

February 10-16, 2025

# Doctrine and Covenants 10–11

“THAT YOU MAY COME OFF CONQUEROR”

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## Summary:

*Doctrine and Covenants 10. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, likely around April 1829, though portions may have been received as early as the summer of 1828. Herein the Lord informs Joseph of alterations made by wicked men in the 116 manuscript pages from the translation of the book of Lehi, in the Book of Mormon. These manuscript pages had been lost from the possession of Martin Harris, to whom the sheets had been temporarily entrusted. (See the heading to section 3.) The evil design was to await the expected retranslation of the matter covered by the stolen pages and then to discredit the translator by showing discrepancies created by the alterations. That this wicked purpose had been conceived by the evil one and was known to the Lord even while Mormon, the ancient Nephite historian, was making his abridgment of the accumulated plates, is shown in the Book of Mormon (see Words of Mormon 1:3–7).*

*1–26, Satan stirs up wicked men to oppose the Lord’s work;*

*27–33, He seeks to destroy the souls of men;*

*34–52, The gospel is to go to the Lamanites and all nations through the Book of Mormon;*

*53–63, The Lord will establish His Church and His gospel among men;*

*64–70, He will gather the repentant into His Church and will save the obedient.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 11. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to his brother Hyrum Smith, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, May 1829. This revelation was received through the Urim and Thummim in answer to Joseph’s supplication and inquiry. Joseph Smith’s history suggests that this revelation was received after the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood.*

*1–6, Laborers in the vineyard will gain salvation;*

*7–14, Seek wisdom, cry repentance, trust in the Spirit;*

*15–22, Keep the commandments, and study the Lord’s word;*

*23–27, Deny not the spirit of revelation and of prophecy;*

*28–30, Those who receive Christ become the sons of God.*

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## Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

### What value can I discover in “preparation?”

The preparation that Joseph Smith went through is part of a pattern of preparation identified throughout the scriptures and evident in Jewish tradition. Many of the Jewish holidays have extensive preparations that are as important as the holy day itself. The preparation of scriptures for later use is a pattern seen in the Bible as well as the Book of Mormon. There is strong evidence that Biblical texts were lost and even found again as told in an account of King Josiah. “During the renovation, the book of **Deuteronomy** was

discovered in one of the storage chambers. The biblical books had previously been destroyed by Amon so that the find caused a sensation. When the book was read to Josiah he was deeply shocked by its prophesies of doom. He immediately sent a delegation to the prophetess Hulda to ask her advice. The answer was forthright and not reassuring—Jerusalem and the Temple were doomed, but Josiah himself would not live to see their destruction. Josiah led the people to the Temple in repentance. He issued a proclamation to celebrate the Passover according to the ancient statutes. The people flocked to Jerusalem from all corners of the kingdom to

celebrate the renovation of the temple and the holiday of Passover. Josiah was far-sighted. Despite his successes, he heeded Hulda's prophesy and hid the Ark of the Covenant so that it should not be captured when Jerusalem fell. He also hid the anointing oil, prepared in the wilderness by Moses." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The pattern unfolding at the time of King Josiah shows the value in having **Deuteronomy** found – another record of the “law” prepared in order to verify a true interpretation, a witness of scriptures that were misunderstood or lost.

### **How does history seem to repeat itself?**

Some of the witnesses for the Book of Mormon are the previous prophets who foresaw its coming and its value in the restoration of all things. “And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work . . . even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.” (**Isaiah 29:12-14**) Let's consider the “marvelous!” Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate by the means of the *Urim* and *Thummim*, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them. (**Doctrine and Covenants 10:1**) Consider how a prophet teaches us to use the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the underlined words are

a clue. “But now hold your peace; study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which is now translating, yea, until you have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation, and then shall all things be added thereto. (**Doctrine and Covenants 11:22**) A marvelous tool or gift of spirit used by ancient and modern prophets is the *Urim* and *Thummim*. Modern day Jews explain; “The exact meaning of the words ‘*Urim*’ and ‘*Thummim*’ have puzzled scholars over the generations. Both in the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible they were rendered as ‘revelation and truth’ or ‘teaching and truth’ and this understanding gave rise to the incorporation of the Hebrew words *Urim ve-Thummim* on the official seal of Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **What might the *Urim* and *Thummim* have looked like?**

There are symbols in modern Judaism that ostensibly date back to David and Solomon's times. One of the most popular is known by non-Jews as the Star of David. Those of the House of Israel call it the *Magen David*, the sign or shield of David. “*Magen David* (‘Shield of David’), the six-pointed star, has become the generally accepted emblem of the Jewish people. Tradition tells us that King David wore a *Magen David* on his shield, and that King Solomon had the symbol inscribed on his ring in place of the name of God to give him dominion over demons. Despite its long history, it is however only recently that the *Magen David* has become an exclusively Jewish symbol. “During the early Middle Ages, Christians decorated their churches and cathedrals with the *Magen David*. For Muslims it was a magical sign; in Arabic sources the *Magen David* was also known

as the 'seal of Solomon' and this alternative name was taken over by Jewish groups as well." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The *Magen David* is always shown as two triangles, interwoven. One possible explanation is that the two triangles represent a characterization of the *Urim* and *Thummim*. According to Joseph Smith, the *Urim* and *Thummim* were two triangular stones connected by a silver bow. One pointed up and the other pointed down. Superimposed, they make a fascinating Magen David!

