Lesson 24

Doctrine and Covenants 26; 28; 43:1–7; 50; 52:14–19

Doctrine and Covenants 26

Verse 1: Why do you think it was necessary for the Lord to give the Prophet, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer this advice? Why was the revelation given to those three in particular?

Verse 2: What does “common consent” mean in this context? What does that principle have to do with free agency? When we raise our hands to sustain someone who was called by a priesthood leader, in what sense is that working by common consent? How does the practice of common consent help guard the Church against apostasy? (Compare D&C 107:84.)

In addition to saying that all things must be done by common consent, this verse says that all things must be done “by much prayer and faith.” The law of common consent is, clearly, a law about governing the Church. Are prayer and faith also principles for governance? How is prayer a principle of governance? Faith?

What does the Lord mean when he says “all things you shall receive by faith”? Does that differ from “you shall receive all things by faith”? How?
Doctrine and Covenants 43

Verses 3–6: We occasionally hear of some who have separated themselves from the Church, claiming that we have a false prophet or that they have another prophet who leads them in a higher law. What do these verses tell us about such claims? How does the Lord say that he will deal with things if the prophet were to cease to be his prophet?

Verse 7: To whom is this referring in speaking of those who have been ordained?

What does it mean to “come in at the gate”?

What are those referred to in this verse to teach?

Doctrine and Covenants 50

Verse 1: The Lord tells the elders of the Church to listen to what they will receive “according as ye have asked.” What that means is relatively clear. But what does it mean to say that it will be given to them “according [. . . as they] are agreed as touching the church”? And how does “the spirits which have gone abroad in the earth” fit into the sentence? Does the heading of this section help explain what the Lord is saying here?

What is the connection, if any, between the fact that this section is described as “words of wisdom” and that section 89 is called the “Word of Wisdom”?

Verses 2–4: To what kinds of spirits is verse 2 referring? Speaking of this period in Church history, George Albert Smith said:
When the Church was organized, persons came into it bringing along some of these enthusiastic notions, individuals who professed to have revelations on every subject, and who were ready to banish every moral principle under the guidance of false spirits. Joseph the Prophet had also to learn by experience, and to teach the Elders and the early members of the Church, how they should judge of the manifestation of spirits. . . .

There was a prevalent spirit all through the early history of this Church, which prompted the Elders to suppose that they knew more than the Prophet. Elders would tell you that the prophet was going wrong, men who thought they knew all about this work thirty or forty years some of them before the Lord revealed it, tried “to steady the ark.” The Church was constantly afflicted with such a class of men. (Journal of Discourses, 11:2, 7)

How are these verses directed at that problem?

**Verse 5:** This verse says that the alternative to falling prey to a deceiving spirit is being faithful and enduring. Is that a tautology—in other words, two things that mean the same thing (not falling prey to a deceiving spirit = being faithful and enduring)?

What does it mean to say, “Blessed are they who endure, whether in life or in death”?

**Verses 6–9:** What is a deceiver? What is a hypocrite in this context? Does the word *hypocrite* here mean what it usually
means, “a person who falsely pretends to have virtuous inclinations, feelings, or practices”? It is clear why deception is a terrible sin, but why is hypocrisy? Does verse 7 mean that deceivers and hypocrites are the same? What does it mean when it says “but behold such shall be reclaimed”?

**Verses 10–12:** Is the Lord using the word the word *reason* in these verses as we use it? What does he mean? (See Isaiah 55.) What does verse 12 suggest about how the Lord speaks to us? (Compare D&C 1:24.)

**Verses 13–14:** How is this message about the purpose of ordination relevant to the problem of apostasy, of following false spirits?

**Verses 15–16:** To what is verse 15 referring when it speaks of “spirits which you could not understand”? What criticism is the Lord making here? What is his promise in verse 16?

**Verses 17–20:** How do these verses answer the question that I asked of verses 13–14?

**Verses 21–22:** What does the Lord mean when he says “he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth”? That seems to say that only “those who receive the word by the Spirit of truth receive the word by the Spirit of truth.” At first glance it seems to be a tautology. But surely the clause says more than that. What more does it say?

