

## LESSON 2: THE WORD OF GOD

**A Word about the Word Word:** In New Testament times, Greek was the language of the known world in the way English is a world language today and is the language of our own Church leaders. Sometimes understanding a word as it is used in scripture means understanding its nuances in Greek. There were two different Greek words translated *word*. One was “logos,” as in John 1:1. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word (Logos) was God.” To a person unfamiliar with the Greek word “logos” this would have been confusing. But not to the apostle John. John was very aware of how the logos was regarded by Greek thinkers as *the mind or thought behind the visible universe*. “Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation.” (D&C 93:8) To understand John’s writings, you must understand the Greek word “logos.” Logos means *word* as it is an expression of the mind and reasoning of the one who spoke the word. It is the expression of a person’s entire thought and character and nature. Thus, Jesus is the Divine Expression or Representation of all the words, thoughts and reasoning of his Father. He is the thought of God in physical human form that we can see and hear, sent down from the Father to show us what the Father is like. He is The Word.

There is a second Greek word for “word” often used in the New Testament that is more like our own English word *word*. ☺ It is *rhema*, and simply refers to a word spoken. If Logos refers to all the wisdom, thought and reason of God as a whole, then *rhema* is a particular word spoken at a particular time. Out of God’s Logos, which is too great and all encompassing for us to grasp at once, God gives man from time to time, a *rhema* for his particular need and situation. One example will help you see the difference: In the story in Acts of Peter taking the gospel to Gentiles for the first time, we find this sentence: “While Peter yet spake these **words (rhema)**, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the **word (logos)**.” (Acts 10:44) *Logos* is used when the scripture refers to all the word of God, i.e., the gospel or to Christ as the Divine Expression of God; and *rhema* when referring to particular words. Understanding this will help you make sense of how the concept of the Word of God can be a guide to you, helping you understand what God is like in general (the Word of God), and what He may want you to do in a specific and particular situation—his *rhema* for you.

### READING: DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS SECTION 5

1. A. If you were translating this section into Greek, what Greek word would you use in verse 10 for the word “word”?

B. What Greek word would you use to translate “words” in verse 26? 2. Who does God say that He will give His word through in this “generation” or dispensation? Cite verse.

3. God sent a new outpouring of His word to our generation through a prophet, which is the way he has always given his words to man.

A. What additional witness besides that of Joseph Smith did he give to our generation? Cite verses.

B Which witness had difficulty qualifying for a heavenly manifestation and what did he have to do to get it?

C. PERSONAL: Have you ever had a witness that came “unto you by the power of God and not man” that allowed you to bear testimony of the things of God? Please share your experience and how it made a difference.

4. A. What will happen to those who believe the new word of God sent to our generation? Cite verse.

B. What will happen to those who harden their hearts against God’s word? Cite verse or verses.

**READING: D&C 21**

**Notes:** This section was received at the meeting during which the Church of Jesus Christ was organized.

5. What titles or functions are given to Joseph Smith in this section?
  
6. Joseph is to give the people of the church God's words "as he receiveth them." (v.4)
  - A. How should the people receive them? Cite verse.
  
  - B. What does it mean for your own life to receive a prophet's words in this way?
  
- C. PERSONAL: Can you share a time when it took sacrifice to follow the words of a living prophet?
  
- D. What verse shows that Joseph Smith was not called to be the prophet because he was sinless man?
  
8. A. Note verse 1. What does God say in this verse is the "end" or purpose for which He raised up Joseph Smith as a prophet?
  - B. Why would God use a "weak thing" and not a great scholar or renowned leader to head up his work?
  
9. CHALLENGE QUESTION: Can you think of a prophet or leader from the scriptures whose weaknesses or mistakes are shown in scripture?
  
10. A. Read D&C 132:49-50,56. This is the last section in the Doctrine and Covenants that constitutes a revelation given to the prophet Joseph Smith. It was given in 1843 and he was killed in 1844 at the age of 38. What verses show that Joseph was not a perfect, sinless man at the end of his life?
  - B. Why is it dangerous to build a testimony upon one's feelings about a prophet rather than on the rock of Christ and his word?
  
