

Podcast Episode 13: Our Dispensation

QUESTION: What “great knowledge” is to be restored in our dispensation?

DENVER: Go to *Doctrine and Covenants* section 121. Beginning at verse 26 (these are the neglected verses because we don't pay attention to this stuff anymore): “*God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Spirit, that has not been revealed since the world was until now.*” (Not the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit has been revealed. It's the knowledge that is coming that has not yet been revealed.)

“Which our forefathers have awaited with [anxious] expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory; A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And also, if there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—All the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times—According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before the world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest” (D&C 121:27-32).

There is an agenda. That agenda is to be completed. It's to be completed before the coming of the Lord. And it includes a restoration of things that we have hardly yet thought about.

Abraham had the records of the fathers. Look at Abraham 1:31: “*But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me.*”

Since Abraham was acquainted with the priesthood that belonged to the fathers, and since Abraham had a knowledge that was reckoned from priesthood that goes back to the time of the

patriarchs, he—as a consequence of possessing that—knew about the beginning of creation, knew about the planets, knew about the stars as they were made known unto the fathers.

Go back to *Doctrine and Covenants* section 121. It's talking about our dispensation. I want to look at, beginning about verse 28: "*A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest....*" Because that's included within the knowledge that the first fathers had. That's included with what was here at one time.

"All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And also, if there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—All the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times—According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest" (D&C 121: 28-32).

Abraham is not merely talking about something—both in this verse, Abraham 1:31, as well as what we encounter later on in the book of Abraham about the various stars that were shown to him and the relationship between them and his Facsimile #2; as I recollect, that is an effort to lay out a relationship in the heavens between certain positions of glory and authority—but Abraham is testifying that it was part of the original gospel that was entrusted to the fathers and that those records were handed down to him. In *Doctrine and Covenants* section 121 we find out that that's part of what is supposed to have been included within, and is ultimately scheduled for revelation to, those that will receive the restoration of the gospel when it is fully upon the earth in the dispensation of the fullness of times.

Abraham represents coming to the truth in a generation of apostasy. Abraham represents coming back to the light despite the fact that his fathers taught him idolatry. Abraham represents the challenge that every man who would be saved from that point forward must find themselves within, and then overcome, the idolatry of their fathers. Abraham is the prototype. And so Abraham is acknowledged by that same Jehovah who visited with the *fathers* in Adam-ondi-Ahman and identified Himself again to Abraham who, after apostasy, becomes literally the first—the first to return to the righteousness of the first fathers, the first to return to the religion that belonged in the beginning to mankind, the first to discover "*a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers*" (Abraham 1:31).

Abraham was the one who desired to be a follower of righteousness—one who possessed great knowledge, to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess greater knowledge still. It is this which made him a candidate the Lord could speak to. It's this that made him the prototype in his generation of what it takes to turn away from idolatry, to turn away from the kind of corrupt and degrading religions that were then in play on the earth—the fertility cults and the human sacrifices and the vileness that surrounded him. Fundamentally, what distinguishes Abraham and what distinguishes the covenant is the knowledge that he has. Abraham is in possession of something because Abraham knows some things that are true that relate back to the very beginning. And as a consequence of that, those who are given the same knowledge necessarily have to belong to the same priesthood.

“In thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood)...”—because you become a son of Abraham if you take upon yourself the requirements for the covenant, you inherit that. Just as Abraham inherited it. It comes down from the beginning from the fathers.

Everyone who receives the gospel, this gospel, verse 10 of that Abraham chapter 2: *“As many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name....”* You ought to ask yourself, what is “this Gospel?” And are you yet in possession of it? Because it would appear that the promises made to the fathers includes rather more than what we know about as yet.

But it is nevertheless the case that it is through Joseph and Jacob, Isaac and Abraham that the promises remain. You can see that in *Doctrine and Covenants* section 27. We only need to look at verse 10 of section 27: *“And also with Joseph and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, your fathers, by whom the promises remain....”* That is, promises are still in play right now as a consequence of what God did in covenant with Joseph, and covenant with Jacob, and covenant with Isaac, and covenant with Abraham. Those promises are still in play. This is what Moroni was talking to Joseph Smith about. And verse 11: *“As also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days.”* Promises that are in play today go all the way back to them.

The covenant which we receive will come as a consequence of *them*—what *they* got secured for *us*—promises which the Lord intends to honor. Therefore, when we are the beneficiaries of those covenants we are going, like Abraham, to have restored to us a knowledge of the beginning of creation, the planets, the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, and as section 121 tells us is going to be the case in the dispensation of the fullness of time.

And so the question is, how diligent ought the search be into the things of God? How carefully ought we to consider the things that have been restored to us through the prophet Joseph Smith?

The fact is that this stuff is assigned to our dispensation. And I'm reading from the *Book of Mormon*, which the world does not have or accept. I'm reading from the book of Abraham, which the world does not have or accept. I'm reading from the *Joseph Smith Translation*, which the world does not have and accept. All of you have this information in front of you. All of this material has been restored through someone that we claim we honor and regard as a prophet.

