

March 17-23, 2025

Doctrine and Covenants 23–26

“SEEK FOR THE THINGS OF A BETTER WORLD”

Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 23. A series of five revelations given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Manchester, New York, April 1830, to Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, Joseph Smith Sr., and Joseph Knight Sr. As the result of earnest desire on the part of the five persons named to know of their respective duties, the Prophet inquired of the Lord and received a revelation for each person.*

1–7, These early disciples are called to preach, exhort, and strengthen the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 24. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, July 1830. Though less than four months had elapsed since the Church was organized, persecution had become intense, and the leaders had to seek safety in partial seclusion. The following three revelations were given at this time to strengthen, encourage, and instruct them.

1–9, Joseph Smith is called to translate, preach, and expound scriptures;

10–12, Oliver Cowdery is called to preach the gospel;

13–19, The law is revealed relative to miracles, cursings, casting off the dust of one’s feet, and going without purse or scrip.

Doctrine and Covenants 25. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, July 1830 (see the heading to section 24). This revelation manifests the will of the Lord to Emma Smith, the Prophet’s wife.

1–6, Emma Smith, an elect lady, is called to aid and comfort her husband;

7–11, She is also called to write, to expound scriptures, and to select hymns; [12–14](#), The song of the righteous is a prayer unto the Lord;

15–16, Principles of obedience in this revelation are applicable to all.

Doctrine and Covenants 26. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, July 1830 (see the heading to section 24).

1, They are instructed to study the scriptures and to preach;

2, The law of common consent is affirmed.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How are saintly women an integral part of God’s Plan?

The sacredness of
women, and

motherhood may be the reason little information is available about our “Mother in Heaven.” In speaking of the Lord, Isaiah describes Him like the blessing of motherhood, “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” ([Isaiah](#)

[66:13](#)) The honor heaven bestowed on Joseph Smith’s wife, Emma, chimes close to Isaiah’s wife. She is referred to as a “prophetess.” ([Isaiah 8:3](#)) Emma was called by God, “an Elect Lady.” ([Doctrine and Covenants 25:3](#)) There is a strong Jewish tradition about women and places them on a lofty pedestal. “It is said that a man without a wife lives without joy, blessing and good, and that a man should love his wife as himself and respect her more than himself. Women have greater

faith than men and greater powers of discernment. The *Torah*, the greatest joy of the rabbis, is frequently pictured as a woman and is represented as God's daughter and Israel's bride." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How similar are the women organizations of the two parts of the covenant people?

Service and care for each other are hallmarks of God's covenant people. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with their auxiliary organizations of Priesthood and Relief Society and the Jewish version, *Hadassah*. They have activities for men and women dedicated to serve others. "*Hadassah*, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, was also active in pioneer medical efforts in *Erez* (land of) Israel, and in 1939, Hadassah Hospital was opened in Jerusalem in conjunction with the Hebrew University. Hadassah has since developed into one of the world's leading research and medical facilities, and together with Israel's several other hospitals, provides the country with outstanding medical care." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What are the roles of women in scriptural life?

Women have an important role in Biblical and Jewish life. "Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, slew the Canaanite general Sisera in the war of Deborah and Barak against the Canaanite king Jabin of *Hazor* ([Judges 4-5](#)). Sisera had fled to Jael's tent after the rout of his army by the Israelites; she offered him comfort and hospitality but killed him while he slept, using a hammer and a tent pin rather than a sword, in accordance with the biblical command prohibiting the use of weapons by women ([Deuteronomy 22:5](#)). The murder thus fulfilled Deborah's prophecy to Barak that God would "sell Sisera into

the hand of a woman" ([Judges 4:9](#)). Heber was descended from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses; his wife's slaying of Sisera apparently signified a switch of loyalties back to Israel on the part of his clan, which had previously been allied to Israel's enemy Jabin." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

Who are some of the "elect ladies" in the Bible?

There are several women greatly revered in Jewish thought. Ruth is one of them. A woman convert to Judaism is given or "takes upon herself" a "new name," usually that of *Ruth* or another of the righteous women of the Bible. (Convert men are usually named "*Ben Avraham*—Son of Abraham.) "The sages regarded Ruth as the prototype of the righteous convert. They taught that Elimelech and his sons were punished for going to Moab during the famine in Judah. They should have remained to share the hardships of their own people, and to help them with their own wealth. Ruth on the other hand left her home not to seek an easier life, but to devote herself to the God of Israel, and to share the fortunes of Naomi and her people, whatever they were destined to be." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) A genetic line begins as Boaz marries Ruth, a foreign convert, and that sets the stage for a line of kings. "So, Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife . . . and she bare a son. . . . And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name *Obed* (servant/slave): He is the father of Jesse, the father of David." ([Ruth 4:13, 16-17](#)) The Messiah, Son of God the Father, Jesus, was born of Mary, a descendant of King David.

