

September 13-19, 2021

## Doctrine and Covenants 102–105

“AFTERMUCH TRIBULATION . . . COMETH THE BLESSING”

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### Summary:

*Doctrine and Covenants 102. Minutes of the organization of the first high council of the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 17, 1834. The original minutes were recorded by Elders Oliver Cowdery and Orson Hyde. The Prophet revised the minutes the following day, and the next day the corrected minutes were unanimously accepted by the high council as “a form and constitution of the high council” of the Church. Verses 30 through 32, having to do with the Council of the Twelve Apostles, were added in 1835 under Joseph Smith’s direction when this section was prepared for publication in the Doctrine and Covenants.*

*1–8, A high council is appointed to settle important difficulties that arise in the Church;*

*9–18, Procedures are given for hearing cases;*

*19–23, The president of the council renders the decision;*

*24–34, Appellate procedure is set forth.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 103. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 24, 1834. This revelation was received after the arrival in Kirtland, Ohio, of Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight, who had come from Missouri to counsel with the Prophet as to the relief and restoration of the Saints to their lands in Jackson County.*

*1–4, Why the Lord permitted the Saints in Jackson County to be persecuted;*

*5–10, The Saints will prevail if they keep the commandments;*

*11–20, The redemption of Zion will come by power, and the Lord will go before His people;*

*21–28, The Saints are to gather in Zion, and those who lay down their lives will find them again;*

*29–40, Various brethren are called to organize Zion’s Camp and go to Zion; they are promised victory if they are faithful.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 104. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at or near Kirtland, Ohio, April 23, 1834, concerning the United Firm (see the headings to sections 78 and 82). The occasion was likely that of a council meeting of members of the United Firm, which discussed the pressing temporal needs of the Church. An earlier meeting of the firm on April 10 had resolved that the organization be dissolved. This revelation directs that the firm instead be reorganized; its properties were to be divided among members of the firm as their stewardships. Under Joseph Smith’s direction, the phrase “United Firm” was later replaced with “United Order” in the revelation.*

*1–10, Saints who transgress against the united order will be cursed;*

*11–16, The Lord provides for His Saints in His own way;*

*17–18, Gospel law governs the care of the poor;*

*19–46, The stewardships and blessings of various brethren are designated;*

*47–53, The united order in Kirtland and the order in Zion are to operate separately;*

*54–66, The sacred treasury of the Lord is set up for the printing of the scriptures;*

*67–77, The general treasury of the united order is to operate on the basis of common consent;*

*78–86, Those in the united order are to pay all their debts, and the Lord will deliver them from financial bondage.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 105. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, on Fishing River, Missouri, June 22, 1834. Under the leadership of the Prophet, Saints from Ohio and other areas marched to Missouri in an expedition later known as Zion’s Camp. Their purpose was to escort the expelled Missouri Saints back to their lands in Jackson County. Missourians who had previously persecuted the Saints feared retaliation from*

*Zion's Camp and preemptively attacked some Saints living in Clay County, Missouri. After the Missouri governor withdrew his promise to support the Saints, Joseph Smith received this revelation.*

*1–5, Zion will be built up by conformity to celestial law;*

*6–13, The redemption of Zion is deferred for a little season;*

*14–19, The Lord will fight the battles of Zion;*

*20–26, The Saints are to be wise and not boast of mighty works as they gather;*

*27–30, Lands in Jackson and adjoining counties should be purchased;*

*31–34, The elders are to receive an endowment in the house of the Lord in Kirtland; 35–37, Saints who are both called and chosen will be sanctified; 38–41, The Saints are to lift an ensign of peace to the world.*

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### **Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights**

#### **What are God's procedures to hear cases?**

A convening of councils occurred before the earth's creation. "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, in the priesthood, 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)** Since Later-day Saints have such an intense interest in temple culture and its ritual symbolism, a few comments about the temple may be interesting. There were curtains in the temple that the Sanhedrin sat behind when speaking with participants in the temple. ". . . the Great Sanhedrin was the name of the unique court consisting of . . . judges which sat in a special part of the Temple in Jerusalem. These judges had to know a great many languages in order to understand the witnesses and the litigants without an interpreter (who might change ever so slightly the original statement). They never saw the litigants or the accused, in case their judgment might be influenced by their appearance." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)** In the New Testament, Caiaphas was the High Priest over three

councils of twenty-three men each that made up the grand Sanhedrin assembly. However, Caiaphas, the High Priest, apparently was only meeting with one of the three councils and not the entire Sanhedrin (seventy men). The Sanhedrin would have to judge in such a case, and if it were a legal trial, the accused would be interviewed through curtains. Councils were in common use in the Meridien of Times. "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men." "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." **(Acts 5:34-35,38-39)**

