

## ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE (EPISODE 156)

### LESSON 30

#### “God Is No Respector of Persons”

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| Hook        | The tricky thing about understanding human and divine nature is that humans are always the ones describing the Divine.           |
| Manual Goal | To help class members recognize that the gospel is for all people and that the Church is guided by continuing revelation         |
| EGD Goal    | To help class members become more like their Heavenly Parents through becoming more aware of and putting aside their prejudices. |
|             |  |

#### I. Sunday School

- a. What does “respector of persons” mean? (Seems like respect is a good thing) (NRSV: “Shows no partiality” Greek: God is not a “prosopolymptes”, from the Greek “proson lambanein”, modeled on Hebrew “nasa panim” that means something like “lift [someone’s] face/head, be favorably disposed toward”)
- b. Review the reading
  - i. In what ways do we “call profane what God has declared clean”?
- c. Quotes:
  - i. McConkie
  - ii. “God’s Love for all Mankind”
  - iii. Faust, Epiphanies
- d. How do our Heavenly Parents view their children?
- e. How do humans view each other?
- f. What is the relationship between these two perceptions? (It is very important to understand that limitations come from \*humans\* not God. The Book of Mormon musical satirizes the removal of the priesthood/temple ban with the words “I believe that in 1978 God changed his mind about black people,” which helps us see the absurdity of such a view. \*WE\* limit God, not the other way around.)
- g. How do we come to view each other as our Heavenly Parents see us?

#### II. Scripture Study

- a. Peter’s vision in historical perspective (Read Galatians chapter 2)
- b. The significance of the Gentile mission and letting go of the Law

#### III. Study Notes

- a. Human limitations and the nature of God II
- b. Preference and human nature (kin selection, reciprocal altruism, tribalism, ingroup/outgroups)
- c. Circumcision (look at the “bloody husband” passage!)

Good universalist “God inspires other people” quotes

**Elder McConkie’s statement** after the revelation on the Priesthood (exemplary humility and openness) August 18, 1978

[https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-r-mcconkie\\_alike-unto-god-2/](https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-r-mcconkie_alike-unto-god-2/)

"There are statements in our literature by the early Brethren that we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say, 'You said such and such, and how is it now that we do such and such?' All I can say is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or George Q. Cannon or whoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.

"It doesn't make a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June 1978. It is a new day and a new arrangement, and the Lord has now given the revelation that sheds light out into the world on this subject. As to any slivers of light or any particles of darkness of the past, we forget about them. We now do what meridian Israel did when the Lord said the gospel should go to the Gentiles. We forget all the statements that limited the gospel to the house of Israel, and we start going to the Gentiles."

**1978 First Presidency Letter, “God’s Love for All Mankind”** (quoted several places but I can’t find the whole statement on lds.org)

<https://www.lds.org/manual/book-of-mormon-student-manual/chapter-54-moroni-7?lang=eng>

“The great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God’s light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals. ...

“We believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation’ (*Statement of the*

*First Presidency regarding God’s Love for All Mankind, 15 Feb. 1978)”*  
(James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 15; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 12).

The favorite talk I found on this topic:

[https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/james-e-faust\\_personal-epiphanies/](https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/james-e-faust_personal-epiphanies/)

I wish to emphasize a profoundly significant phenomenon that occurs in life. It is inspiration. I also want to introduce you to the word *epiphany*.

...

Writer James Joyce used the word *epiphany* to designate an event in which the essential nature of something—a person, a situation, an object—was suddenly perceived. It is thus an intuitive grasp of reality achieved in a quick flash of recognition in which something, usually simple and commonplace, is seen in a new light. In our understanding, this can be inspiration.

...

Tonight, ... I wish to speak of a few uncommon, remarkable, spiritual events that have occurred throughout history.

The First Presidency recognized that many historical figures and events were inspired by God. ...

Interestingly, these personal epiphanies often come to young people. In secular history we read of Joan of Arc, a simple peasant girl who could neither read nor write. She claimed visions from heaven directing her to liberate her oppressed country, France, from the English. At seventeen, she left her home to fulfill those visions. At first people laughed and declared her insane, but in the end they gave her a horse and the escort of a few men to go and see the king.

Young King Charles VII of France lived in a castle in Chinon. The long Hundred Years’ War with the English had impoverished and divided his country. Charles had heard about Joan and decided to test her. He slipped into the ranks of the army and let one of his trusted associates occupy the throne. When Joan came into the room, she barely acknowledged the man on the throne but walked up to Charles and curtsied to him as the king. That convinced the king, and he gave her command over his twelve thousand troops. At first the French soldiers did not want to obey her, but when they saw

that all succeeded who followed her, and no one succeeded who disregarded her, they got into line and looked upon her as their leader.

Clad in a suit of white armor and flying her own standard, Joan of Arc liberated the besieged city of Orleans in 1429 and defeated the English in four other battles. Twice she was wounded, but each time she recovered and went on fighting. Her orders were those of a military genius. She marched into the city of Reims and stood with sword and banner in hand while Charles was crowned king. She fought in the Battle of Paris until the Burgundians, who were allies of the English, captured her at Compiègne and sold her to the English for sixteen thousand francs. She was imprisoned and suffered many insults. She was tried as a witch and a heretic and burned at the stake in 1431, all because she claimed inspiration.

...

We believe that all righteous people have the potential to receive inspiration from God. The many great masterpieces of music, art, poetry, and other creations of beauty testify to this. Handel's glorious oratorio *Messiah* is proof of this.

Michelangelo's statues of the pietà, Moses, and David also testify of this. Surely the poet William Wordsworth was inspired when he wrote "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood."

The same is true of the inventors who have been inspired to bring us all of the marvelous inventions of our time.

We believe the Spirit of God can come to all men and women.

President Hinckley

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2000/05/a-time-of-new-beginnings?lang=eng>

Let us as Latter-day Saints reach out to others not of our faith. Let us never act in a spirit of arrogance or with a holier-than-thou attitude. Rather, may we

show love and respect and helpfulness toward them. We are greatly misunderstood, and I fear that much of it is of our own making. We can be more tolerant, more neighborly, more friendly, more of an example than we have been in the past. Let us teach our children to treat others with friendship, respect, love, and admiration. That will yield a far better result than will an attitude of egotism and arrogance.

[https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/howard-w-hunter\\_all-alike-unto-god/](https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/howard-w-hunter_all-alike-unto-god/)

I take as a theme a passage from the Book of Mormon referring to the Lord's relationship to the children of men throughout the earth in which it is stated:

*. . . And he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile. [2 Nephi 26:33]*

From this statement it is clear that *all* men [and women] are invited to come unto him and *all* are alike unto him. Race makes no difference; color makes no difference; nationality makes no difference. The brotherhood of man is literal. We are all of one blood and the literal spirit offspring of our eternal Heavenly Father. Before we came to earth, we belonged to his eternal family. We associated and knew each other there. Our common paternity makes us not only literal sons and daughters of eternal parentage, but literal brothers and sisters as well. This is a fundamental teaching of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.