

Summary Handout

“This Generation Shall Have My Word through You”

Lesson

13

Summary

Scripture Summary:

Doctrine and Covenants 35:20 Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at or near Fayette, New York, December 1830. HC 1: 128—131. At this time the Prophet was engaged almost daily in making a translation of the Bible. The translation was begun as early as June 1830, and both Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer had served as scribes. Since they had now been called to other duties, Sidney Rigdon was called by divine appointment to serve as the Prophet's scribe in this work (verse 20). As a preface to his record of this revelation the Prophet wrote: "In December Sidney Rigdon came [from Ohio] to inquire of the Lord, and with him came Edward Partridge. . . . Shortly after the arrival of these two brethren, thus spake the Lord."

Doctrine and Covenants 45:60—62 Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 7, 1831. HC 1: 158—163. Prefacing his record of his revelation, the Prophet states that "at this age of the Church many false reports and foolish stories were published and circulated, to prevent people from investigating the work or embracing the faith; but to the joy of the saints . . . I received the following." 60—62, The Prophet is instructed to begin the translation of the New Testament, through which important information would be made known;

Doctrine and Covenants 73:3—4 Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at Hiram, Ohio, January 10, 1832. HC 1: 241—242. Since the early part of the preceding December, the Prophet and Sidney had been engaged in preaching, and by this means much was accomplished in diminishing the unfavorable feelings that had arisen against the Church (see heading to Section 71). 3—6, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon are to continue to translate the Bible until it is finished.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Unique Doctrines Today Reflect the Past: There are doctrines that seem unique among the Latter-day Saints, yet on closer examination of Jewish traditions and, of course, Biblical texts, we see a verification of the principle of restoration. The following paragraphs show apparent links to the past.

Godhead: “. . . God, as depicted by the rabbis, embodies a combination of justice and mercy, of strict judgment and lenient compassion. This combination of justice and mercy in God is represented by the two names of God—Elohim and YHWH. The former stands for justice and the latter for mercy. Though they may seem contradictory, one actually complements the other and, when there is a conflict between the two, God usually favors mercy.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Jehovah (YHWH) Is His Name: Salvation is what He provides. Jehovah means “I Am,” and “I Am” is so sacred that modern Hebrew does not even have a first person conjugation of “I am.” The shortened version of Jehovah is “Jeho” and connected to the abbreviation of “salvation” it is pronounced Jeho-Shua. By the time Jeho-shua was transliterated into Greek and then into Latin, it became pronounced “Je-sus,” and in English, Jesus.

Created In the Image of God: Latter-day Saints readily accept “two creation stories” as being spiritual, then temporal. One could say that the first is when mankind is created in the image of God and the second when mankind is physically formed from the materials or elements of the newly created earth, hence from “dust.” The Jewish thought on creation is not as clear any more. “Two Creation Stories? . . . differences have led some critical scholars to see the two stories as the work of different authors who wrote at different times and reflected different, sometimes conflicting, traditions. Not all scholars accept this theory. Many view the second section as a more detailed supplement to the first. . . . On the other hand, the rabbis taught that Adam was created last, so that if he should become conceited, he could be told: “The gnat was created before you.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Returning Prophets: In every synagogue two seats are traditionally and historically reserved for Moses and Elijah to return. At one of the early meetings of the “Bnai Shalom” group (Jewish/Mormon cultural group), the late Apostle LeGrand Richards once remarked that he saw two beautifully decorated chairs fastened to the wall of a synagogue he was visiting. Knowingly, he asked the Rabbi, “What are those two chairs for?” The reply came quickly that they were being kept for Elijah and Moses. Elder Richards, seizing the moment and using his wonderful sense of humor said, “Get them down, they’ve already been here!”