#### **How have customs of temple curtains continued among the Jews?**

Nowadays, a curtain or cloth is used to create a canopy (Huppah) under which marriages are performed. This cloth is usually a "*tallith*," a garment that represents the clothing used in temple times with marks (four sets of strings with knots) that represent binding ourselves to keep the commandments. ". . . it was customary for the groom to cover the bride's head with his *tallith* as a symbol of

sheltering her; and in modern-day Israel, for weddings of soldiers on active duty, it is not unusual to see a *huppah* constructed of a *tallith* supported by four . . . friends of the bride and groom. . . among Orthodox Jews, the preferred custom is to erect the *huppah* outside, or at least in a spot open to the sky, underneath the stars,” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **How does the continuation of religious councils continue to this day?**

Consider the leadership of the children of Israel, a council of three, with Moses, Aaron & Hur, a Council of Twelve Elders and a Council of Seventy. “And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.” (**Exodus 24:1**) “Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.” (**Joshua 3:12**) This order was continued after Moses in the New Testament as well: “And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; (**Luke 6:13**) After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.” (**Luke 10:1**) It is comparable to the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The latter-day Israelites led now by the tribe of Ephraim (Joseph) are also organized with a “First Presidency of three, a Quorum of Twelve and a Council of Seventy, and other High Councils. Latter-day Saints are also advised to settle differences and disagreements before they develop into disputes. “High Councilors, do you have any trials before you? “Yes.” Have the brethren complained of each other? “Yes.” Are their feelings alienated one from the other? Bishops, do you have any trials? Are the feelings of the brethren in your

Wards alienated? “Yes.” What should they do in such cases? They should follow the rules laid down, and be reconciled to their brethren forthwith. I think that it can be shown that the great majority of difficulties between brethren arises from misunderstandings rather than from malice and a wicked heart, and instead of talking the matter over with each other in a saint-like spirit, they will contend with each other until a real fault is created, and they have brought a sin upon themselves. When we have done good ninety-nine times and then do an evil, how common it is, my brethren and sisters, to look at that one evil all the day long and never think of the good. Before we judge each other, we should look at the design of the heart, and if it is evil, then chasten that individual, and take a course to bring him back again to righteousness.” (**Discourses of Brigham Young, Page.149 -150**) “Being the kingdom of God on earth and having a perfect organization, provision is made in the Church for the trial of transgressors against church standards and for the settlement of disputes between church members and groups. It is the practice of the Church for home teachers (or other specially assigned brethren) to investigate alleged transgression and then, if necessary, bring charges against accused persons, either before a bishops court or a stake presidency and high council.” (**Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, Page 134**)

### **What blessings come from persecutions?**

Previous discussion bears repeating; Despite persecutions, the “Former-day” Saints were instructed to remain peaceful, emulating the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, He showed humility to His persecutors, and even chiding Peter for his resistance. Jesus taught: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:43-46)

### **How does Zions' camp echo the Exodus traveling camp of Israelites?**

As we read of the restoration process, we see an endeavor at restoring the "camp of Zion." In a previous lesson we examined what seems anciently to be the "camp of Israel." It was organized into a travelling "City of the Lord" which was later likened to the "House of the Lord." The families were on the outside; the priests (Levites) were next. They surrounded the holiest place (the Ark), administered by the Melchizedek Priesthood where the Lord's prophet communed with God. Based on today's Jewish Orthodox practice of the *Talith* worn on one shoulder, then transferred to the other, the priests (Levites) wore their robes on the right shoulders and the Melchizedek Priesthood wore their robes on the left shoulders. The three areas may be likened to the terms telestial, terrestrial and celestial. "... it seems, the ancient Israelites were commanded to build a sanctuary so that God may dwell amongst them" (Exodus 25:8). The Tabernacle became the place to which sacrifices were brought in times of joy and in times of sadness. It became the place to which Moses retired when he wanted to communicate with God. When the Children of Israel camped in the desert, the Tabernacle was erected at the very center of the camp; when they moved, the Tabernacle was taken apart, and was moved with them. Physically and

spiritually, it was the central object for the Children of Israel and it was through the Tabernacle that they felt their connection with God." "The Tabernacle stood in the center of the Israelite camp and a cloud rested over it. When the cloud lifted, it was considered a divine signal to move the camp. A silver trumpet was sounded, the Levites dismantled the Tabernacle (all the courtyards) and transported it to its next resting place." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) It is apparent that the few verses we have about "Zion's Camp" are implying the ancient "Camp of Israel." "For ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham, and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched-out arm. And as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be. Therefore, let not your hearts faint, for I say not unto you as I said unto your fathers: Mine angel shall go up before you, but not my presence. But I say unto you: Mine angels shall go up before you, and also my presence, and in time ye shall possess the goodly land." (Doctrine and Covenants 103:15-20)

