you have an upper case, it actually means a heavenly character or heavenly individual endowed with power and usually referring to Jesus Christ himself. And if you notice here in this verse, the reference is to heaven and to power, and so Son of Man is the perfect title for God or Jesus in this verse because he's talking about his heavenly power-filled qualities. And Tyler, we were talking earlier about how in our scriptures we are given additional information about Son of Man, and I'll just point out briefly that for a lot of years people have been confused about Son of Man and the phrase Son of God. (This is a bouncy board.) We only discovered, scholars only kind of made this clear in the last, I don't know, hundred years, plus, that there's a difference between these two phrases. Son of Man refers to a heavenly person; Son of God is an earthly king, or the Messiah.

What do we learn from the Pearl of Great Price from revelation before the scholars discovered this? So while Joseph's doing the translation of the Book of Genesis, he comes across the sections

¹ Seely, David Rolph. "William Tyndale and the Language of At-One-Ment: Religious Studies Center." *William Tyndale and the Language of At-One-Ment*, 2021, rsc.byu.edu/king-james-bible-restoration/william-tyndale-language-one-ment.

on Enoch, and embedded in there, in Moses chapter 6 verse 57, we get this little gem: "Wherefore teach it unto your children that all men everywhere must repent." What percentage is that? All men everywhere, and we understand that when referring to men, we're referring to all mankind, all of God's children. "Or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence; for, in the language of Adam," we're going back to Adamic here, "Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time." So Son of Man is a shortened form in this Enoch passage for Jesus Christ whose full version there would be Son of Man of Holiness. Jesus Christ is a Son of Heavenly Father, the Son of Man – the Man.

I love that title. And coming back to this, so we often see these phrases again, "son of man", lower case, just means any human, or you have the upper case, it's this heavenly character that's actually Jesus, full of power and ability, and then Son of God is an interesting one, because it really actually refers to a human, an earthly king, a messiah, one who's been anointed to be the king.

Now look at how does Jesus define himself in the New Testament? He usually calls himself the Son of Man. He's just come from heaven with all this power. What do people often call him? The Son of God, that he's the king, the Messiah. And he is. He is these things. But it's interesting how he chooses to represent himself to the people to help focus on things that matter. The Jews, they really wanted an earthly king to liberate them from the oppressive – the oppressive Romans. They wanted that – that Son of God, Messiah, and he's, like, I'm actually far beyond that.

Let's now talk about Jesus returning from heaven a second time. Look at verse 7: "I, the Lord God, have spoken it; but the hour and the day no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor shall they know it until he comes." Now we live in a world where people spend a lot of time predicting the end.

Let me just share a brief story from about a generation or two before the time of Joseph Smith. This happened in New England. It was called the Dark Day. It happened on May 19th, 1780. Many people, well, actually all of New England basically had a blackout. There was so much fog, cloud, dust, and smoke in the air, it was so dark that at noonday people had to light candles to be able to go about their business. And this persisted for more than a day. And for many people, they saw it as a sign that this was the day of judgment, the end had come.

Now it's very interesting. We have a Connecticut state senator who's going about his business, he's in the state senate chambers with the other state senators, and people are starting to freak out because the world's gone black; it's gone dark, and they're all worried like, oh, my gosh, it's the day of judgment; maybe we should all flee, maybe we should all get out of here, and Abraham Davenport, the state senator, says this: I am against adjournment." I'm against leaving the chamber of our work right now. "The day of judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is

no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought."²

I find that very compelling, that wherever we are in our lives, we should not be fearful of whatever day it is. We should be diligently about our duty, and might I humbly encourage all of us that, it isn't what God has asked us to do, to predict his end times. He asked us to be aware of the signs, but the main thing is to be focused on him and the gospel and to be about our duty. I just find that wonderfully instructive.

One other neat insight from verse 7 is who he doesn't include in the list of people who don't know about his coming in section 41 verse 7. You'll notice: "I, the Lord God, have spoken it; but the hour and the day no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor shall they know until he comes." Interesting, not even the angels in heaven will know the day until the day he comes. What does that tell us about this – this effort that has been around for so long of people trying to predict and say, okay, this is when it's going to happen.

Brothers and sisters, he doesn't include himself anymore. Jesus is not on that list, whereas in Matthew chapter 24 verse 36, he tells the people on the Mount of Olives, his disciples, he says, I don't even know when my Second Coming is going to be. And he's right at the – towards the end of his life, his mortal ministry in chapter 24 of Matthew, and he's saying, I don't even know when it's going to be. Only the Father knows. But now you'll notice, now that he's resurrected, glorified, perfected, he's a God fully exalted in heaven, he's no longer included in that list, along with us and the angels, of people who don't know the day or the hour of his coming.

