



Type: Book Chapter

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## Lecture 4

Source: *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective*

Editor(s): Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate, Jr.

Published: Provo, UT; Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University,  
1990

Page(s): 75-82

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**Abstract:** No abstract available.



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# Lecture 4

## ON FAITH

1. We showed in the third lecture that it is necessary to have correct ideas of the character of God to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation, and that without correct ideas of his character, the minds of men could not have sufficient power with God to exercise the faith necessary to enjoy eternal life. But having correct ideas of his character lays a foundation, as far as his character is concerned, for the exercise of faith so as to enjoy the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even that of eternal glory. We shall now proceed to show the connection between having correct ideas of the attributes of God and exercising faith in him unto eternal life.

2. Let us here observe that the real design which the God of heaven had in view in making the human family acquainted with his attributes was that they might be enabled to exercise faith in him through the idea of the existence of his attributes, and through exercising faith in him, might obtain eternal life. For without the idea of the existence of the attributes which belong to God, the minds of men could not have power to exercise faith in him so as to lay hold upon eternal life. The God of heaven, understanding most perfectly the constitution of human nature and the weakness of men, knew what was necessary to be revealed and what ideas needed to be planted in their minds to enable them to exercise faith in him unto eternal life.

3. Having said so much, we shall proceed to examine the attributes of God as set forth in his revelations to the human family and to show how necessary having correct ideas of his attributes is to enable men to exercise faith in him. For without these ideas being planted in the minds of men, it would be out of the power of any person or persons to exercise faith in God so as to obtain eternal life. Consequently, the divine communications made to men, in the first instance, were designed to establish in their minds the ideas necessary to enable them to exercise faith in God, and through this means to be partakers of his glory.

4. We have the following account of his attributes in the revelations which he has given to the human family:

5. First, knowledge. “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18). “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, *declaring the end from the beginning*, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa 46:9-10; emphasis in 1835).

6. Secondly, faith or power. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God” (Heb 11:3). “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen 1:1). “The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand. . . . For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” (Isa 14:24, 27).

7. Thirdly, justice. “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne” (Ps 89:14). “Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? . . . have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour” (Isa 45:21). “The just Lord is in the midst thereof” (Zeph 3:5). “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation” (Zech 9:9).

8. Fourthly, judgment. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne" (Ps 89:14). "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut 32:4). "But the Lord shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment" (Ps 9:7). "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth" (Ps 9:16).

9. Fifthly, mercy. "Mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Ps 89:14). "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious" (Ex 34:6). "But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful" (Neh 9:17).

10. And sixthly, truth. "Mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Ps 89:14). "Longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex 34:6). "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut 32:4). "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth" (Ps 31:5).

11. A little reflection shows that the idea of the existence of these attributes in the Deity is necessary to enable any rational being to exercise faith in him. For without the idea of the existence of these attributes in the Deity, men could not exercise faith in him for life and salvation, seeing that without the knowledge of all things God would not be able to save any portion of his creatures. For it is the knowledge which he has of all things from the beginning to the end that enables him to give that understanding to his creatures by which they are made partakers of eternal life. And if it were not for the idea existing in the minds of men that God has all knowledge, it would be impossible for them to exercise faith in him.

12. And it is not less necessary that men should have the idea of the existence of the attribute power in the Deity. For unless God had power over all things, and was able by his power to control all things and thereby deliver his creatures who put their trust in him from the power of all beings that might seek their destruction, whether in heaven, on earth, or in hell, men could

not be saved. But with the idea of the existence of this attribute planted in the mind, men who put their trust in God feel as though they have nothing to fear, believing that he has power to save all who come to him to the very uttermost.

13. It is also necessary that men should have the idea of the existence of the attribute justice in God in order to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation. For without the idea of the existence of the attribute justice in the Deity, men could not have confidence sufficient to place themselves under his guidance and direction. For they would be filled with fear and doubt lest the Judge of all the earth would not do right, and thus fear or doubt existing in the mind would preclude the possibility of the exercise of faith in him for life and salvation. But when the idea of the existence of the attribute justice in the Deity is fairly planted in the mind, it leaves no room for doubt to get into the heart; and the mind is enabled to cast itself upon the Almighty without fear, and without doubt, and with the most unshaken confidence, believing that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

14. It is also of equal importance that men should have the idea of the existence of the attribute judgment in God, so they may exercise faith in him for life and salvation. For without the idea of the existence of this attribute in the Deity, it would be impossible for men to exercise faith in him for life and salvation, seeing that it is through the exercise of this attribute that the faithful in Christ Jesus are delivered out of the hands of those who seek their destruction. For if God were not to come out in swift judgment against the workers of iniquity and the powers of darkness, his saints could not be saved; for it is by judgment that the Lord delivers his saints out of the hands of all their enemies and those who reject the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But no sooner is the idea of the existence of this attribute planted in the minds of men than it gives power to their minds for the exercise of faith and confidence in God. They are thus enabled by faith to lay hold on the promises which are set before them and to wade through all the tribulations and afflictions to which they are subjected by reason of the persecution from those who know not

God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They believe that in due time the Lord will come out in swift judgment against their enemies, who shall be cut off from before him, and that in his own due time he will bear them off conquerors, and more than conquerors, in all things.

