

March 10-16, 2025

Doctrine and Covenants 20–22

“THE RISE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST”

Summary:

Doctrine and Covenants 20. Revelation on Church organization and government, given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at or near Fayette, New York. Portions of this revelation may have been given as early as summer 1829. The complete revelation, known at the time as the Articles and Covenants, was likely recorded soon after April 6, 1830 (the day the Church was organized). The Prophet wrote, “We obtained of Him [Jesus Christ] the following, by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to His will and commandment, we should proceed to organize His Church once more here upon the earth.”

*1–16, The Book of Mormon proves the divinity of the latter-day work;
17–28, The doctrines of creation, fall, atonement, and baptism are affirmed;
29–37, Laws governing repentance, justification, sanctification, and baptism are set forth;
38–67, Duties of elders, priests, teachers, and deacons are summarized;
68–74, Duties of members, blessing of children, and the mode of baptism are revealed;
75–84, Sacramental prayers and regulations governing Church membership are given.*

Doctrine and Covenants 21. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Fayette, New York, April 6, 1830. This revelation was given at the organization of the Church, on the date named, in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. Six men, who had previously been baptized, participated. By unanimous vote these persons expressed their desire and determination to organize, according to the commandment of God (see [section 20](#)). They also voted to accept and sustain Joseph Smith Jr. and Oliver Cowdery as the presiding officers of the Church. With the laying on of hands, Joseph then ordained Oliver an elder of the Church, and Oliver similarly ordained Joseph. After administration of the sacrament, Joseph and Oliver laid hands upon the participants individually for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost and for the confirmation of each as a member of the Church.

*1–3, Joseph Smith is called to be a seer, translator, prophet, apostle, and elder;
4–8, His word will guide the cause of Zion;
9–12, The Saints will believe his words as he speaks by the Comforter.*

Doctrine and Covenants 22. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Manchester, New York, April 16, 1830. This revelation was given to the Church in consequence of some who had previously been baptized desiring to unite with the Church without rebaptism.

*1, Baptism is a new and everlasting covenant;
2–4, Authoritative baptism is required.*

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What method can I use to verify a true restoration?

One of the witnesses for the restoration

would be a comparison to ancient times because the Old Covenant was the same as the New Covenant. “It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the

gathering of the people in every age of the world . . . Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world . . . for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.” (**Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44, Pg.308**) “Actually, of course, the law of carnal commandments, the law of performances and ordinances revealed through Moses, was an old covenant as

compared with the gospel restored by Jesus and his apostles. But this New Testament or covenant, this restored gospel, was the same testament that had been in force between God and his people from Adam to Moses in both the old and the new worlds." (**Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, Pg.543**) Religious Jews still practice many forms of ancient rites and rituals whose meanings may have become distorted or lost over many years without priesthood guidance. Now that the priesthood has been restored, we can learn about the old practices in order to better understand the "Old Covenant," which was true and how the "New Covenant" restored the ancient practices with true doctrine.

How are the first principles of the gospel still reflected in Judaism?

In Judaism, the subjects of Faith, Repentance, Baptism (immersion - Mikveh) and the Holy Spirit are viewed as follows. **Faith:** "In the Bible there are no articles of faith or dogmas in which the Jew is commanded to believe. Belief in God's existence and infinite ability is taken for granted and is the basis of the Bible. This is the importance of the story of the Exodus from Egypt; the Children of Israel witnessed God's wonders and passed on the record of their own personal experience to their descendants. The biblical word *emunah* (and its other forms) which is often translated as 'belief' really means 'trust' or 'confidence,' which is something quite different. "Judaism insists on belief, faith and good deeds (which are also called *mitzvot*); but by themselves they are not enough. The actual observance of the *mitzvot*, notwithstanding the fact that it may occasionally cause inconvenience, is a prime doctrine of Judaism." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How is Repentance explained?

"A unique aspect of the Jewish faith is

that although God rules the world with absolute justice, He is also merciful and forgives sins against Him. The doctrine of repentance is based on this belief.

'Although Judaism sees sin as a most serious matter, even the sinner is not without hope. One of the most important theological doctrines of both the Bible and the *Talmud* is that if a sinner repents his bad deeds, God will forgive him.'

Repentance consists of several stages- firstly the sinner must reflect on his actions and realize that he has indeed done the wrong thing. He must then make up his mind never to do it again, and confess his sin. This confession is not made to any other human being but is made by the sinner directly to God. On this basis the two confessions *Ashamnu* and *Al-Het* were introduced into the prayers for the Day of Atonement which is a special occasion for repentance and forgiveness. However, even when a sinner has done all these things, his repentance is still not final until he has been exposed to the same temptation and withstood it. Of course he should not deliberately put himself on that spot again." "Repentance in Hebrew is known as *teshuvah*, which literally means 'return,' and signifies a return to God. A person who repents his sins is known as a *ba'al teshuvah*. Many rabbis of the *Talmud* believed that the real *ba'al teshuvah* is greater even than a person who has never sinned and they furthermore said that when a person repents out of love of God (and not just out of fear of divine punishment), all the sins he had committed are considered to be *mitzvot*. This is perhaps the most comforting doctrine that Judaism has given to the world." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What is considered a washing away of sins?

