

4. Howard W. Hunter, in Conference Report, October 1994, 8; or *Ensign*, November 1994, 8.



Painting by Harry Anderson, *The Second Coming*

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Doctrine and Covenants 93: How and What We Worship

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In May 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith received one of the most important revelations of the Restoration. In what is now Doctrine and Covenants 93, Jesus Christ revealed how we may know the true character of God and the manner in which He worships the Father. The Savior testified and explained that we may follow His example in worshiping and coming unto the Father in His name. In addition, this revelation stands alone in holy writ in its clarity of doctrinal truths regarding the oneness of the Father and the Son, as well as the premortal glory and mortal condescension of the Savior.

By way of historical introduction, a comparison of section 93 with John 1 suggests that the Prophet Joseph Smith was pondering the message of that chapter in the New Testament when he received this revelation. We have a precedent for other revelations coming forth when a prophet of God meditated on the writings and visions of others (see 1 Nephi 11:1; D&C 76:19; 138:1, 11). Some may have assumed that the revelation was received while the Prophet worked on John 1 during the inspired Bible translation or while he edited the manuscript. However, three months before receiving section 93, the Prophet wrote, “I completed the translation and review of the New Testament on the 2nd of February, 1833, and sealed it up, no more to be opened till it arrived in Zion.”^{cxlvii}1 Nevertheless, regardless of our lack of surety to the historical background

for this revelation, the Savior stated clearly its purpose: “I give you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness” (D&C 93:19).

The Father and the Son Are One

The Savior stated that the key to understanding what we worship is to know “that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one” (D&C 93:3). In other words, to know the Son is to know the Father. Jesus Christ manifests the Father to the world, meaning that all we know of the Father’s attributes and perfections is revealed by and through Christ’s attributes and perfections. The words and acts of the Savior are the same words the Father would speak and the same works He would do in the same circumstances. Thus, we come to know what we worship by learning of Jesus Christ.

Next, as exemplified by the Savior, true worship of the Father consists in becoming as He is. That is, Jesus worshiped the Father by becoming one with Him. The Lord clarified that He received a fulness of the Father and was one with Him before mortality. He cited John’s witness of His oneness in glory with the Father: “And John saw and bore record of the fulness of my glory. . . . And he bore record saying, I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning before the world was” (D&C 93:6–7).

Similarly, Abraham referred to the premortal Savior as being “one . . . like unto God” (Abraham 3:24). Partly because of this uniformity in glory, Jehovah also became known as the Father, by which name He appeared, ministered, and was identified by His prophets anciently (see Mosiah 16:15; Ether 3:14; 4:7).^{cxlviii2}

Within this revelation of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Savior confirmed that He manifested Himself as “the Father because he [the Father] gave me of his fulness” (D&C 93:4). As a premortal spirit, Jesus was commissioned as the “messenger of salvation—the light and the Redeemer of the World” (D&C 93:8). That is, He was given a fulness of the Father and authorized to represent Him in all things pertaining to the plan of salvation.

In 1916, President Joseph F. Smith, his counselors, and the Quorum of the Twelve referred to this commission to speak and act as the Father as “divine investiture of authority.”^{cxlix3} They wrote that a “reason for applying the title ‘Father’ to Jesus Christ is found in the fact that in all His dealings with the human family Jesus the Son has represented and yet represents Elohim His Father in power and authority.”^{cl4} **Jesus Christ Possessed Premortal Glory**

Christ was the most intelligent of all of our Father’s premortal spirit children. Possessing a fulness of the Father, He was like unto God in glory, defined in this revelation as “intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth” (D&C 93:36). The Lord revealed, “I am the Spirit of truth, and John bore record of me, saying: He received a fulness of truth, yea, even all truth” (D&C 93:26). Thus, the Savior, like His Father, knew all truth, identified in this revelation as “knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come” (D&C 93:24). The Prophet Joseph Smith explained: “The great Jehovah contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth, pertaining to the plan of salvation, before it rolled into existence, or ever ‘the morning stars sang together’ for joy; the past, the present, and the future were and are, with Him, one eternal ‘now;’ . . . He knew the plan of salvation and pointed it out; He was acquainted with the situation of all nations and with their destiny; He ordered all things according to the council of His own will; He knows the situation of both the living and the dead, and has made ample provision for their redemption, according to their several circumstances, and the laws of the kingdom of God, whether in this world, or in the world to come.”^{cli5}

We see the fulness of Jehovah's premortal glory in John's testimony that "the worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him and of him" (D&C 93:10). In proclaiming His glory, Jesus was identified as "the Lord Omnipotent, . . . the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning" (Mosiah 3:8). The power and glory of the Savior is the same as His Father's work and glory—"to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). There is no greater fulness of glory than the power, light, and truth needed to bring to pass the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord's creations.

