

A House of Order, a House of God



***RECYCLED CHALLENGES TO THE
LEGITIMACY OF THE CHURCH***

Central tension



On the one hand...

- Receive personal revelation
- We're told to seek, ask, and knock
- Personally commit to come to Christ

On the other hand...

- God calls prophets to receive revelation for us
- Answers only come in God's way and time, not ours
- We come to Christ by ordinances administered by others

Mormon Gnosticism



The belief that we must pursue esoteric knowledge to fulfill our spiritual potential.

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Hallmarks of Gnosticism



1. Inordinate interest in the Second Comforter or Second Anointing, complaints that the church does not teach or emphasize them enough, and belief that books or teachings by individuals who are not church leaders are the best way to obtain them.
2. Belief that visions claimed by individuals other than church leaders are authoritative for the general church membership and important to temporal preparedness and spiritual progression.
 - a. Predictions about “tent cities” where those who diligently prepared for future calamities will go for protection.
3. Claims of divine authority that was not received via regular priesthood within the church, but from an angel or vision or other unusual divine means.
4. Claims that a “remnant” group of spiritually elect are more obedient and spiritually advanced than general church membership.
5. Criticism of the LDS church and its leadership for spending priorities, corporate organization, purported lack of recent revelation, or on other grounds.

Doctrine and Covenants 28:2-5



2 “No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses.

3 “And thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto him, even as Aaron, to declare faithfully the commandments and the revelations, with power and authority unto the church.

4 “And if thou art led at any time by the Comforter to speak or teach, or at all times by the way of commandment unto the church, thou mayest do it.

5 “But thou shalt not write by way of commandment, but by wisdom.”

Principles of Revelations



1. No one receives commandments or revelations in the church except the prophet.
2. Others can have the authority to declare the commandments and revelations with power, and to speak and teach by way of commandment, but when writing should couch it as wisdom instead of commandment.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:11



11 “It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by someone who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church.”

Principles of Revelations



1. No one receives commandments or revelations in the church except the prophet.
2. Others can have the authority to declare the commandments and revelations with power, and to speak and teach by way of commandment, but when writing should couch it as wisdom instead of commandment.
3. Authority to preach and organize the church comes through ordination by someone with authority;
4. That person with authority has to be known by the church and ordained in the church through priesthood channels.

Doctrine and Covenants 43:2 - 7



2 “Ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church [this refers to Section 42], through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand [meaning Joseph Smith].

3 “And this ye shall know assuredly—that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he [Joseph] be taken, if he abide in me.

4 “But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for **if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead.**

5 “And this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments.

6 “And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me.

7 “For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.”

Principles of Revelations



1. No one receives commandments or revelations in the church except the prophet.
2. Others can have the authority to declare the commandments and revelations with power, and to speak and teach by way of commandment, but when writing should couch it as wisdom instead of commandment.
3. Authority to preach and organize the church comes through ordination by someone with authority;
4. That person with authority has to be known by the church and ordained in the church through priesthood channels.
5. If the prophet goes astray, to the extent of losing his authority to receive revelations and commandments for the church, he would still have the ability to appoint his successor.
6. Anyone ordained of the Lord will “come in at the gate”--that is, will be easily recognizable as an authorized messenger.

Progression to Apostasy



1. I'm a loyal church member and I follow church leaders. I read about others' prophecies because I long to hear more of God's word and prepare for the future.
2. I assume church leaders have visions and prophecies just like these others I'm reading about, since they all come from God. It's a shame church leaders can't talk openly about them; it must be because most church members are too faithless to handle it. I'm glad I've found these other sources for learning these things.
3. Maybe church leaders don't have these visions and prophecies. Perhaps because they're too wrapped up in managing the church's assets and employees. It's a shame the church has become so corporate and uninspired. There is no prophecy or revelation from God to the church anymore.
4. The church is apostate. I have found the replacement.

Alma 12:9



9 “It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.”

Joseph Smith



“Let us be faithful and silent, brethren, and if God gives you a manifestation, keep it to yourselves.”

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, edited by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1938), [91](#)

Joseph Smith



“Respecting the vision you speak of we do not consider ourselves bound to receive any revelation from any one man or woman without his being legally constituted and ordained to that authority, and giving sufficient proof of it. I will inform you that it is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instruction for those in authority, higher than themselves; therefore you will see the impropriety of giving heed to them; but if any person have a vision or a visitation from a heavenly messenger, it must be for his own benefit and instruction; for the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church are vested in the keys of the kingdom.”

“History of the Church,” *Times and Seasons*, 5 (January 1, 1844): 752.

Joseph F. Smith



“[N]ot even a revelation from God should be taught to his people until it has first been approved by the presiding authority—the one through whom the Lord makes known His will for the guidance of the saints as a religious body. The spirit of revelation may rest upon any one, and teach him or her many things for personal comfort and instruction. But these are not doctrines of the Church, and, however true, they must not be inculcated [i.e., taught or spread about] until proper permission is given.”

Joseph F. Smith Correspondence, Personal Letterbooks, 93–94, Film Reel 9, Ms. F271; cited in Dennis B. Horne (ed.), *Determining Doctrine: A Reference Guide for Evaluation Doctrinal Truth* (Roy, Utah: Eborn Books, 2005), 221–222.

Joseph Smith



"The angel told good old Cornelius that he must send for Peter to learn how to be saved: Peter could baptize, and angels could not, so long as there were legal officers in the flesh holding the keys of the kingdom, or the authority of the priesthood. . . . Jesus himself when he appeared to Paul on his way to Damascus, did not inform him how he could be saved. He had set in the church first Apostles, and secondly prophets, for the work of the ministry, perfecting of the saints, etc.; and as the grand rule of heaven was that nothing should ever be done on earth without revealing the secret to his servants the prophets, agreeably to Amos 3:7."

"Baptism," *Times & Seasons* 3/21 (1 September, 1842): 905, reprinted in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 264.

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Questions?