### **How did the *Urim* and *Thummim* work?**

According to a paper given at Hebrew University by the late John Tvedtnes (1941-2018), a Senior Researcher at FARMS (BYU), the words *Urim* and *Thummim* may come from Egyptian words similar to "*RMMM*" and "*TMMM*," one meaning yes or act upon it (positive), the other a more negative meaning (leave it alone). Since the *Urim* and *Thummim* were revelatory tools, it is possible that they represent or operate on a simple principle of revelation, study then ask. The answer, if we are ready, will be yes or no. Think of it as one answer points up and the other points down. This is as simple as the most complicated computer which works on ones and zeros, yes and no. "But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right." (**Doctrine and Covenants 9:8**) Sometimes the exact right answer does not come when we expect it. A parable about a rock wall that I learned years ago included the imagery of a farmer dragging and lifting the stones from his field as he cleared the land for planting. He laid the stones a row around his property. Later, a stone worker arrived to turn the loose stones into a rock wall. With his skill, the worker managed to find the stones that fit, each one supporting

itself and the others above, under or around it. At one point the worker reached a place where no stone seemed to fit. He simply left a hole and continued constructing the wall. At the end he had some left-over stones. Remembering the gap, the stone worker returned with the extra left-over stones. They fit perfectly! "For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith." (**Doctrine and Covenants 98:12**) ". . . the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept . . . line upon line; here a little, and there a little . . . Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." (**Isaiah 28:14-16.**)

### **How can little stones be so powerful?**

"In biblical times, Jerusalem was surrounded by thick, green forests of almond, olive and pine trees. But in the course of numerous wars and settlements, much of this lush greenery was destroyed and the soil left to dry out in the summer sun and wash away in the heavy winter rains. From earliest times, farmers have therefore been forced to terrace the ground and build stone fences along the slopes to hold back the soil. This stone terracing is still in evidence all along the Jerusalem landscape." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Ah, those little stones can also be "seer stones!" When Joseph Smith received the golden plates in 1827, he also received a translation instrument with them, "two stones in silver bows" used by "seers" in ancient or former times" (**Joseph Smith—History 1:35**). I heard Eldredge G Smith (1907-2013), Patriarch to the Church repeat Joseph Smith's description of "two triangular stones, held by a silver bow, one pointed up and the other pointed down." A *Magen David*, the *Urim* and *Thummim*! The imagery of stone is used often in the

scriptures. One of the reasons is that the Lord is the “Rock of Salvation.” Our testimony of Him comes with repeated experiences from the “still small voice.” Even the strongest stone wall is made from many smaller ones.

### **How do the words harvest, and sickle relate – religiously?**

One of three Jewish harvest holidays is *Pesach* (Passover) which begins a 7-day celebration on the first full moon after the spring equinox – as well as commemorating the deliverance – the Exodus from Egypt – the first fruits harvest. Another harvest holiday is *Sukkot*, a 7-day long festival beginning on the first full moon after the fall equinox. It celebrates the fall harvest as well as commemorating the deliverance – the Exodus from Egypt. It is a sequel to Passover. The beginning and ending days of these two festivals are designated as High Days, or extra Sabbaths. Another “first fruits” harvest festival is called *Shavuot*. It begins seven weeks after the second day of Passover (or 50-days after Passover began). It celebrates a spiritual progression from slavery to deliverance, as well as celebrating *Z’man Matan*

*Torateinu*, (the time of the giving of the *Torah* – the law), written on stone tablets. 50-days after the first harvest is known in many languages as Pentecost. (In New Testament times, the Lord chose this day to the giving of the Holy Ghost – the law written in the heart.) That holiday is called *Shavuot*. These three holidays are Harvest celebrations with requirements to go to the Temple, the house of the Lord. Going to the restored House of the Lord we covenant to keep the laws of God, **Law of obedience**: Striving to keep God's commandments; **Law of sacrifice**: Supporting the Lord's work and repenting; **Law of the gospel**: Following the higher law taught by Jesus Christ; **Law of chastity**: Having sexual relations only with a legally wedded spouse; and the **Law of consecration**: Dedicating time, talents, and other blessings to building up the Church of Jesus Christ. The sickle represents our work, the harvest represents God's blessings to us. Just as a reminder, the Hebrew word for the commandments, the Laws, is *Mitzvot*, that word also means blessings!