Some have been confused in studying John's testimony regarding the premortal glory of the Savior because they supposed that a fulness of glory is possible only for resurrected beings. As previously mentioned, "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36). The Savior was given the title of "the Spirit of Truth" (D&C 93:9) in premortality because, as a member of the Godhead, He knew all things. Similarly, "the Holy Ghost . . . is a personage of Spirit" (D&C 130:22) and, like the premortal Savior, also knows all truth (see D&C 42:17). The Lord clarified that it is not a fulness of glory that requires a resurrected body but a fulness of joy (see D&C 93:33). Thus, the Savior received a fulness of glory as a premortal spirit, but it was not until after His resurrection that He was able to declare, "Now behold, my joy is full" (3 Nephi 17:20).

Jehovah Surrendered His Glory to Come into Mortality

While in mortality, the Savior was not referred to as "the Father" but rather "the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men" (D&C 93:4). Nephi referred to the Savior's stepping down from His exalted station as a premortal being to be born into mortality as "the condescension of God" (1 Nephi 11:26). This condescension included both relinquishing the fulness of glory that He enjoyed with the Father and receiving a temporal body of flesh and blood.

Regarding the Savior's condescension, John wrote, "And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at first, but received grace for grace; . . . and thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at first" (D&C 93:12, 14). The Apostle Paul explained, "Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:5–7). The Greek verb used by Paul in this passage that is translated in English, "he made himself of no reputation," is a derivative of the word *kenosis*, meaning "to make empty." Bible scholars render Paul's writings to literally say that Jesus "emptied himself" (Jerusalem Bible and Revised Standard Version), or "laid aside his mighty power and glory" (The Living Bible). Thus, although the Savior had become one with the Father in glory, He did not hold tightly to that station. Rather, at birth Jesus emptied Himself, or, in other words, He surrendered His glory and relinquished His knowledge of all things past, present, and future.

"Over his mind had fallen the veil of forgetfulness common to all who are born on earth," clarified Elder James E. Talmage, "by which the remembrance of primeval existence is shut off."^{clii}6 "When Jesus lay in the manger, a helpless infant," further explained President Lorenzo Snow, "He knew not that He was the Son of God, and that formerly He created the earth. When the edict of Herod was issued, He knew nothing of it; He had not power to save Himself; and His father and mother had to take Him and fly into Egypt to preserve Him from the effects of that edict."^{cliii}7 The doctrine of the Savior's condescension from premortal glory to mortality underscores one of the greatest sacrifices in all eternity. That is, in surrendering His glory, Christ, Creator and Redeemer of the earth, the great I AM, "descended below all things" (D&C

88:6) to be born as a helpless babe, “despised and rejected of men” (Isaiah 53:3). **Christ Began Mortality As Other Men Do**

As previously mentioned, the Savior emphasized, “I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men” (D&C 93:4). An angel taught King Benjamin that “the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and who is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay” (Mosiah 3:5). In so doing, Jesus took upon Himself a body of flesh and blood, subject to temptations, death, disease, and other physical weaknesses.

Paul explained the importance that the Savior receive a mortal body like other men: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. . . . For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Hebrews 2:9, 16–17).^{cliv8}

Isaiah testified regarding the Savior’s similarity to other men in mortality, “When we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isaiah 53:2). “Jesus walked the same road from infancy to manhood that has been trod by every adult mortal,” explained Elder Bruce R. McConkie. “As a babe he began to grow, normally and naturally, and there was nothing supernatural about it. He learned to crawl, to walk, to run. He spoke his first word, cut his first tooth, took his first step—the same as other children do.”^{clv9}