And again I just love, it's like, why spend time focusing on things we don't know and actually don't matter to our salvation, because you will experience the Second Coming, either when you die and you will meet Jesus or when he shows up on this earth. And so it really is irrelevant about when that day will be, except have you believed in Jesus, have you repented, have you been baptized, and have you stayed steady? And that's exactly what we were reading in 2 Nephi chapter 31, the Father and Son are both testifying. They're not testifying about the end times and needing to know this particular hour. So I just find that extremely instructive that we should just stay focused on what really matters.

Interesting. I wonder – I wonder if there will be a pattern that whenever God speaks about the end times, that he doesn't just leave it hanging with this – this eerie feeling in the air of oh, no, I wonder if it's going to be this year or next year or if I'm going to be alive. I wonder if he's going to follow a pattern that has been found in lots of other places in the scriptures where, after talking about end-time prophecies, he usually follows it up with an invitation to live his gospel which involves having

² Courant, The Hartford. "The Dark Day: A History Lesson From Malloy." *Courant.com*, 1 Oct. 2018, www.courant.com/politics/hc-xpm-2011-01-05-hc-dark-day-capitol-watch-0105-story.html.

faith in him or repenting or being baptized, getting the gift of the Holy Ghost and enduring to the end. I wonder if any of those elements might come up next.

Let's go to verse 8: "Wherefore, I will that all men shall repent," so in English that phrase I will, it's my desire, it's my will, "that all men shall repent." There's a hundred percent again, and your invitation to focus on things that you do have control over, which is repenting. "For all," notice the percentage, that's a hundred percent yet again, "are under sin," the idea being, brothers and sisters, it does us no good to point fingers of accusation, boy, that group needs to repent and that person needs to change and they need to repent; he's saying all are under sin. Everyone needs to repent.

Verse 9: "Wherefore, I say unto you that I have sent unto you mine everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning." And he's made all these promises to the earth. Look at verse 11: "Wherefore, I give unto you a commandment that ye go among this people, and say unto them, like unto mine apostle of old, whose name was Peter." Verse 12: "Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus (Christ), who was on the earth, and is to come, the beginning and the end." Repent. Be baptized. Are you seeing the pattern here? Believe. This is the essence of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in verse 12, repentance, baptism. Verse 14: "Whoso doeth this shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." There are your principles and ordinances of the gospel. Instead of putting all of our focus on things that don't matter, that we have no control over, rather, put them on the things that we do.

Then he gets into the specific doctrines that the Shakers believe that maybe needs some clarification. Verse 15: "Again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man. Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation." Very important to note that at this age of the Church, this is the Lord's law of marriage. Your great cross reference here would be to take you back to Jacob chapter 2 in the Book of Mormon where we get the Lord's law of marriage taught to the Nephites by Jacob in chapter 2 verse 27: "Wherefore, my brethren, hear me and hearken to the word of the Lord." In other words, Jacob's saying, this isn't just Jacob, this isn't Brother Jacob's doctrine; he's speaking with divine investiture of authority. He's speaking for the Lord. He's saying, hearken unto me, to the word of the Lord. Hear me and hearken to the word of the Lord. Here's the law: for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none," which then would cause some people to say, well, wait a minute, then why did Joseph Smith teach the doctrine of plural marriage a little bit later?

Look at verse 30: "For if," you could circle the word "if" there in verse 30, "if I will, saith the Lord of hosts," are you noticing Jacob speaking for the Lord directly? "For if I will, saith the Lord of hosts, raise up seed up to me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things." So you get the law of marriage, one man, one wife, and then this exception that will come

when the Lord commands it, and that's it. It is not up to mankind to determine when those times are going to be. So that sets the stage for that doctrine being taught a little bit later.

Notice verse 18: "And whoso forbiddeth," or, you notice in the footnotes, it says biddeth, because if you read verse 18 the way it is, it sounds like a double negative, but verse 19 clarifies that it's not a double negative in this context. "Whoso biddeth to abstain from meats, that man should not eat the same, is not ordained of God." Why? "For, behold, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which cometh of the earth, is ordained for the use of man for food and for raiment, and that he might have in abundance." Now the qualifier, verse 20: "But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin."