### **How important is the principle of caring for the poor?**

"The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all." (Proverbs 22:2) "The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes." (Proverbs 29:13.) "In every town where there are Jews they must appoint 'charity wardens,' men who are well known and honest that they should collect money from the people every Sabbath eve and distribute it to the poor. . . We have never seen or heard of a Jewish community which does not have a charity fund." "The obligation to help the poor and the needy and to give them gifts is stated many times in the Bible and was considered by the rabbis of all ages to be one of the cardinal *mitzvot* (blessing or commandment) of Judaism." "In the Bible there are several laws which are in effect



a sort of tax for the benefit of the poor. Among these are *leket*, *shikhhah* and *pe'ah*, according to which the farmer could not pick up the ears of corn that had fallen during the harvest, or go back for forgotten sheaves or reap into the corners of the field. All these he was required to leave for the poor. Every third year the farmer was also required to put aside a special tithe for the needy. The institution of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee was in order 'that the poor of your people may eat' as well as to cancel debts. The *Torah* also insists that the needy be remembered when the Festivals are celebrated, e.g., 'You shall rejoice before the Lord your God, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite in your communities, and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow in your midst.' The Bible expects Israel to be aware of the needs of the poor and the stranger because Israel itself had experienced this situation in Egypt."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How can I improve my "almsgiving?"**

These thoughts are worth repeating! "Although the idea of charity and almsgiving is spread throughout the whole of the Bible, there is no special term for it. The rabbis of the *Talmud*, however, adopted the word (*zedakah*) for charity and it is used (but not exclusively so) throughout rabbinic literature in the sense of helping the needy by gifts. The word has since passed into popular usage and is almost exclusively used for charity. The term *hesed* ('loving-kindness'), which is used widely in the Bible, has taken on the meaning of physical aid, or lending money without interest. "Everybody is obliged to give charity; even one who himself is dependent on charity should give to those less fortunate than himself." "To give a tenth of one's wealth to charity is considered to be a 'middling' virtue, to give a 20th or less is to be "mean"; but the rabbis decided that one should not give

more than a fifth lest he become impoverished himself and dependent on charity." "The rabbis were especially concerned about the manner in which alms are to be dispensed. The prime consideration is that nothing be done that might shame the recipient." "Maimonides (1128-1204) lists eight ways of giving *zedakah* which are progressively more virtuous: to give, (1) but sadly; (2) less than is fitting, but in good humor; (3) only after having been asked to; (4) before being asked; (5) in such a manner that the donor does not know who the recipient is, (6) in such a manner that the recipient does not know who the donor is; and; (7) in such a way that neither the donor nor the recipient knows the identity of the other." "The highest form of charity is not to give alms but to help the poor to rehabilitate themselves by lending them money, taking them into partnership, employing them, or giving them work, for in this way the purpose is achieved without any loss of self-respect at all." "This last way of helping the poor is known as *gemilut hasadim*, 'dispensing kindness.' This term also includes aiding people who need help and encouragement and includes such matters as visiting the sick and looking after them and inviting needy guests to eat at your home. One of the greatest acts of charity is to provide for orphans."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What prompted God to govern this earth by a Celestial Law?**

"And again, verily I say unto you, the earth bideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law—([Doctrine and Covenants 88:25](#)) Apostle Bruce R. McConkie (1915-1985) wrote: "Four great principles must be in force if there is to be agency: 1. Laws must exist, laws ordained by an Omnipotent power, laws which can be obeyed or disobeyed; 2. Opposites must exist—good and evil, virtue and vice,

right and wrong—that is, there must be an opposition, one force pulling one way and another pulling the other; **3.** A knowledge of good and evil must be had by those who are to enjoy the agency, that is, they must know the difference between the opposites; and **4.** An unfettered power of choice must prevail.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., “Agency,” p.26) To earn the BEST, we must have the opportunity to experience, endure and prevail over the WORST. “For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things . . .” (2 Nephi 2:11).

### **What is my “Ensign to the Nations?”**

The Old Testament teaches; “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious . . . “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah

from the four corners of the earth.” (Isaiah 11:10, 12) “In the scriptures, a flag or standard around which people gather in a unity of purpose or identity. In ancient times an ensign served as a rallying point for soldiers in battle” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Ensign,” scriptures.lds.org). We discussed the “Camp of Israel” that had each tribe “staked out” with a banner, an ensign. What would you choose as your ensign? It could be that loving smile, a bright twinkle in your eyes, a soft comforting voice, a song, a melody, a deed of kindness, a helping hand, an encouragement, a simple gift, a prayer, a blessing, a going-the-extra-mile. Look at your reflection and ask, “what is my ensign today, right now?” I love to say “Shalom! You know, it is hello and goodbye in Hebrew, yet it means peace, it is the name of the Lord. I will use it carefully, reverently, and it will never be used in vain! It is an ensign, always repeated twice because it is significant!