If the original Mormonism needed to recover the fulness that was lost, then to revive an original, it will require a recovery of what was lost and more. If recovered, believers will be able to receive a holy spot accepted and defended by God. In that place the religion of Adam will be taught. The promised original religion includes the revelation of everything. Nothing shall be withheld. Today's Mormonism has a great deal withheld. But the religion of Abraham, and therefore the religion of Adam, included a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, as also the planets and of the stars and as they were made known unto the fathers. The original Mormonism must grow in ancient knowledge and understanding until their understanding reaches into heaven. Not just spiritual understanding but also physical understanding of the layout of the universe. The placement of the lights in the firmament was for signs to man, and therefore were deliberately placed and contain information originally understood by Adam.

By the way, all these things were once part of the gospel—all of this, everything. In fact, the D&C says everything that's above, everything that's on, and everything that's beneath the earth. And beneath the earth means from the surface of the earth. It means those heavenly bodies that fall below the horizon and then re-emerge, like the planet Venus re-emerges. It goes under—it's the evening star, and then it's the morning star; it changes sides that you see the symbol on. All of these things were once part of the gospel. And all of these things will eventually, again, become part of the gospel once more.

“All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And also, if there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—All the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times” (D&C 121: 29-31).

There's a message up there. It was part of the gospel; it will be restored again. But right now, faith, repentance, baptism, and treating one another kindly and preparing to be the kind of people that are worthy of preservation is far more important than all of that. But, Genesis 1:14 says all that stuff up there was given for signs, and they're talking to us. The only way you can obliterate the testimony that's up there is by our apostasy when we lose light, and we're ignorant, and we

can't read it anymore. It's fixed, and it's not going to change. But we can lose light and knowledge such that we can no longer understand that testimony. Any time there's something going on in the heavens, God means something by it even if we're oblivious to it. And the challenge is to not be oblivious to it but to take it in and then assign it its proper weight.

What is going to happen is more affected by your repentance and your faith than anything else. And that's really where the hard work gets done—in the hearts, in our own hearts, in our own lives, in how we treat one another.

When this whole process was set in motion by God on the first day of creation, He had in His heart a plan that was going to unfold through every generation until the end. Three years previous to the death of Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, Adam gathered his posterity together essentially to tell them goodbye. And in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, Christ came and appeared to those that had gathered there. And Adam, despite the fact that he was bowed down with great age, rose up animated by the Spirit that he was taking in from the presence of our Lord, and he prophesied whatsoever should befall his descendants to the last generation. So he was talking about, among others, *you*. That same plan that was ordained in the heavens before the foundation of the world was revealed through Adam in prophecy in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. And we're on schedule to keep the appointments. Whether we're going to be on one side of the divide or on the other side of the divide, we're keeping the appointment. And the times have been fixed, and the seasons unfold, and the signs that show up from time to time remind us that despite how hectic and disorganized and how ill-fitted the world may be for the fulfillment of the all prophecies, it's simply going to happen.

A new dispensation of the gospel began with Joseph Smith; it continues today. There are now more revelations and more scripture given to us by Christ. The *Book of Mormon* foretold how the Gentiles would react to new scripture:

"...many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible. Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible ...And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever. Wherefore, because ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written" (2 Nephi 29:3, 6, 9-10).

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The purpose of the new dispensation is to make it possible again for mankind to know both God the Father and His Son.

Joseph is receiving in this first interview with the Angel Moroni, an announcement about the first indications of the restoration of God's intent to restore a holy family. God is telling us what He wants. He, God, wants to have upon the earth again His family. But we must respond. *We*—this is your dispensation. This is your time. You came down here with the intent of living and finding the things that will bring you back. This is your opportunity. Don't let some other group claim that it doesn't belong to you. These scriptures are only going to be fulfilled when enough people awake and arise to realize that it is devolving upon you the obligation to find, to heed, to seek, to search, to pray, to obey, and to form what is necessary in order to fulfill the promises and the covenants that were made to the fathers.

I know that the Lord knows a great deal more than do I and that very often I only figure out later what He has had in mind all along. And God is moving systematically. He is taking the measure of the Latter-day Saints, and His hand is about to move again in the affairs of men. We have a window. This is your dispensation. You are accountable. Those prophecies spoken to Joseph Smith by the Angel Moroni in his room aren't going to fulfill themselves. There has to be someone who has faith. There has to be someone who rises up. And when He sets His hand and He invites you to join in, and He wants you to know Him—when He sets that in motion, then you need to respond—not to me, not to any man—you need to respond to Him. This is His work. He, and only He, will organize it. He, and only He, will roll it forth.

The foregoing are excerpts from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #1 entitled "Be of Good Cheer," given in Boise, ID on September 10th, 2013;
- Talk #2 entitled "The Lectures on Faith," given in Idaho Falls, ID on September 28th, 2013; and
- Talk #4 entitled "Covenants," given in Centerville, UT on October 6th, 2013;
- The presentation of Denver's paper entitled "Was There an Original," given at the Sunstone Symposium on July 29, 2016;
- His remarks at "A Day of Faith and Connection" youth conference in UT on June 10th, 2017; and
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #2 given in Dallas, TX on October 19th, 2017.