Quick clarification: it's important that we note that God doesn't tell you it's evil to choose not to eat meat. You'll notice the qualifier here is, that you're preaching or you're setting this up as a requirement or a doctrine for others. People have agency. You can eat whatever you'd like or not eat whatever you'd like, according to the principles that we're going to learn in section 89 from the Word of Wisdom, but it's when we undertake to make that a central focus of the gospel or a litmus test, if you will, for our discipleship, that we're no longer ordained of God, bottom of verse 18. So what you do personally is one thing, what you try and get other people to do is an entirely different matter.

Let's focus on this word "abundance". God created the world for it to be fruitful, bountiful, and abundant, and he wants to give us of that abundance. That is one of his purposes in life. He wants us to have abundance, but I love this qualifier in verse 20: it is not given – this abundance that God has provided is not given that anyone should possess that which is above another. It's basically saying, I don't want inequality. We have said this before, and I think it's worthwhile to say again, the word inequality actually is the same word as iniquity. If you look up the root of both these words, they actually come from the same word. They're actually just variants of the same word. Iniquity drives inequality, and inequality leads to iniquity.

God has given in abundance, but when we separate that abundance out, this is the consequence. And so we have things in the Church to help with that. We've all been given callings. We all get to serve and share of our own personal wealth in the terms of our time and talents to bless the lives of others. There is tithing, there is fast offerings. What God has not commanded is for us to live the united order at this point, though he has commanded us to be consecrated, to consecrate our lives to him and to our fellow brothers and sisters. And this is a hard one. I think we all struggle with this. I live in the world like the rest of you. I deal with this. I often think, I'd like to have more in abundance, and when I get more of that abundance, I'm like, boy, I'm really grateful to have an abundance, and I think, well, what should I do with it? And what I just want you to focus again that God is willing to give an abundance. He wants you to have flourishing lives, and then the invitation is for you to act like God and to give others an abundance that they might also have flourishing lives.

Now look at the follow-up to this whole conversation about the eating of meat and the beasts and the fowls and the possession of things in the world. Look at verse 21: "Wo be unto man that sheddeth blood or that wasteth flesh and hath no need." Life is sacred, life is special, and it's to be treated with dignity and respect and not wastefully or wantonly destroyed.

Then he shifts gears, look at verse 22: "Again, verily I say unto you, that the Son of Man cometh not in the form of a woman, neither of a man traveling on the earth. Wherefore, be not deceived, but continue in steadfastness, looking forth for the heavens to be shaken, and the earth to tremble and to reel to and fro as a drunken man," and he goes on to describe more and more of those signs that will be granted.

And what's interesting is that this revelation is given to the Shakers. God's, like, the real shaking you should look for, it's the shaking in the heavens and the earth that he'll bring before, I just think it's a fun little connection.

Yeah, it is, especially because they think that Jesus has already returned in the form of Ann Lee, and the Lord is making it very clear, don't be deceived. Nobody will need to try to convince you that Jesus is – has returned. The scriptures in other places are very clear that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess when he comes in the clouds of glory. Nobody will need to nudge you in the ribs and say, hey, I think that's Jesus. We'll all collectively bend the knee, confess with our mouth, that he is Lord and has returned and it will be very clear to everyone.

Then he finishes with this promise of Zion flourishing in verse 25: "Zion shall flourish upon the hills, and rejoice upon the mountains, ye shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed. Behold, I say unto you, go forth as I have commanded you; repent of all your sins, ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you." And then verse 28: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, and I come quickly. Even so. Amen."

Let's look at this one word here in verse 27, "rearward". Now many of us are in wards, and the word "ward" actually means protection. So, he's protecting us from the rear, which means we shouldn't be retreating, we shouldn't be looking back, because he's got our back, literally. He's, like, press forward. I am your protection, and I want you to think that if you are in a ward, that is a form of protection, particularly if you are consecrating yourself to serving others that mutually, through the power of God, you're experiencing this protection in the covenants of God.

Wonderful. Now at the conclusion of sharing this revelation with the Shakers on that Sabbath day, keep in mind, they received this revelation on a Saturday, and Leman immediately left with Sidney to go to this settlement in North Union, and they – they had this long interaction with Ashbel Kitchell, kind of the leader of that group that evening, and he wasn't convinced by what they had shared with him about their doctrinal differences, but the next morning, Sunday, he invited them to join in their – in the Shakers' worship service.

