

MORMON SCRIPTURE

Doctrine And Covenants, Part VII

By Marvin W. Cowan

"We Thank Thee, O God, For A Prophet" is a Mormon hymn sung frequently in their Sunday services and other meetings. It declares, "We thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet, to *guide* us in these latter days." And Mormons claim to have "a living prophet" who *guides* or leads their church today. When asked what their current prophet has prophesied, few can identify anything. A prophet doesn't have to prophesy all the time, but if he doesn't prophesy at all, why call him a prophet? We showed in previous articles that Joseph Smith, Mormonism's founder, gave many false prophecies. His successors during the next fifty years also gave false prophecies. Recent LDS prophets have only prophesied generically so it isn't specific enough to question. Mormons claim that even when their Prophet doesn't prophesy, he provides *guidance* for them as the above hymn declares. We will now examine some of their Prophet's *guidance* in their *scripture*.

In *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 129, Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith gave instructions or *guidance* in how to recognize heavenly visitors. We will quote the entire Section with the verse numbers so that the reader can see it in its context: 1. "There are two kinds of beings in heaven, namely: Angels, who are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones—2. For instance, Jesus said: *Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*. 3. Secondly: the spirits of just men made perfect, they who are not resurrected, but inherit the same glory. 4. When a messenger comes saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand and request him to shake hands with you. 5. If he be an angel he will do so, and you will feel his hand. 6. If he be the spirit of a just man made perfect he will come in his glory; for that is the only way he can appear—6. Ask him to shake hands with you, but he will not move, because it is contrary to the order of heaven for a just man to deceive; but he will still deliver his message. 8. If it be the devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands he will offer you his hand, and you will not feel anything; you may therefore detect him. 9. These are three grand keys whereby you may know whether any administration is from God."

In verse one, Joseph Smith said Angels "are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones," but the Bible doesn't teach that. In verse two, Smith quoted Jesus' words after His resurrection in Luke 24:39, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Smith used Jesus words as proof that angels have resurrected bodies of flesh and bones. But Jesus never said He was an "Angel," or that angels are resurrected mortals. Hebrews 2:16 even declares that Jesus "took *not* on Him the nature of angels." Hebrews 1:7, 13-14 also says that angels are "*spirits*," not resurrected mortals with bodies of flesh and bone like Smith taught. Smith said in verse three that "spirits of just men made perfect" inherit the *same glory* as resurrected mortals or angels. But the Bible doesn't teach that some people will have resurrected bodies in heaven while others don't. *All* who belong to Christ will be resurrected *when He comes again*, but only Christ has a resurrected body *now* (I Cor. 15:12-24). Thus, there are several problems with the first three verses of Section 129. But, the problems increase in the rest of this Section as Smith instructs his followers in how to recognize heavenly visitors by a *handshake*.

In verses four and five, Smith said, "When a messenger comes saying he has a mes-

sage from God, offer him your hand and request him to *shake hands* with you. If he be an angel he will do so, and *you will feel his hand*.” Since Smith also said angels are resurrected mortals, they must look like us. By following Smith’s instructions, a mortal deceiver might convince Joseph Smith’s followers he was an angel if he gave a firm handshake and a “religious” message! In verses six and seven, Smith said if the heavenly messenger “be the spirit of a just man made perfect he will come in his glory; for that is the only way he can appear—Ask him to *shake hands* with you, but he will not move, because it is contrary to the order of heaven for a just man to deceive; but he will still deliver his message.” The spirit of a just man would look like a mortal body, so it wouldn’t be difficult for a deceiving mortal to claim to be “the spirit of a just man made perfect.” As long as he delivered his message and didn’t shake hands when asked to do so by a follower of Joseph Smith, his message should be accepted according to verse seven.

In verse eight Smith said if the devil comes “as an angel of light, when you ask him to *shake hands* he will offer you his hand, and you will not feel anything; you may therefore detect him.” Some people have a handshake that can hardly be felt, but I have always “felt” something when I shook hands, so I have never met the devil! If the devil is as deceptive as the Bible says he is in Revelation 12:9 and 20:3, why doesn’t he just do like “the spirit of a just man made perfect” and deliver his message without shaking hands? That way he could *deceive* Smith’s followers without his handshake betraying him. Smith concludes his instructions in verse nine saying, “These are *three grand keys* whereby you may know whether any administration is from God.” In reality, Smith only offered one key (the handshake) to three kinds of spiritual messengers. Their response to a request to shake hands was the key to knowing whether or not they were God’s messengers! But we have shown that mortals could easily duplicate their actions and mislead people, so could these instructions have come from an all knowing God?

Our next article will discuss The Word of Wisdom in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. For more information about the guidance given by Mormon Prophets see *The Mormon Hierarchy, Origins of Power* by D. Michael Quinn, published by Signature Books in Salt Lake City in 1994.