

## Summary Handout

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# The Word of Wisdom: “A Principle with Promise”

Lesson  
**22**  
Summary

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### Scripture Summary:

*Doctrine and Covenants 89; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 27, 1833. HC 1: 327—329. As a consequence of the early brethren using tobacco in their meetings, the Prophet was led to ponder upon the matter; consequently he inquired of the Lord concerning it. This revelation, known as the Word of Wisdom, was the result. The first three verses were originally written as an inspired introduction and description by the Prophet. 1—9, Use of wine, strong drinks, tobacco, and hot drinks proscribed; 10—17, Herbs, fruits, flesh, and grain are ordained for the use of man and of animals; 18—21, Obedience to gospel law, including the Word of Wisdom, brings temporal and spiritual blessings.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 49:19—21; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and Leman Copley, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 1831. HC 1: 167—169. (Some historical sources give the date of this revelation as May 1831.) Leman Copley had embraced the gospel, but still held to some of the teachings of the Shakers (United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing) to which he had formerly belonged. Some of the beliefs of the Shakers were that Christ's second coming had already occurred and he had appeared in the form of a woman, Ann Lee; baptism by water was not considered essential; the eating of pork was specifically forbidden, and many did not eat any meat; and a celibate life was considered higher than marriage. In prefacing this revelation, the Prophet wrote, “In order to have a more perfect understanding on the subject, I inquired of the Lord, and received the following.” The revelation refuted some of the basic concepts of the Shaker group. The aforementioned brethren took a copy of the revelation to the Shaker community (near Cleveland, Ohio) and read it to them in its entirety, but it was rejected. 17—21, Eating of meat is approved.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 59:15—21; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, August 7, 1831. HC 1: 196—201. Preceding his record of this revelation, the Prophet writes descriptively of the land of Zion wherein the people were then assembled. The land was consecrated, as the Lord had directed, and the site for the future temple was dedicated. The Lord makes these commandments especially applicable to the saints in Zion. 9—19, By keeping the Lord's day holy, the saints are blessed temporally and spiritually; 20—24, The righteous are promised peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 88:124; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet at Kirtland, Ohio, December 27, 1832. HC 1: 302—312. It was designated by the Prophet as the “olive leaf . . . from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us.” It appears from the historical records that portions of this revelation were received on December 27 and 28, 1832, and January 3, 1833. 86—94, Signs, upheavals of the elements, and angels prepare the way for the coming of the Lord; 117—126, Seek learning, establish a house of God [a temple], and clothe yourselves with the bond of charity.*

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### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**The First Word of Wisdom:** In the Garden of Eden, there was a law of health—things you should and should not eat. The Lord gave the Children of Israel a law of health. It could be called a “Word of Wisdom.” The Jews call it the correct, proper or fit way of living, the Kashrut, or being kosher. The word kosher is also used as meaning correct. The Kashrut has been modified throughout the ages, yet some basics still remain as was given at Mount Sinai.

**What is Kosher?** In this modern age, there are some Jews who will not eat meat because there are no sacrifices and the meat cannot be prepared in the correct way. Others will only eat meat that is kosher, that is, slaughtered in the way sacrifices were done and only eating the parts of the animal as prescribed in the Law of Moses. “The dietary laws affect a Jew every day of his life and aim to insure that the holiness of the Jewish nation will be preserved through the consumption of food which is fit and proper.”

**“Fruits and Vegetables:** From the point of view of the dietary laws, all fruits and vegetables are permitted. However, there are certain limitations on the drinking of wine, and in Erez Israel there are restrictions applying to agricultural produce, such as the laws of tithes and Sabbatical years.

**“Animals:** Animals which are permissible must have two characteristics: they must chew the cud and have cloven hooves. Among these are cattle, sheep, goats and deer. Animals which have only one of the required characteristics are prohibited; for example, the camel and rabbit which chew their cud but do not have cloven hooves, and the pig which has cloven hooves but does not chew the cud. Altogether the Bible enumerates 42 unclean animals which are forbidden.