By this time Parley Pratt has now arrived, and so the three of them go in, and towards the end of that service, Parley stands up and says, hey, we've got a revelation, and Sidney, they read this revelation to the group assembled there, and the leader again, Ashbel, says he doesn't agree with it and he doesn't accept it, and they say what about the others? And he, Ashbel, lets them all give their word as well, because they feel like each individual can speak for the Lord separately, and they all agree with their leader, at which point Parley Pratt, fiery, he dusts off his coattails as a symbol of that New Testament practice of shaking the dust off to show the responsibility is on your head, at which point the leader, Ashbel, he was not impressed, and he was a bit angry and basically tried to put them in their place, and they left. Parley left immediately and went – went back to Kirtland.

Brothers and sisters, there wasn't a lot of gain from that particular mission that was called in section 49, and so we would be – we would be left here in our day saying, why did God send them, because God knew that none of these Shakers were going to accept it and no worldly gain would come from it as far as converts or increase to the kingdom of God in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, so why would he send them? I love the fact that God honors and respects agency. Just because somebody isn't going to accept the gospel is not a good reason to not share the gospel with them, because of agency. We give people every invitation, every opportunity that is reasonable to be able to learn and respond to the message of the gospel, which is to have faith in Christ, repent of our sins, get baptized, get the gift of the Holy Ghost, endure to the end on that covenant path. We give every – that is our message to the world. Whether the world accepts it or not is entirely up to their agency. So if you're a missionary or know a missionary who served and didn't have a lot of baptisms, so to speak, those earthly measures of success, I don't know that that's the way heaven is measuring success.

Those three missionaries learned a great deal in the process, and keep in mind, they're very young in the gospel, and they're learning and growing, line upon line, precept upon precept, and I love the fact that God's working with them, which now brings us into another thing that this young, relatively young, group of saints has to learn in section 50. We've mentioned it before in other sections associated with the Ohio area, but now it kind of becomes central, this idea of people having these crazy manifestations of what they're calling the Spirit in their worship.

For some context, here's what Joseph Smith recorded about what was happening in Kirtland soon after his arrival, and again, it's a very young Church and people are influenced in part by the Christian traditions that they were familiar with, like the Shakers and Quakers and other traditions. Soon after the gospel was established in Kirtland and during the absence of the authorities of the Church, Joseph Smith records, many false spirits were introduced, many strange visions were seen and wild enthusiastic notions were entertained; men ran out of doors under the influence of this Spirit, and some of them got upon the stumps of trees and shouted, and all kinds of extravagances were entered into by them: one man pursued a ball that he said he saw flying in the air until he came to a precipice when he jumped into the top of the tree which saved his life, and many

ridiculous things were entered into, calculated to bring disgrace upon the Church of God; to cause the Spirit of God to be withdrawn and to uproot and destroy those glorious principles which had been developed for the salvation of the human family.

So the Spirit of God like a fire is burning. The Spirit and gifts of God are with us, for those who have chosen to follow God. But the question for this young Church was, how are those gifts to be manifested? And the key point of this section is, the gifts of the Spirit are meant to edify. The word edification means to build. And not just to edify one person but all, and that is the crux of this section's how do we use the gifts of the Spirit to build the kingdom of God instead of distracting and destroying the Spirit with over-exuberant, non-spiritual gifts that people claim falsely are the gifts of the Spirit. So we'll spend just a bit of time here in this section looking at God's revelation about how to engage better with the Spirit and to detect what's true and what isn't.

So after –after his introduction verses in the section, notice in verse 11 – or actually verse 10, he transitions where the Lord now basically says to them, something along the lines of, pull up a chair, sit down with me, let's have a direct conversation. Look at the way he says this, verse 10: "Now come, saith the Lord, by the Spirit, unto the elders of his church, and let us reason together, that ye may understand. Let us reason even as a man reasoneth one with another face to face." So, here's Joseph the “Prophet and he's speaking this revelation very clearly, one phrase at a time so that anybody could dictate, or write it down, scribe it, very clearly, and he's speaking to them.

Look at verse 13: "Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question – unto what were ye ordained?" What did I call you to do and ordain you and authorize you to do? Verse 14: "To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth." He introduces this idea of teaching by the Spirit. You could use that English phrase in a couple of ways to interpret it. You could say, I'm teaching by the power of the Spirit in what I say. Another way you could use it is in the preposition form of the word “by”. I'm teaching by the Spirit, he's beside me; he's guiding me in what to say and what to do and what to teach, and how to teach it.

