

than the realities on which they are based, they can yield valuable historical data. But it is more profitable to turn to them for other reasons, to view them not as history but as literature, and to discover in them not the ledger-book truths of actual events but expression of the people's heart and mind. To a greater or lesser degree, Mormon folk stories may or may not be factually accurate. But as keys to understanding the Latter-day Saints and their church, they are always true.

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FOLLOWING THE BRETHREN

Latter-day Saints believe that God gives REVELATIONS to living PROPHETS and that their words, when so inspired, are to be received as his (D&C 1:38). It has therefore become common in the Church to say that Christ and his prophets are as one because they represent him (cf. John 17:21–23). This means that prophets, as agents of Christ, announce his gospel, and are one with him in teaching, testimony, and purpose (*see* UNITY). Thus, the scriptural injunction to follow Jesus and the baptismal COVENANT to obey his commandments also require following his prophets.

Among Latter-day Saints the injunction to "follow the Brethren" derives from this requirement of obedience to Jesus and to prophetic instruction. In this context, "the Brethren" are the GENERAL AUTHORITIES, particularly the FIRST PRESIDENCY and the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES, who are formally sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators. The principle involved can be extended to include local priesthood leaders such as PRIESTHOOD QUORUM presidencies, BISHOPS and STAKE PRESIDENTS, and the presidencies of the women's auxiliary organizations—RELIEF SOCIETY, YOUNG WOMEN, and PRIMARY—within their respective jurisdictions. This exten-

sion of the principle to all Church leaders at every level is based on the recognition that all officers in the Church are entitled to revelation in their CALLINGS and on the assumption that they are in harmony with the Brethren. Referring specifically to the prophet who is currently President of the Church, the Lord has instructed members to "give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith" (D&C 21:4–5).

Latter-day Saints claim a variety of blessings from following prophetic instruction. Not only does following the Brethren unite the Saints, enabling them to advance the purposes of the RESTORATION more effectively, but it also allows them to receive the rewards of such obedience, which include the GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.

Following the Brethren, however, does not imply blind obedience, for every member of the Church is entitled to an individual witness of the Holy Spirit that the leadership of the Church is inspired by God. For this reason, following the living prophet obliges members to live worthy to receive personal inspiration and revelation. It gives contemporary meaning to MOSES' desire that "all the Lord's people" be prophets and thus recipients of inspiration (Num. 11:29), and to the Savior's saying that all should "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" (D&C 84:44; Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4).

Because Church members are entitled to divine confirmation of prophetic declarations, there is no teaching among Latter-day Saints of "prophetic infallibility." As Joseph SMITH taught, "a prophet was a prophet only when . . . acting as such" (*TPJS*, p. 278). Prophets have personal and private opinions, and they are "subject to like passions," as all people are (see James 5:17; Mosiah 2:10–11). However, when acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit in the prophetic role, "whatsoever they shall speak . . . shall be the will of the Lord" (D&C 68:3–4; *see* SCRIPTURE). As the Savior told Joseph Smith, "He that receiveth my servants receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth my Father" (D&C 84:36–37; *see* also Matt. 10:40; 3 Ne. 28:34).

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FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Modern scripture speaks unequivocally of the foreknowledge of God: "All things are present before mine eyes" (D&C 38:2). It affirms that God has a fulness of truth, a "knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they *are to come*" (D&C 93:24, emphasis added).

Divine foreknowledge includes the power to know even the thoughts and intents of the human heart: "There is none else save God that knowest thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart" (D&C 6:16). Divine foreknowledge is at least, in part, knowledge of his own purposive plans for the cosmos and for humankind, plans that "cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught" (D&C 3:1). "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18; Abr. 2:8). These include the conditions of the plan of salvation. For example, "God did elect or predestinate that all those who would be saved, should be saved in Christ Jesus, and through obedience to the Gospel" (*TPJS*, p. 189). It is likewise foreknown that all humankind will die, be resurrected, and be brought to judgment.

In scripture, the root terms for divine knowing connote more than a subject-object, cognitive relationship; they imply a close, direct, participative, affective awareness. Divine foreknowledge is the knowledge of a Heavenly Father, not knowledge of a metaphysical abstraction. Scriptures that speak of divine foreknowledge emphasize God's understanding of an experience with his people and their destiny rather than the content and logic of that knowledge. Anyone seeking to understand divine foreknowledge must begin by recognizing that scripture does not directly address the question as it has been formulated in philosophy and theology, where the emphasis is on the content and logic of knowledge. The scriptures are explicit that God knows all and that we can trust him. They have not been explicit about what that means philosophically or theologically. Consequently, short of new revelation, any answer to the theological question of God's foreknowledge can be only speculative.

In an attempt to reconcile divine foreknowledge and human freedom, major Jewish and Christian theologians and philosophers have offered three alternatives. In the first, both horns of the dilemma are affirmed: "Everything is foreseen, and freedom of choice is given." This is the position of Rabbi Akiba and Maimonides (Aboth 3, 19; Yad, Teshuvah 5:5), as well as of Augustine and Anselm (*City of God* 5.9–10; *The Harmony of the Foreknowledge, the Predestination, and the Grace of God with Free Choice* 1.3). Maimonides argues that though it is logically impossible for human foreknowledge of one's actions to be compatible with freedom, God's foreknowledge, which is of a different and mysterious kind, is compatible with freedom.

In the second, God's foreknowledge is limited. Since people are free, God knows the possibilities and probabilities of human choice, but not the inevitabilities. God is omniscient in knowing all that can be known; but not in knowing beforehand exactly how people will use their freedom, since that cannot be known because future, contingent events do not exist. This is the view of the Talmudist Gersonides (Levi Ben Gershon, 1288–1344; *Milhamot Adonai*, III, 6) and, with some modifications, of Charles Hartshorne and process philosophers.

In the third, humans are not genuinely free. Freedom is an illusion that arises from human ignorance of divine cause and necessity. All that individuals do is actually determined and predetermined. God both pre-knows and pre-causes all that occurs. This is the view of Spinoza and Calvin.

Historically, most Latter-day Saints have taken the first general position: everything is foreseen and freedom remains. Some have taken the second, that God's foreknowledge is not absolute. The third alternative, that human freedom is illusory, is incompatible with LDS belief in genuine free agency and responsibility. Praise and blame, accountability and judgment, are meaningless unless humans are free. Any doctrine of foreknowledge that undercuts this principle violates the spirit and letter of LDS scripture.

Consequently divine foreknowledge, however it is finally defined, is not PREDESTINATION. What God foresees is not, for that reason, divinely caused, even though it is in some sense known (Talmage, p. 317). Divine foreknowledge is the background of *foreordination*. But, again, foreordination is not pre-causation. Rather, "foreordination is a conditional bestowal of a role, a responsi-