Immersion is the token of conversion. "A convert to Judaism is considered a new-born child, and, from the *halakhic* (Jewish

legal) point of view, he has no father or mother. Thus, if a whole family converts, the children and the parents start their lives as Jews with no legal relationship. Because of this state of affairs, converts are always named as though they were the sons of Abraham, the first Jew. A husband and wife who convert must also have another wedding ceremony in order to be married under Jewish law."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) In a literal sense, Latter-day Saints connect "Jews" with "Judah," a descendant of Abraham. "A potential convert (or proselyte) is first questioned by a court (*bet din*) of three rabbis. They usually begin by trying to persuade him to give up the idea of joining a nation which has been, and today still is, severely persecuted. If the candidate still affirms sincerely that he is ready to 'accept the yoke of the commandments,' he or she must undergo a period of instruction in Judaism, in its laws and practices. After thorough study, when he understands the *mitzvot* (commandments and blessings) and is ready to begin his life as a Jew, the candidate is ready for the rituals of conversion. For both males and females the *bet din* oversees their immersion in a ritual bath (*mikveh*)." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)** Jewish thought requires that the *Bet Din* should always have the presence of Levites. They will witness the total immersion of the person. "Just how to construct a *mikveh* in accordance with the numerous legal specifications involved constantly posed a technological problem of great seriousness, and over the generations rabbinic thinkers were repeatedly challenged to come up with novel solutions to this unusual problem which demanded a rare combination of technologic and *halakhic* ingenuity."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Briefly the basic legal requirements are these: "A mikveh must not be filled with water that has been drawn (i.e., has been in a vessel or a receptacle), but with water from a

naturally flowing source; spring water or rainwater are the ideal sources, but melted snow and ice are also permitted. The water must be able to flow into the mikveh freely and unimpeded (any blockage renders the water 'drawn water') and must reach the mikveh in vessels that are not susceptible to ritual uncleanness. The minimum size of the mikveh is of a vessel which has a volume of '40 seah,' variously estimated at between 250 and 1,000 liters (quarts). The *mikveh* must be watertight and must be constructed of natural materials on the spot, for otherwise it is deemed itself to be a 'vessel' and renders the water in it 'drawn water'." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)** Jesus' baptism was an ancient ordinance. John, a Levite, was administering immersions in a classic Jewish environment. The water source came from springs (living water), it flowed freely (Jordan River), it exceeded the minimum amount of water needed, and it was a natural setting. Jewish tradition also includes a requirement that the *mikveh* should be below ground level. The Jordan River, where John the Baptist was immersing people, is at the lowest place on the face of the earth, near the Dead Sea.

What is parallel to the next "First Principle?"

Holy Spirit or "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* is (also) often used as a synonym for prophecy. However, according to some rabbis, unlike prophecy, there are some types of *ruah ha-kodesh* which also can be attained by doing good deeds."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The possession of the "Holy Spirit" has been used to describe various righteous teachers and sages. ". . . Luria already had a reputation as a man of striking personality who possessed the holy spirit. ". . . Nahman was the great-grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, and his mother was said to 'possess the holy spirit.' ". . . Phinehas is known to have

traveled to redeem captives, and on one journey a river in flood parted for him, so as not to delay his mission. He constructed the famous 'ladder of saintliness' in which Caution (against evil) leads through Eagerness (for good), Cleanliness, Purity, Asceticism, Holiness, Humility, Fear of God, Attainment of the Holy Spirit (divine inspiration), ultimately to the Resurrection of the Dead."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

Who claims the authority to perform ordinances?

"In the early Church, the Savior set the pattern for Church leadership: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" ([Eph. 4:11](#)). In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke described the vital role Apostles had in guiding the Church anciently. This model of apostolic leadership continues in the Church today and is further confirmed by revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and by modern prophets. The striking parallels between the role of Apostles in New Testament times and the role of Apostles today testify of the continuing validity of this sacred office." (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/iahona/2001/09/and-he-gave-some-apostles?lang=eng>)

Considering the word authority, few religions identify or make claims on it. Scripturally, this priesthood authority is explained: "Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness." ([Joseph Smith History 1:69](#))

concept of authority are the Roman Catholic Church which states a "line of authority" from Jesus through the lead Apostle, Peter, to the present day Pope. "The authority structure in the Roman Catholic Church is like a three-legged stool, with Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium (teaching authority of the Church through ordination). Each of the three, and the three together, are necessary and work seamlessly together as the authority for the Church."

(<https://www.9marks.org/article/how-a-roman-catholic-view-of-church-authority-compares-to-a-protestant-view/>) The other statement on authority is found among the religious Jews who say the authority was lost with the destruction of the last Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. "There is no sitting high priest today, so hereditary succession is a non-issue. It follows that the appointment of the high priest for the Third Temple—may it be speedily in our days—will be done by the newly installed Sanhedrin and/or the king, Moshiach himself—based on the above-detailed criteria. ([Rabbi Naftali Silberberg, Chabad.org Editorial Team, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/994923/jewish/How-Is-a-High-Priest-Selected.htm](#))

What is restoration?

The original order of God the Father and His son Jesus is restored, it is a divine return of the Church of Jesus Christ – with its foundation of apostles and prophets, gospel light and knowledge, and priesthood authority. That is what members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints refer to as the Restoration. The Apostle Peter foretold the Restoration when he declared there would be a time of "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets." ([Acts 3:21](#))

The only other religions that have a