**“Birds:** On the basis of the unclean birds mentioned in the Bible, the rabbis of the Talmud compiled a list of 24 birds which are forbidden, among them birds of prey such as the vulture, raven, eagle and hawk. Although the Bible does say which birds are not clean, it does not list the clean birds. The Mishnah, however, states their characteristics: they must have a crop, a gizzard which can be easily peeled off and an extra claw. Among these

clean birds are domestic fowl, pigeon and dove. Eggs from unclean birds are regarded as unclean and even the eggs of permitted birds are forbidden if they have been fertilized (usually indicated by the presence of a blood spot).

**“Fish:** A fish is considered ‘clean’ if it has fins and scales, which usually indicate a fish found in freshwater areas. Those without fins and scales usually live in the muddy, swampy areas and are considered unclean. In the category of unclean fish which are forbidden are shellfish such as lobster, clams, shrimp and oysters.

**“Insects:** Nearly all insects are considered unclean and may not be eaten. It is therefore important to carefully clean . . . vegetables where insects are apt to hide (such as cabbage, cauliflower and romaine lettuce) . . . to be sure . . . insects will not be eaten with the vegetable. Although the bee is a forbidden insect, its honey is permitted . . .

**“Slaughtering:** The many complex and minute regulations about how an animal or bird may be slaughtered make it necessary that a carefully trained and licensed shohet perform the slaughter. It is his duty to carry out a careful examination of the animal after it has been slaughtered to make certain that there is no defect in any of its organs. Any defect that would have led to the animal's death within a year makes the animal . . . prohibited . . . An animal which has died a natural death or was killed by any other means than shehitah is . . . forbidden to be eaten.

**“Forbidden Portions:** After an animal has been ritually slaughtered there are certain unclean portions which must be removed before the animal may be prepared for eating. The sciatic nerve and the fatty portions (helev) attached to the stomach and intestines of the animal are among these parts which are forbidden to be eaten.

**“Koshering:** After the shehitah and the removal of forbidden parts, the animal or bird must go through the process of ‘koshering.’ Based on the prohibition of eating blood, the purpose of koshering meat is to drain the meat and draw out the blood before it is cooked . . . by either soaking and salting the meat, or by broiling it over an open flame . . . liver may only be koshered over an open flame.

**“Milk and Meat:** The Torah commands: ‘Thou shalt not cook a kid goat in its mother's milk,’ a command from which three distinct prohibitions are learned: cooking meat and milk together, eating meat and milk together, and deriving any benefit from their mixture. (Milk includes all dairy products such as butter, cheese and cream). In order to insure that these prohibitions would be properly observed, the rabbis ordained that separate cooking utensils, dishes and cutlery be used for dairy and meat respectively. These must be washed separately and stored separately.

**“Martyrs Faithfully Observe Dietary Laws:** During the period of the Greek rule of Erez Israel (second century B.C.E.) many Jews chose to die rather than eat the unclean foods which the Greeks forced upon them. In peril of their lives, Jews carried out the laws of ritual slaughter during the Crusades. The Marranos of the Inquisition, the Cantonists of Czarist Russia, and the inmates of Nazi concentration camps all remained steadfastly faithful to the laws of Kashrut, despite all threats.”

**Explanation of Health Laws:** “Attempts have been made to explain the dietary laws in various ways. Many thinkers (including Maimonides) have seen the dietary laws as hygienic precautions and have attempted to prove that all forbidden foods are unwholesome. Others have attempted to give the philosophical reasons for Kashrut. One such explanation is that Kashrut hallows the common act of eating and preserves the holiness of the soul through the cleanliness of the foods which the body consumes. However, the observance of Kashrut is not dependent on any explanation since the Torah commands the dietary laws without giving a reason. Therefore, a halakhic Midrash states ‘Let not a man say, ‘I do not like the flesh of swine.’ On the contrary, he should say, ‘I like it but must not eat it since the Torah has forbidden it.’” (*Encyclopædia Judaica, Jr.*)

**Daniel’s Example:** It is clear that the biblical account of Daniel shows his humble dedication to the Lord’s principles of proper living. His unswerving obedience to the “Word of Wisdom” is an example for many people today who are committed to keeping the Lord’s health code.

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](http://www.HolyLandsRevealed.com). (Just click “LDS SUPPLEMENTS”)

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