The Savior Again Received a Fulness of Glory in Mortality

In addition to teaching that Jesus came to earth without the knowledge and glory He enjoyed as the premortal Jehovah, John also emphasized that He regained a fulness of that glory in mortality: “And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at first, but received grace for grace; and he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace until he received a fulness” (D&C 93:12–13). Further, it is clear that although the Savior had a veil placed over His memory, yet He was still Jehovah. For example, if an individual were to receive a hard blow to the head, which resulted in amnesia, he or she would lose memory but would still retain his or her individual nature. The same is true when spirits are born into mortality. “When we pass from preexistence to mortality,” wrote Elder McConkie, “we bring with us traits and talents there developed. True, we forget what went before because we are here being tested, but the capacities and abilities that then were ours are yet resident within us. . . . And all men with their infinitely varied talents and personalities pick up the course of progression where they left it off when they left the heavenly realms.”^{clvi10} Thus, Christ’s “knowledge came to him quickly and easily, because he was building—as is the case with all men—upon the foundation laid in preexistence. He brought with him from that eternal world the talents and capacities, the inclinations to conform and obey, the ability to recognize truth that he had there acquired.”^{clvii11} The Savior grew both physically and spiritually as He matured. He “continued from grace to grace” (D&C 93:13) in regaining the glory of God, which is “intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth” (D&C 93:36). Even as a youth, He progressed to the point at which “he needed not that any man should teach him” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 3:25). His intellectual and spiritual development was more rapid than His physical growth. “When still a boy,” the Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “He had all the intelligence necessary to enable Him to rule and govern the kingdom of the Jews, and could reason with the wisest and most profound doctors of law and divinity, and make their theories and practice to appear like folly compared with the wisdom He possessed; but He was a boy only, and lacked physical strength even to defend His own person; and was subject to cold, to hunger and to death.”^{clviii12}

The New Testament Gospels are relatively silent regarding the youth of the Savior. In the one reference that is preserved, Luke wrote that as a twelve-year-old boy, Jesus knew He “must be about [His] Father’s business” (Luke 2:49). During the time that He prepared for His ministry, “He grew up to manhood,” explained President Lorenzo Snow, “and during His progress it was revealed unto Him who He was, and for what purpose He was in the world. The glory and power He possessed before He came into the world was made known unto Him.”^{clix}13

Nevertheless, knowledge that He once enjoyed a fulness of the glory of the Father is not the same as regaining that glory. The pattern for growth is revealed as receiving “grace for grace.” Only Deity can extend grace. That is, grace offers that which is beyond the power for mortals to achieve. Jesus was born into mortality as the Only Begotten Son of God. As Deity, He could offer grace to mortals in need. Further, Christ’s growth was accelerated above that of His fellowmen because of the reciprocal nature of receiving strength of the Spirit when extending grace. Thus, as He extended His arm of mercy to others, the Father gave Him grace, or additional divine strength. By this He increased and grew in grace until “he received of a fulness of the glory of the Father; and he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him” (D&C 93:16–17). That is to say that the Savior became one with the Father again in mortality.

Just as He enjoyed oneness with the Father in heaven, so it was again on earth. He became one with the Father in premortality by speaking His words and doing His works; likewise, the Son spoke the words and performed the work of the Father in mortality. He testified to the Jews who questioned him, “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me” (John 7:16). “Jesus had been with his Father,” taught President Brigham Young, “talked with Him, dwelt in His bosom, and knew all about heaven, about making the earth, about the transgression of man, and what would redeem the people, and that he was the character who was to redeem the sons of earth, and the earth itself from all sin that had come upon it. The light, knowledge, power, and glory with which he was clothed were far above, or exceeded that of all others who had been upon the earth after the fall.”^{clx}14

Therefore, although He dwelt among His brethren, subject to all of the frailties of mortality, He was “the Only Begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth” (D&C 93:11). He taught the truths that He learned from His Father and went “forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases” (Mosiah 3:5). The Son of God grew in grace, ultimately receiving a fulness of glory and fulfilling His divine, foreordained mission to atone for sin and to rise from the dead.

Christ Is Our Example to Gain a Fulness of Glory

The account of the Savior’s attaining a fulness of glory rings with familiarity for all mortals. Man is treading on the same path that was set forth by the Son of God. As I have previously written, “Christ came into mortality as a helpless infant, knowing no more than any other child at birth. It was then for him to grow up into perfect knowledge of the principles of salvation, doing so in such a manner as to mark the path that all others seeking the same end could follow.”^{clxi}15 Christ revealed that, like Him, we “were also in the beginning with the Father” (D&C 93:23). Although none of us attained the light and truth that He did in premortality, at birth we too lost memory of whatever light and truth we gained previously. More importantly, Christ also revealed that like Him, we “may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness” (D&C 93:19). In so doing, we will both know and “worship the Father in spirit and truth” (John 4:23). “Here, then, is eternal life,” taught the Prophet Joseph Smith, “to know the

only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from one small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation.”^{clxii}16

Following the Savior’s example leads to baptism and reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 93:15). In addition, Jesus marked the path for us that leads to receiving a fulness of the Father through obedience. “For if you keep my commandments,” revealed the Savior, “you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father. . . . And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments. He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things” (D&C 93:20, 27–28).

It is readily apparent that we may not receive that fulness of glory while in mortality. However, “all those who are begotten through me,” the Savior declared, “are partakers of the glory of the same” (D&C 93:22). In the vision of celestial glory, the Lord revealed further, “Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come. . . . And they shall overcome all things” (D&C 76:58–60).