Look at verse 6 – sorry, 17: "Verily I say unto you, he that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the Spirit of truth, doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way? And if it be by some other way it is not of God." He's basically saying the ends don't justify the means. You can't say, well, I'm trying to bring souls to Christ so it doesn't matter what techniques I use. No, it does matter what techniques we use. We can't use these false spirits that will occasionally do good things or occasionally tell truths even, in order to get you to tune your ear to them so that you will then trust them when they deliver the deceptions and the lies to get you to follow.

Look at verse 22: "Wherefore," Taylor touched on this already, "Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together." You know you're teaching by the gift of the Holy Ghost and by the power of the Holy Ghost, teaching by the Spirit, when both are edified together.

Notice 24: "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day." I love that analogy of this growing illumination that can come from the power of the Holy Ghost.

Look at verse 26: "He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all." It's fascinating because in the kingdoms of the world, you have the king who is at the top, and he has all of his servants and subjects and the people that are under him, and they all are layered in this way to do things to serve him. Brothers and sisters, the kingdom of our God is an inverted kingdom. He that is greatest of all, Jesus Christ, is the servant of all. It's Jesus who serves everybody. It's Jesus who upholds everybody. King Benjamin portrays this as a righteous king, a very unusual king in worldly standards, when he tells his people, which, by the way, he calls them my brethren, he puts himself on their level, and he says I have served you my whole life. You haven't had to provide for me. I've provided for you. This is the inverted kingdom of our Lord.

Look at verse 26 again, if you are ordained of God, you're sent forth whether you're a bishop, a stake president, whether you're one of the apostles or a member of the First Presidency or any of the General Authorities or general officers of the Church, whether you're a mission president or whether you're a mission president's wife, whether you are a daddy, a mommy, a Primary teacher, it doesn't matter. Whatever you're ordained of God to do, you're appointed to be the greatest in that realm, but what does that mean? That means you have to be the servant. You don't – you don't take the world's approach of thinking, oh, I've got this new calling in the Church, look at all the people who are now going to serve me. It's, oh, I've got this new calling in the Church. Look at all these people who need my service, or I've got this new calling in my family as a new father, look at this new life that needs my service, and the more we become like Jesus, the more we find joy in serving, in turning outward, in lifting, in sharing of the abundance that God has given us whether, like Taylor said, whether it's our time or our talent or our money, our energy, our gifts, all of our resources that are given to us, we simply now send them further up this inverted kingdom line. Whenever we're called or appointed to anything, we're ordained of God.

Look at verse 30: "Know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask; and as ye are appointed to the head, the spirits shall be subject unto you." He makes it clear that there will be opposition, but if you turn to the Lord, he'll guide you, not just in answering your prayers, but he'll even guide you in what to pray for. What a beautiful thing it is when you – when we can get beyond the pseudo-memorized version of our prayers, and we can kneel down or in our heart elevate our thoughts and occasionally ask the question, Heavenly Father, what should I be asking for right now? What are some things I should be thankful for that maybe I haven't recognized? Who are some people that I should be focusing on serving and how could I serve them? Bless me to know what to even ask for is kind of the message here, and he assures us that it will be given to us.

Verse 31: "Wherefore, it shall come to pass, that if you behold a spirit manifested that you cannot understand, and you receive not that spirit, ye shall ask of the Father in the name of Jesus; and if he give not unto you that spirit, then you may know that it is not of God." This, brothers and sisters, is not something that you can find a scientific instrument to measure, but God has given you revelatory instruments that far exceed anything invented by man, given to us by our God, mind and heart to perceive what is right, what is wrong, and if you leave either your mind or your heart out of the conversation when seeking truth or when people are making claims or you're trying to decide, is this of God or is this not? Is this a false spirit or a false claim or a false doctrine, if you leave either revelatory instrument out of that conversation, you're more likely to be deceived. You use all of the powers of the intellect to triangulate the data that you're receiving, triangulate with other scriptures, other prophetic statements and quotes and doctrines and teachings of the Lord that come through inspired sources and means. You triangulate it here and does it taste good? Does it feel right? And put both of those together and we move forward in faith, and if it doesn't line up, verse 32: "It shall be given unto you, power over that spirit; and you shall proclaim against that spirit with a loud voice that it is not of God."

And to conclude, let's jump over to verse 40: "Behold, ye are little children, ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, and you are of them that my Father hath given me; and none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost." Brothers and sisters, know that God is in his heavens, Jesus is the Christ, and he will guide you along this covenant path to become more like to him and to have power to discern the difference between right and wrong, truth and error, light and darkness, as we move forward in faith, and we leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. Know that you're loved.

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