What are the ritual responsibilities of women in Jewish life?

“Women usher in the Sabbath each week by lighting candles and blessing God “who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light.” On Saturday night, traditional Jewish families light a *havdalah* candle made of several wicks braided together, raise a cup of wine and sniff fragrant spices, thus bidding farewell to the Sabbath peace and beginning a new week.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The special Sabbath bread called *hallah* is baked sweeter than regular bread because the Sabbath is a “sweeter” day.

What binds women to the “Bread of Life?”

“A religious duty of Jewish women when baking is to separate a small portion of the dough about the size of an olive, as *hallah*, and to burn it (reminiscent of Temple burnt offerings). In Temple times the *hallah* portion was given to the priests. From *Talmudic* times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath. This bread, usually prepared from white flour, is also called “*hallah*.” Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Showbread in the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath. The bread for Sabbath is usually braided, and of oblong shape, but for *Rosh Ha-Shanah* (Biblical new year) it is round.” “Rabbinic tradition made *hallah* a special *mitzvah* (commandment/blessing) for women. Today the word is generally used to mean the white Sabbath and festival loaf. And the *mitzvah* of separating *hallah* is followed by observant Jews in

their bakeries and in homes where the art of baking fresh *hallah* is still practiced.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How does a woman usher in the “Lord’s Day?”

“Women usher in the Sabbath each week by lighting candles and blessing God “who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light.” On Saturday night, traditional Jewish families light a *havdalah* candle made of several wicks braided together, raise a cup of wine and sniff fragrant spices, thus bidding farewell to the Sabbath peace and beginning a new week. Sephardic Jews often use a single, unbraided candle for this ceremony. On the evening before Passover, the head of the household searches for the forbidden leaven (*bedikat hamez*) with the aid of a simple candle, and in various parts of the world, candles are carried on weekdays before the scroll of the *Torah* and held while it is being read in the synagogue. At weddings, too, the parents of the bride and groom sometimes hold candles when they escort the young couple to the *huppah* (canopy representing the Temple).” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How can I better understand “dust off your feet?”

In sharing the gospel, we present peacefully. Sometimes, in the ancient unpaved villages of Israel, the response was opposite and when not welcomed by rinsing your feet, the householder may have us leave with still dusty feet! In the modern times, that phrase was used by the Lord in responding to those rejecting our glad tidings, “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.” (Matthew 10:13), “And in whatsoever place ye shall enter,

and they receive you not in my name, ye shall leave a cursing instead of a blessing, by casting off the dust of your feet against them as a testimony, and cleansing your feet by the wayside.” (**Doctrine and Covenants 24:15**) Pruning a vineyard strengthens the remaining fruit as the goal is to maximize the yield and quality of the fruit. (**Doctrine and Covenants 24:19**)

Am I voting or affirming?

God’s plan is that He blessed us with the gift of choice. Jewish thinking includes: “By affirming His plan – (1):we praise God for healing the brokenhearted, building the cities of Jerusalem, and counting the stars; (**Psalm 147**) – (2): we express confidence that those who perform God's will be rewarded in the future; (**Psalm 4**) – (3) we expresses gratitude to God for blessing the earth and causing the ends of the earth to fear (awe) Him; (**Psalm 67**) – (4) we express that the mountains will quake from pleasing God; (**Psalm 46**) – (5): we express that forgiveness is with God and that people should fear (awe) Him; (**Psalm 130**) – (6) we express that God has given the speaker a shield of salvation and treat them with humility. (**Psalm 18**)” By affirming, we become strengthened with greater resolve. “Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus Christ Himself is the head of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He calls, through inspiration, prophets and apostles to lead His Church. The Lord has given these leaders authority to call others to serve in the Church, such as members of the Seventy.

Apostles and Seventy extend callings to stake presidents, who call bishops, who call members to serve in various positions in their wards. Thus, priesthood authority and revelation guide Church callings from the Churchwide level to local congregations. We have an opportunity to sustain—support, help, pray for—each of these people in their callings. We indicate our willingness to do so by raising our right hands when their names are read to us in general conference, stake conference, ward or branch conference, or sacrament meeting. Raising our hands is a sign to us, to them, and to the Lord that we will sustain them.” “Raising our hands to sustain someone is not like voting that person into office. The person has already been called by the Lord to serve in that calling by one who has the priesthood authority to extend such a calling. Our sustaining is a vote of confidence in the person, because we recognize that he or she has been called of God through priesthood leaders we sustain . . . by our faith and prayers in their behalf, by following their counsel, by helping when they ask us, by accepting callings they extend to us. Sustaining our leaders is evidence of our goodwill, faith, and fellowship.” “We sustain our leaders by praying for them.” (**see Doctrine and Covenants 107:22**) (**see Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith (1998), chapter 24; and Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith (2011), chapter 6**)