

Summary Handout

“Seek Ye Earnestly the Best Gifts”

Lesson
15
Summary

Scripture Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 46; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 8, 1831. HC 1: 163—165. In this early time of the Church, there had not yet developed a unified pattern for the conducting of Church services. However, a custom of admitting only members and earnest investigators to the sacrament meetings and other assemblies of the Church had become somewhat general. This revelation expresses the will of the Lord relative to governing and conducting meetings. 1—2, Elders are to conduct meetings as guided by the Holy Spirit; 3—6, Truth seekers should not be excluded from sacramental services; 7—12, Ask of God and seek the gifts of the Spirit; 13—26, An enumeration of some of these gifts; 27—33, Church leaders are given power to discern the gifts of the Spirit.*

Articles of Faith 1:7; We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

1 Corinthians 12—13; Holy Ghost reveals Jesus is the Christ—Spiritual gifts are present among the saints—Apostles, prophets, and miracles found in the true Church. Paul extols the high status of charity—Charity, a pure love, excels and exceeds almost all else.

Moroni 10:8—18 A testimony of the Book of Mormon comes by the power of the Holy Ghost—The gifts of the Spirit are dispensed to the faithful—Spiritual gifts always accompany faith—Moroni’s words speak from the dust—Come unto Christ, be perfected in him, and sanctify your souls.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights: **Key to Recognizing the Messiah:** The true meaning of the Messiah’s life and those who testified of Him is the SPIRIT. The word for spirit in Hebrew is Ruach Elohim, the breath the wind of God. Moses knew that gift well and desired that everyone would have it. “And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!” (**Numbers 11:29**)

A Gift: As previously stated, there are some people who do not have that gift yet, and those that do must exercise patience and love because eventually more will get that gift and be very happy. The gift of belief comes from God.

Attributes Leading to Belief: “. . . 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.” (*Encyclopædia Judaica, Jr.*)

Believing Superseded by “Doing:” In Judaism, “belief” is superseded by “doing.” Hence, the 613 commandments (365 do not’s and 248 do’s) have preeminence over faith. “The biblical word emunah (and its other forms) which is often translated as ‘belief’ really means ‘trust’ or ‘confidence,’ which is something quite different.” (*Encyclopædia Judaica, Jr.*)

Beyond “doing::” Even prayers and benedictions are prepared to be followed, rather than be spoken from the heart. However, some of these benedictions still carry an admonition to go beyond the ‘do’ to embrace ‘faith’ (Emunah) in God. (*Encyclopædia Judaica, Jr.*)

Praying for Wisdom and Knowledge: In Synagogue services there are certain benedictions recited or read. One of them is a request for the gifts of wisdom and knowledge. “The fourth benediction is a request for the gift of wisdom and understanding. It concludes with Barukh . . . honen ha-da’at (Blessed be . . . the gracious giver of knowledge.)” (*Encyclopædia Judaica, Jr.*)

Judges Need Extra Spiritual Gifts: In biblical times, men were called as judges or prophets in Israel when they understood the law and had extra abilities and spiritual gifts. “The shofet, or judge, had to meet strict qualifications, besides just knowing the law. Among these qualifications were piety, wisdom, humility, gentility and human understanding. When Moses set up the first courts, he looked for ‘able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain’ (Exodus 18:21) and ‘wise men, and understanding and full of knowledge.’”

Interpreting Dreams: “Daniel was a Jewish sage and prophet who lived in Babylonia during the sixth century B.C.E. Because of his great wisdom and ability to interpret dreams, Daniel rose to positions of responsibility and

honor in the court of kings Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius. However, as a Jew, he was constantly tormented by his rivals who denounced him for not worshiping the idols of the land. Daniel's piety and faith in God always stood firm and despite all dangers, he continued to pray daily in the traditional Jewish way.

Joseph Interprets Dreams: “Potiphar respected Joseph's wisdom and put him in charge of his entire household. When Potiphar's wife fell in love with Joseph and he refused to respond to her, she lied about him to Potiphar, who immediately had him imprisoned. The chief jailer soon put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. He interpreted the dreams of two important prisoners, saying that one would be freed and one would die. Although the interpretation came true, the man who was freed forgot him. He remained in prison for two more years, until Pharaoh requested an interpreter for his strange dreams. Joseph was called before Pharaoh to hear them and God gave him the wisdom to understand that the dreams predicted seven years of plenty throughout the kingdom, to be followed by seven years of famine. He suggested that food be stored and distributed during the years of hunger. Pharaoh realized that Joseph was honest and wise and ordered him to supervise all necessary preparations. Once again Joseph rose to a high position, and became Pharaoh's chief minister. (*Encyclopedia Judaica, Jr.*)

In the Name of the Lord: Ba'al Shem Tov is a descriptive title which means the "Good Master of the Name" (or the "Master of the Good Name"), and the "Name" refers to the Name of God. Thus the bearer of the title was a person who was able to invoke the Name of God for the purpose of healing the sick or in other worthy causes.

Earning Wisdom: “Although the capacity to obtain wisdom might be considered a natural endowment, wisdom itself had to be learned, and could be taught. The two principal methods of teaching were musar (instruction or training) and ezah (counsel, or persuasion) according to whether the teacher's authority was imposed or freely sought. In general, the teacher's musar was an appeal to reason and conscience and to the pupil's own desire for knowledge and understanding. The wisdom was transmitted by a saying or proverb; a rhetorical question; a parable or allegory; and imaginative tales and anecdotes. Despite this great emphasis on teaching and learning, however, wisdom ultimately remained a divine gift rewarding those who desired it enough to submit to its discipline.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica, Jr.*)

Developing Spiritual Gifts: It is difficult to develop spiritual gifts when you do not make an effort to use them. The inspired translation of the following verse makes the lesson of using spiritual gifts easier to understand. “For whosoever receiveth to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever continueth not to receive, from him shall be taken even that he hath.” (*Matthew 13:12*)

“If You Don’t Use It, You’ll Lose It.” This modern proverb echoes the message, by exercising the gift, it expands and grows. The parables Jesus used offered learning experiences on the level of those listening and according to their sense of understanding. Parables are like paintings. They must be studied for more interpretation. Many of Jesus’ parables contained references to nature and human experiences so that more people with differing gifts would be able to understand them.

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