15. And again, it is equally important that men should have the idea of the existence of the attribute mercy in the Deity in order to exercise faith in him for life and salvation. For without the idea of the existence of this attribute in the Deity, the spirits of the Saints would faint in the midst of the tribulations, afflictions, and persecutions which they have to endure for righteousness' sake. But when the idea of the existence of this attribute is once established in the mind, it gives life and energy to the spirits of the Saints, who believe then that the mercy of God will be poured out upon them in the midst of their afflictions, and that he will be compassionate to them in their sufferings, and that the mercy of God will lay hold of them and secure them in the arms of his love, so that they will receive a full reward for all their sufferings.

16. And lastly, but not less important to the exercise of faith in God, is the idea of the existence of the attribute truth in him. For without the idea of the existence of this attribute, the mind of man could have nothing upon which it could rest with certainty: all would be confusion and doubt. But with the idea of the existence of this attribute in the Deity in the mind, all the teachings, instructions, promises, and blessings become realities. And the mind is enabled to lay hold of them with certainty and confidence, believing that these things and all that the Lord has said shall be fulfilled in their time, and that all the cursings, denunciations, and judgments pronounced upon the heads of the unrighteous will also be executed in the due time of the Lord. By reason of the truth and veracity of him, the mind beholds its deliverance and salvation as being certain.

17. Let the mind once reflect sincerely and candidly upon the ideas of the existence of the before-mentioned attributes in the Deity, and it will see that there is a sure foundation laid for

the exercise of faith in him for life and salvation as far as his attributes are concerned. For inasmuch as God possesses the attribute knowledge, he can make all things known to his saints that are necessary for their salvation. And as he possesses the attribute power, he is able thereby to deliver them from the power of all enemies. Seeing, also, that justice is an attribute of the Deity, he will deal with them upon the principles of righteousness and equity, and will grant them a just reward for all their afflictions and sufferings for the truth's sake. And as judgment is an attribute of the Deity, also, his saints can have the most unshaken confidence that, in due time, they will obtain a perfect deliverance out of the hands of all their enemies and a complete victory over all those who have sought their hurt and destruction. And as mercy is also an attribute of the Deity, his saints can have confidence that it will be exercised towards them, and through the exercise of that attribute towards them comfort and consolation will be administered unto them abundantly, amid all their afflictions and tribulations. Lastly, realizing that truth is an attribute of the Deity, the mind is led to rejoice amid all its trials and temptations in hope of that glory which is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It will do this in view of that crown which is to be placed upon the heads of the Saints in the day when the Lord shall distribute rewards unto them, and in prospect of that eternal weight of glory which the Lord has promised to bestow upon them when he shall bring them in the midst of his throne to dwell in his presence eternally.

18. In view, then, of the existence of these attributes, the faith of the Saints can become exceedingly strong, abounding in righteousness unto the praise and glory of God. And it can exert its mighty influence in searching after wisdom and understanding, until it has obtained a knowledge of all things that pertain to life and salvation.

19. Such, then, is the foundation which is laid for the exercise of faith in him for life and salvation through the revelation of the attributes of God. And seeing that these attributes of the Deity are unchangeable—being the same yesterday, today,

and forever—gives to the minds of the Latter-day Saints the same power and authority to exercise faith in God which the Former-day Saints had. All the Saints, in this respect, have been, are, and will be alike until the end of time; for God never changes. Therefore, his attributes and character remain forever the same. And as it is through the revelation of these attributes that a foundation is laid for the exercise of faith in God unto life and salvation, the foundation for the exercise of faith, therefore, was, is, and ever will be, the same. Consequently all men have had and will have an equal privilege.

### Questions and Answers for Lecture 4

1. *Question*—What was shown in the third lecture?

*Answer*—It was shown that having correct ideas of the character of God is necessary to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation, and that without correct ideas of his character, men could not have power to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation. But having correct ideas of his character, as far as it is concerned in the exercise of faith in him, lays a sure foundation for the exercise of it (Lecture 4:1).

2. *Q*—What object did the God of heaven have in revealing his attributes to men?

*A*—That through an acquaintance with his attributes they might be enabled to exercise faith in him so as to obtain eternal life (Lecture 4:2).

3. *Q*—Could men exercise faith in God so as to be enabled to lay hold of eternal life, without an acquaintance with his attributes?

*A*—They could not (Lecture 4:2-3).

4. *Q*—What account is given of the attributes of God in his revelations?

*A*—First, knowledge; secondly, faith or power; thirdly, justice; fourthly, judgment; fifthly, mercy; and sixthly, truth (Lecture 4:4-10).



5. Q—Where are the revelations to be found which give this relation of the attributes of God?

A—In the Old and New Testaments, and they are quoted in Lecture 4:5-10.\*

6. Q—Is the idea of the existence of these attributes in the Deity necessary to enable any rational being to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation?

A—It is.

7. Q—How do you prove it?

A—By Lecture 4:11-16.\*

8. Q—Does the idea of the existence of these attributes in the Deity enable a rational being to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation, as far as his attributes are concerned?

A—It does.

9. Q—How do you prove it?

A—By Lecture 4:17-18.\*

10. Q—Do the Latter-day Saints have as much authority given them through the revelation of the attributes of God to exercise faith in him as the Former-day Saints had?

A—They have.

11. Q—How do you prove it?

A—By Lecture 4:19.\*

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\*Note: Let the student turn and commit these paragraphs to memory [1835 footnote].