“When you climb up a ladder” explained the Prophet Joseph Smith, “you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.”^{clxiii}17 Thus, the gospel provides a plan through which we may progress from grace to grace until we are perfected in Christ.

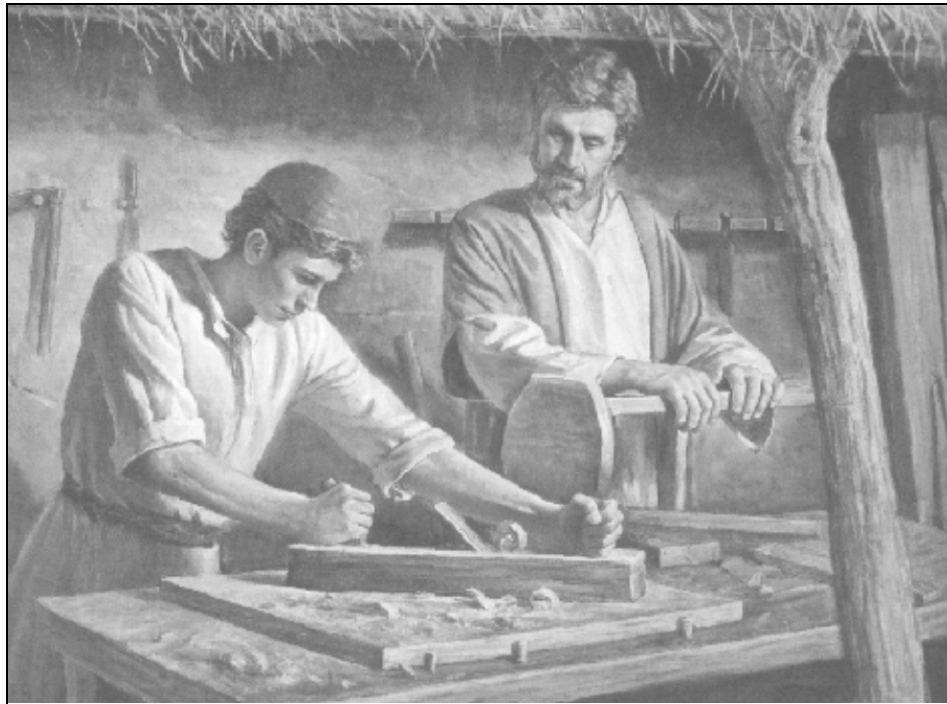
Conclusion

The doctrinal truths revealed in Doctrine and Covenants 93 are the heart of the restoration of the fulness of the gospel. Much of the doctrine of the Restoration regarding the relationship of the Father and the Son is contained within those truths. They provide a firm foundation upon which to build faith in Christ and understand true principles of worshiping the Father. It is clear that the Savior worshiped His Father by becoming one with Him, having received a fulness of glory. Further, while undergoing the experiences of mortality, He showed us the path we are to walk in our worship. He condescended to become one with us in experiencing mortality and growing grace by grace that we might follow Him and worship the Father through His example.

Notes

1. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948), 1:324.
2. Most references of the Savior as the Father deal with Him as the Father of heaven and earth, or in other words, the Creator. Nevertheless, the Savior spoke to ancient and modern prophets as if He were the Father, as further explained in the article. For example, see Moses 1:1–6, 32–33; 2:1, in which Jesus Christ refers to Himself as the Only Begotten Son in third person.
3. *Improvement Era*, August 1916, 934–42; in “Gospel Classics: The Father and the Son,” *Ensign*, April 2002, 17.
4. “Gospel Classics: The Father and the Son,” 17.
5. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 220.
6. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1916), 111.

7. Lorenzo Snow, in Conference Report, April 1901, 3.
8. There is some question about the authorship of Hebrews. Protestant scholarship generally rejects the Pauline authorship of the epistle, but Catholic scholarship accepts it. For a Latter-day Saint discussion of these two points of view, see Sidney B. Sperry, *Paul's Life and Letters* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 268–72, and Richard L. Anderson, *Understanding Paul* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 197–201.
9. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary, Book I* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 1:367–68.
10. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 1:25.
11. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 1:369.
12. Smith, *Teachings*, 392.
13. Lorenzo Snow, in Conference Report, April 1901, 3.
14. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 3:206.
15. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler, *Revelations of the Restoration: A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 673.
16. Smith, *Teachings*, 346–47.
17. Smith, *Teachings*, 348.



Painting by Dale Parson, *Jesus as a Youth in the Carpenter's Shop*

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“He Received . . . Grace for Grace” (D&C 93:12)

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