Elijah to Return: “A special chair is set aside for Elijah at circumcisions, as he is called the protector of children, and the upholder of the covenant between God and Israel, and Elijah is supposed to visit every Jewish home on

Passover, so a special cup of wine is set aside for him. And, says the Midrash, when the time is right, it will be Elijah who will herald the coming of the Messiah.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Pre-Earth Life: The concept of a pre-existence has long since disappeared from Judaism, yet inference of life before birth can be seen in Dead Sea Scroll writings and in the discussions of Jewish sages earlier than Maimonides eight hundred years ago. It seems that since his compilation of Jewish thought and the code of laws, the concept of a pre-existence has been rejected or at least it has disappeared from Jewish thought.

Immersion of the Dead: In Judaism, there has always been a great deal of procedure surrounding death. There is an immediate preparation of the body which includes washing, completely immersing and anointing of the dead. There are periods of mourning. The immediate mourning after death is called Shiva. It is derived from the word for seven and Shiva continues for seven days. Another period of mourning continues for a month. There is also an annual remembrance of death called Yartzait.

Resurrection: Death is another fact that has faded in meaning over the centuries. “The Talmud explains that there are three partners in the creation of a human being; the father and mother who supply the physical parts, and God, Who supplies the spirit. At death, God reclaims his part, and the spirit lives on even though the body has died. “The argument about resurrection lasted well into the Middle Ages, and was one of the reasons for the sharp attacks against Maimonides. Many believed that he denied the doctrine and his views started a controversy . . . In modern times most Jewish theologians do not subscribe to the doctrine of physical resurrection and movements such as Reform Judaism do not consider it to be a necessary belief for the Jew.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Three Degrees: Some information about the three heavenly degrees of glory may be garnered from earthly comparisons. For example, the Jerusalem temple precinct had three courtyards. The outer courtyard circumscribed about forty acres. Within the outer courtyard was a raised complex under the administration of the Jewish priests that included two major areas. In ancient times, one raised area was under the administration of the twelve High Priests and the innermost area was higher and under the charge of the High Priest of the Temple.

Eternal Marriage: The ring in Jewish custom is used as a symbol of “eternity.” Words such as “Until death do you part” are not part of Jewish wedding ceremonies. The ring is examined by a Rabbi and is considered “kosher” only if it is unblemished. A “huppah” or canopy is used, probably to symbolize the Temple. A glass is shattered, symbolizing the destruction of the Temple. Both the bride and groom are addressed by their Hebrew “special names.” The “tallith” [prayer shawl] is used. To some, it is customary to drape the “tallith” over the couple. It may be considered symbolic that the “tallith” is the remaining remnant of garments used in the ancient temples.

Becoming Like God: The Old Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls contain several references to God in ‘human terms’. As the true nature of God is seen to diminish in history, true religion faded. By the time the Crusaders were approaching the Holy Land, a prominent Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides, began collecting the writings and interpretations of other Jewish sages in order to codify and centralize them. In his work “The Guide to the Perplexed,” Maimonides included “Thirteen Articles of Faith’. The first three articles declared that God cannot be explained. That is probably the first published Jewish work that eliminated reference to the anthropomorphic nature of God. Since the Jewish concept of God has diminished, it is difficult to find commentary about becoming like Him. At least the concept of being chosen remains.

Chosen: “‘How odd of God, to choose the Jews.’ W.N. Ewer, who wrote this jingle, could not understand why Israel is God's Chosen People. Moses, in Deuteronomy 7:7–8, explains it thus: ‘The Lord did not set His love upon you because you were more in number than any people . . . but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your fathers.’ “The covenant which signifies the special relationship between God and Israel is based on Israel being elected by God. God has chosen the Jews. Israel has also chosen God. ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him’ (Joshua 24:22). This is the thrust of the anonymous retort to the above jingle: ‘Its not so odd, the Jews chose God.’

Daniel Rona, born in Israel and living in Jerusalem has authored Old & New Testament, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Supplement Study Materials to be used in conjunction with the weekly LDS Gospel Doctrine Lesson study. NOTE: Three versions of the supplemental study materials are available FREE at www.HolyLandsRevealed.com. (Just click “LDS SUPPLEMENTS”)

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