- C. THOUGHT QUESTION: What would you say to someone who said, "Your church can't be true. Joseph Smith had such and such a flaw!" Or, he "did such and such bad thing."

**READING: D&C 84:43-62, 85**

11. A. Verse 43 contains a commandment. What is it?
  - B. How would you define "diligent heed"?
  
  - C. What does it mean to you to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God"?

D. We are told in verses 49 through 52, that we may know that “the whole world lieth under the bondage of sin” in two ways. What are the two things we see in the world that show it is under bondage to the power of sin? You may quote the verses or paraphrase into your own words.

12. A footnote for verse 44 of Section 84 sends the reader to Deuteronomy 8:3. From this scripture, what basic lesson about God's “word” was taught the Israelites through the miracle of manna?

B. THOUGHT QUESTION: Look up the story of manna found in Exodus 16:11-36. (A great FHE lesson, btw) What are some ways that the word of God is like manna? (Unpack the metaphor.)

C. PERSONAL: How is the word of God like “the food of God” in your life? Or, what happens to your life when you stop reading the scriptures daily?

13 A. What great truth is taught in verse 45 about the words in the scriptures that is not true of the words we read in other, ordinary books?

B. Look at D&C 112:21-22. Verse 21 refers to missionaries being sent to the nations and promises that they will be successful—open the door to the nations—if they do the three things found in the formula of verse 22. What are the three things? You may paraphrase or quote.

C. Verse 22 says “abide in my word.” Look up the word *abide*. Come up with three synonyms for this word. \_\_\_\_\_ in my word \_\_\_\_\_ in my word \_\_\_\_\_ in my word

14. A. Verses 54 through 57 are a rebuke unto the church. What sin are they guilty of?

B. What ways do we “treat lightly” the scriptures?

C. What happens to the minds of those guilty of this sin?

D. Verses 61 and 62 contain a condition of forgiveness for the sins mentioned in the preceding verses. What must the saints do to get out from under their “condemnation”?

15. A. Look up Joseph Smith Matthew (in the Pearl of GP) 1:37. What powerful promise do you find there and why is it such an important promise in our time?

B. What other things are we tempted to make the treasures of our hearts instead?

C. What does D&C84:85 say will be a result of treasuring up God's words in your heart?

**READING: DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 50:17-24**

16. As you read these verses substitute the word "teach" for the word "preach." We don't so much use the word *preach* today to describe speaking or teaching in the church, but that this is about. We want you to see how these verses can apply to what we do in church and in our homes.

A. What must be with the teacher (or preacher) of "the word of truth" according to verses 17 through 19?

B. Given the presence of this element, what things result to both the "hearer" and the "preacher" of the lesson or talk? Cite verses.

17. A. According to verse 24, what would be the ongoing effect in our homes and wards when teaching and preaching is being done through the "Spirit of truth"?

B. In today's world, darkness threatens our homes and families. What things can you do in your own life that will help bring more light into your home? Name some specifics.

**READING: D&C 25; ALSO D&C 1:1 D&C 29:1-2 and D&C 39:1**

18. In all the sections of this reading, who is talking? In other words, whose *voice* is being heard as these words are read?

19. THOUGHT QUESTION: Name at least four avenues or ways in which the truth that resides in the mind of God or, in other words, God's Word (the Logos), can come to our minds and be understood?

20. Name at least one instruction to Emma Smith from Section 25 that is specific to her situation alone.

21. From the more general instructions given in Section 25, name something that you feel the Lord might be "speaking" to you as you read.

22. According to Section 25, what is one way God can use the women of the church in relation to His word?

23. What is it about the Doctrine and Covenants that makes it feel so personal and immediate to us? You may cite verses or speak from your own experience.

24. What have you learned about the word of God from this study that was new to you or will continue to help you?