

## Summary Handout

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# “Seek Learning, Even by Study and Also by Faith”

Lesson

23

Summary

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### Scripture Summary:

*Doctrine and Covenants 88:118; 121–126; 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. 117–126, Seek learning, establish a house of God [a temple], and clothe yourselves with the bond of charity.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 78:17–18; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, March 1832. The order given of the Lord to Joseph Smith for the purpose of establishing a storehouse for the poor. HC 1: 255–257. It was not always desirable that the identity of the individuals whom the Lord addressed in the revelations should be known by the world; hence, in the publication of this and some subsequent revelations the brethren were referred to by other than their own names. When the necessity had passed for keeping the names of the individuals unknown, their real names were thereafter given in brackets. Since there exists no vital need today to continue the code names, the real names only are now used herein, as given in the original manuscripts. 17–22, Blessed are the faithful, for they shall inherit all things.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 90:15; Revelation to Joseph Smith the Prophet, given at Kirtland, Ohio, March 8, 1833. HC 1: 329–331. This revelation is a continuing step in the establishment of the First Presidency (see heading to Section 81), and as a consequence thereof the counselors mentioned were ordained on March 18, 1833. 12–18, Joseph Smith and his counselors are to set in order the Church*

*Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–28; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, November 1831, at the request of Orson Hyde, Luke S. Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, and William E. McLellan. HC 1: 227–229. Although this revelation was given in response to supplication that the mind of the Lord be made known concerning the elders named, much of the content pertains to the whole Church. 25–28, Parents are commanded to teach the gospel to their children.*

*Matthew 25:14–30; Jesus foretells the doom of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple—Great calamities shall precede his Second Coming—He gives the parable of the fig tree.*

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### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**Key to Learning:** As a reminder, the preface to these lesson supplements includes the first two verses of the Book of Mormon. Therein, the Prophet Nephi gave us the key to understanding the scriptures. We need the “learning of the Jews” along with the “knowledge of the mysteries of God.” In this case, the “mysteries” are simply the subtle, God-given instructions known by the gift of the Holy Ghost. The imagery of Isaiah can best be understood by knowing his political, cultural and geographic environment. He testifies of the Messiah through everything around him. After all, He is in all things. “. . . Who is in the midst of all things.” (*Doctrine and Covenants 88:6-13*)

**World of Words:** The Old Testament only has about 8,900 different words (English has about 850,000), yet the illustrative capacity of the prophets is expressed through the images that are given. Hence, Daniel was able to interpret the king’s dreams using “the learning of the Jews” as well as being “Highly favored of the Lord.”

**Words of God:** As stated previously, Jewish learning is based on the “Torah,” that is, the first five books of the “Old Testament.” “The Bible is holy to Jews because it represents the Word of God. This is particularly true of the Torah which is, so to speak, God’s direct statement. The halakhah, or Jewish law, which is the authoritative guide for a Jew’s life, is mainly based on the Torah, so obviously study of the Torah as well as the rest of the Bible is one of the prime religious duties.

**The Law and the Prophets:** “The custom of reading the Torah publicly is very, very ancient—originating with Ezra in the fifth-fourth centuries B.C.E. At some later date a reading from the Nevi’im was added; this corresponding passage from the Prophets is known as the Haftorah.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) The Latter-day Saints’ use of the Doctrine and Covenants and the “Pearl of Great Price” constitutes the LDS *Haftorah*. Literally, it is the reading of the *Nevi’im*, the “Prophets,” with their explanations and heavenly insights.

**Learning by Contrasts:** There is a popular saying in Israel that epitomizes the Jewish propensity for polemics. Jokingly, they say, “Two Jews in a conversation always come up with three opinions.” It is Jewish nature to discuss and even make up opposite points of view in order to derive a learning experience from the resulting contrasts

**Three Basic Tools of Learning:** Three tools of learning that God gave us are seeing (visual), hearing (audio) and feeling (kinesthetic). One of the ways of recognizing these meta-programs (human perception modes) is in the words we use to describe our reactions: “I see,” “Sounds right to me,” “I feel all right about this.” “. . . then your eyes shall be opened . . .” (*Genesis 3:5*) “And Moses called all Israel . . . I speak in your ears . . .” (*Deuteronomy 5:1*) “Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing . . .” (*Ecclesiastes 8:5*)

**Different Learning for Different People:** Isaiah used simple words as metaphors to reach those who can see, those who can hear, and those who perceive. “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” (*Isaiah 6:10*) Please note the chiasmus: heart, ears, eyes, then eyes, ears, heart. The center point being eyes; Isaiah is giving us an “insight.” Advertising experts appeal to our eyes, make it sound right, and have us feel the worth of their products. These are the most powerful meta-programs to teach about and experience life, even Eternal Life.

**Parables Provide Pictures:** To improve our perception of “learning,” let’s consider the way Jesus taught through parables. Around the eastern and northern shores of the Sea of Galilee are numerous coves. They were created by erosion as the prolific rainfall in the winter months raced downward through small canyons to the lake, drawing the black igneous basalt stone and gravel out past the shoreline. One such cove is very close to Capernaum. There are boulders of stone, choking thorn bushes, and patches of fertile land, all situated close to the road that leads to Capernaum, where Jesus lived.

**Chiasmus Points to Greater Meaning:** It is much easier to picture the parable in chapter thirteen of Matthew taking place in the setting of such a cove than imagining someone speaking from a boat to a multitude scattered across a straight shoreline. The shape of the cove allows more people to be close to a vessel anchored a little way out from the shore, and the acoustics of the water carrying the sound to the surrounding banks permits the listening crowd to hear every word clearly. The most significant message in the parable of the sower is in verse twelve. It is the center of another chiasmus. It is a message of the Gift of the Holy Ghost. The parable uses the wayside, stony place, and the thorns as image points. Then in reverse, consider that the heart was not pricked, the ears were not unplugged (as if stones were in their ears), and their hearts couldn’t understand the way.

**“If You Don’t Use It, You’ll Lose It:”** Reminding ourselves again, the inspired translation of those verses makes the lesson of using the gift of the Holy Ghost easier to understand. “For whosoever receiveth to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever continueth not to receive, from him shall be taken even that he hath.” (*Matthew 13:12 JST*) There is a modern proverb which repeats this message: “If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it.” By exercising the gift, it expands and grows. The parables that Jesus used offered learning experiences on the level of those listening, according to their sense of understanding. Parables are like paintings. They can be studied for more interpretation. Many of Jesus’ parables contained references to nature and human experiences.

**Balance of Learning and Work:** “Rabbi Johanan the shoemaker is only one example. The ideal suggested and followed by most of the sages is to combine learning and work. Maimonides proposed that the day be divided into thirds, with equal time for learning, labor and other matters.” (*Encyclopædia Judaica Jr.*)

**Going Back:** There is a lesson in going back to the “learning of the fathers.” The Hebrew word for “going back” is the same as “repent.” “Say nothing but repentance unto this generation; keep my commandments and assist to bring forth my work, according to my commandments, and you shall be blessed.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 6:9*) There is a lesson in combining an understanding of the “Learning of the Jews” and knowing the “mysteries” of the Lord. “For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.” (*Nephi 10:19*)

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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