How does verse 21 imply verse 22? Why do those who preach and those that receive understand one another? Why are both edified, in other words, “built up”?
Verse 23: Can we divide everything in the world into those things that edify and those that do not? What about things like mowing the lawn that don’t seem to edify but seem strange to describe as “not edifying”? I think some of us would say, “It isn’t edifying to mow the lawn,” though perhaps a few would say, “It is edifying to mow the lawn.” To what kinds of things does this verse refer?

Verse 24: What kinds of meanings can the word light have in this verse? Consider what it means to receive more light, given each of the meanings you think of.

Verses 25–27: Of whom is verse 26 speaking—of a particular person or of anyone who has been ordained? If the latter, ordained to what? What does it mean to say that he is “appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all”? Of what appointment is this speaking? In what ways is he a servant and the least? How does knowing what verse 26 teaches help us know the truth and chase darkness away (verse 25)?

How does verse 27 define what it means to possess all things? Does that understanding of possession differ from our ordinary understanding?

Verse 29: How does this verse repeat what was taught in verse 27? Does it add anything to our understanding?

Verses 30–31: In what sense is the word spirit being used in these verses? Can you say in your own words what the instructions in verse 31 mean?
**Verses 32–34:** What does it mean to proclaim against a spirit? What does it mean to do so with a loud voice if that voice is not one of “railing accusation”?

By what might one who uses railing accusation be overcome? How?

Why might we proclaim against a spirit with boasting or rejoicing? Why is it a mistake to do so?

**Verse 35:** This verse isn’t a complete sentence, but it isn’t obvious how it connects grammatically either to the previous sentence (verse 34) or the one that follows (verse 36). Taken by itself, the part of the verse that is between dashes is simple to understand: it is a blessing that the kingdom is given and that they have power to overcome anything not ordained by the Father. What, however, do you make of the first part of the verse? What does it modify?

**Verse 36:** Obviously this would have been important to those listening. Do we ever hear such a thing ourselves? In what circumstances might we?

**Verses 40–41:** These verses are addressed to those listening when Joseph gave the revelation. Are they also applicable to us?

When the Lord says “you cannot bear all things now,” what kinds of things might he be talking about, things they cannot bear?

What does it mean to grow in grace? Why must we grow in grace and knowledge of the truth in order to be able to bear all things? In other words, how do grace and truth help us bear things?
Verse 42: We don’t believe in predestination, so what does this verse mean?

Verses 43–44: What does it mean to be in Christ or in the Father? Why is the preposition in appropriate here?

Some New Testament scholars have argued that the phrase “in Christ” depends on Old Testament usage, and that usage indicates that the person who is in another person is part of the other person’s family. Would that interpretation work here?

Does the clause “I am in your midst” in verse 44 help us understand better what the Lord teaches in verse 43? How is he in our midst?

Why does the Lord call himself “the good shepherd”? What is the point of that name?

Why does the Lord refer to himself as “the stone of Israel”? What does that name teach us? How do we build on “this rock”? Is verse 43 related to Matthew 16:18: “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”?

Verses 45–46: When will the day described in verse 45 come? How do we watch for it?

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Verse 14: The topic that begins here is “how to avoid being deceived.” How will a pattern help us avoid being deceived?

Verses 15–16: To be accepted, we must pray and speak in meek and edifying language, and we must be contrite and
obey the ordinances. The last two, a contrite spirit and obedience to the ordinances, are mentioned in both of these verses.

What does it mean to have a contrite spirit?

Are “accepted of me” and being “of God” the same? Can you explain what they mean?

We usually speak of obeying commandments. How does one obey an ordinance?

Why does our prayer need to be contrite? Why do we need to be contrite when we speak?

What does it mean to speak in meek and edifying language?

Verses 17–18: What does it mean to tremble under the Lord’s power? Does that have anything to do with being contrite? With obeying the ordinances?

How will we be made strong?

What does it mean to bring forth fruit? Is this a promise that those who tremble will bring forth fruit—or is it a commandment?

What does it mean to be overcome? Notice that the alternatives seem to be trembling under the Lord’s power, on the one hand, and being overcome, on the other. Why are both of these positions of subservience? Is this a pattern for bringing forth fruits? How so? What is the pattern?

Verse 19: How can we use this pattern to identify spirits?