Lesson 23
Doctrine and Covenants 88

Notice that section 87, on war, was given only a few days before this section, “an olive leaf . . . plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord’s message of peace.” How is the message of section 88 one of peace to the Saints? (See what was happening to the Saints in December 1832 and January 1833.) Some of these questions were also part of lesson 19.

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Verse 2: Sabaoth is a Hebrew word meaning “hosts” or “armies.” (See Romans 9:29 and James 5:4, where the word is left untranslated, and 1 Samuel 17:45, where it is translated.) Why might the Lord describe himself with that title in this section, which is a message of peace?

Verse 3: Remember from previous discussions that the word comforter also means “strengthener.” Does thinking of this section in terms of strength rather than ease or consolation change what it means to you?

Verse 4: Verse 3 says that the other Comforter is the Holy Ghost. This verse says it is “the promise . . . of eternal life [and . . .] the glory of the celestial kingdom.” How can the other Comforter be both of these?

Verse 6: All of this section is clearly connected to John 1:1–9 and 3:19–21, but the next several verses are especially
so connected. How do these verses help us understand the verses from John? How do the verses from John help us understand these?

What does it mean to say that Jesus ascended above all things? That he descended below all things? That he comprehends all things? The first meaning of comprehend was “encompass,” and the later meaning, “understand,” comes from that. Might that earlier meaning fit this discussion?

What does it mean to say that Jesus is in all things and through all things? This verse says he ascended, descended, and encompassed so that he could be in and through all things. What does that mean?

The last phrase of this verse, “the light of truth,” modifies “that he might be in all and through all things.” In other words, we could read the verse to say, “Christ ascended above all, descended below all, and comprehends all so that he can be the light of truth.” What does that mean? (As you consider these verses, compare them to verses 40–41 of this section.)

**Verse 7:** To what does this refer in “this is the light of Christ”?  

**Verses 7–10:** How is Christ in the sun, moon, and stars? By being “the power thereof by which they were made” (verse 9)?

**Verse 11:** Think about the phrase “which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings.” Does the word which refer to light in the first part of the verse, or does it refer to him (i.e., Jesus)? In other words, does this say that
the light we see is the same light that gives us understanding, or does it say that the light we see is given by the same person who gives us mental and spiritual light?

**Verses 12–13:** Notice that these verses define the light that fills the universe as God’s power, much as verses 7–10 did. Notice too that “the law by which all things are governed” is equated with “the power of God.” How are these—power, light, and law—the same? For example, what does it mean to say that God’s power and his law are the same?

**Verse 14:** What does it mean to say that the resurrection occurs through the redemption?

**Verse 15:** This is an important doctrine, for traditional Christianity has often denigrated the body, and because of that denigration our culture still often looks on the body as a hindrance (or, in backlash, it thinks of the body as the only thing). The privilege and acclaim we sometimes give supposedly intellectual professions over more physical professions is one of the remnants of this misunderstanding of the body and the spirit. In what other ways do we sometimes forget this necessary unity of spirit and body?

Note: though the soul is defined here as the unity of the spirit and body, it isn’t always or even often used that way in other scriptures. This definition is one that seems to be used only in the latter days. Therefore, when you read the word *soul* in scripture, you must ask yourself whether the writer meant “spirit” or “soul” as it is used here.

**Verses 21–22:** We sometimes speak of being sanctified through obedience to law, but verse 21 speaks of being
sanctified through the law. Is that any different? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Notice too that these verses speak of abiding a law rather than obeying a law. The word *abide* means “dwell.” Why do you suppose the Lord speaks of abiding or “dwelling” a law rather than obeying a law? What does the former imply that may be missing in the latter?

**Verses 30–31:** In what sense can terrestrial or telestial glory be a fulness, as each is called here?

**Verse 34:** What is the message of this verse? How does it square with the many passages in the Book of Mormon and in the New Testament that tell us we are saved by grace, not law? (See, for example, Romans 3:19–28, and notice the change Joseph Smith made in verse 24.) To think about this, ask yourself what the word *law* means? Does it always mean the same thing? Does it mean the same thing in Romans that it means in this verse?

What is the relationship between being saved and being sanctified?

**Verse 35:** Whom does this verse describe?

**Verses 51–61:** Can you give an explanation of this parable?

To what does the phrase “these kingdoms” refer?

**Verse 62:** What does this verse ask us to ponder?

What does it mean that we should call upon the Lord when he is near? If he is in and through all things, when would he not be near?
Verse 67: Given what we’ve seen in verses 4–13, what are we promised if our eye is single to the Lord’s glory? What does it mean to have our eye single to his glory? (Compare this verse with section 4, and compare section 4 to 2 Peter 1:5–9.)

Verses 76–77: How are verses 76 and 77 connected? For example, are they parallel in some way, or does one explain the other, or . . . ? In nineteenth-century English the word doctrine (verse 77) could also mean “message” or “teaching.” What is the message of the kingdom? In other words, what are we to teach each other?

Verses 78–80: We are promised that if we teach diligently, the Lord’s grace will attend us. What does that mean? What is his grace? What does it mean to say it will attend us?

How are the things listed in verse 79 essential to us? Why should we need to know them?

Verse 117: In this verse, the word therefore seems to mean something like, “given all the things described in verses 87–116.” How are this verse and the verses that follow necessitated by the events described in verses 87–116?

Verse 118: Does a lack of faith, rather than knowledge, make teaching necessary? How would you explain that?

What does wisdom mean in this verse? (Compare D&C 131:6.) What are “words of wisdom”? What are the best books? What does it mean to seek learning by faith?

Compare D&C 90:15. Are these two scriptures recommending the same thing or different things?

Verse 119: What house is the Lord speaking of in this verse?
Verse 120: This verse begins with *that* meaning “so that.” What are we to do *so that* our coming in and going out, and so forth, may be in the name of the Lord? What does it mean to say that our comings and goings are in the name of the Lord?

Verse 122: Does this provide a model for teaching in the Church? What is the difference between this model of teaching and most other models of teaching? Does this model apply in more than just Church classes? For example, does it apply in the home? In priesthood and ward councils? Does it apply in primary or secondary school or in college classes? If you think it does apply in some of these other areas, can you say specifically how it does?

If you are teaching a class, ask yourself how you might use the principles of this verse to improve your teaching.

Verses 123–25: Notice that the particular commandments given in verse 124 are included in commandments to love in verses 123 and 125. Why? How are the commandments given in 124 related to verses 123 and 125? Are they part of the instruction for how we should teach, as in verse 122? Or is this a new topic?

Verse 133: What importance might this salutation, intended for use in the School of the Prophets in the Kirtland Temple, have for us? Is it relevant to Sunday School? To priesthood and Relief Society meetings? How? To our other educational pursuits? How?