

Summary Handout

“Sealed . . . for Time and for All Eternity”

Lesson
31
Summary

Scripture Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4 Instructions by Joseph Smith the Prophet, given at Ramus, Illinois, May 16 and 17, 1843. HC 5: 392–393. 1–4, Celestial marriage is essential to exaltation in the highest heaven.*

Doctrine and Covenants 132:4–33; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded July 12, 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, as also plurality of wives. HC 5: 501–507. Although the revelation was recorded in 1843, it is evident from the historical records that the doctrines and principles involved in this revelation had been known by the Prophet since 1831. 1–6, Exaltation is gained through the new and everlasting covenant; 7–14, The terms and conditions of that covenant are set forth; 15–20, Celestial marriage and a continuation of the family unit enable men to become gods; 21–25, The strait and narrow way that leads to eternal lives; 26–27, Law given relative to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; 28–39, Promises of eternal increase and exaltation made to prophets and saints in all ages

Doctrine and Covenants 42:22; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 9, 1831. HC 1: 148–154. It was received in the presence of twelve elders, and in fulfillment of the Lord’s promise previously made that the “law” would be given in Ohio; see Section 38: 32. The Prophet specifies this revelation as “embracing the law of the Church.” 22; Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else.

Jacob 2:12–30; Jacob denounces the love of riches, pride, and unchastity—Men should seek riches to help their fellow men—Jacob condemns the unauthorized practice of plural marriage—The Lord delights in the chastity of women.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights: **Similarities of Jewish and LDS Marriage Customs:** One of the greatest rituals and covenants that Jews maintain is that of marriage and, subsequently, family life. The ritual of marriage in Judaism is considered without end; there is no statement, “Until death do you part.” The canopy or huppah is reflective of the ancient temple, often made of a tallith, the garment that reminds a Jew of the covenants and commandments he has bound to himself. A minyan or “prayer circle” is formed at the marriage. Two witnesses are also present. As in all religious ceremonies, men are separated from women on two sides of the room or hall. Head covering is also required. Blessings are given to the bride and groom. Where polygamy was once accepted, it later was rescinded.

Polygamy and Monogamy: “The biblical idea of marriage was essentially monogamous, although polygamy was common among the upper classes of society. Among the rabbis, polygamy was almost unknown, but it was not until the 11th century that multiple marriages were legally prohibited. Then an enactment associated with the name of Rabbenu Gershom ben Judah was promulgated which established monogamy as the legal norm for all the Jews living in Europe.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Marriage between a Man and a Woman: “In Jewish teaching, marriage is considered the ideal human state and a basic social institution established by God at the time of Creation. Both the Bible and the rabbis reject celibacy as unnatural and harmful to the human personality, and insist upon the need for marriage, not only for purposes of procreation, but also for companionship and human self-fulfillment: ‘It is not good that man be alone; I will make a help meet for him’ (Genesis 2:15) and ‘He who has no wife is not a proper man; he lives without joy, blessing and goodness.’ The successful marriage in the eyes of the prophets and the rabbis was the most perfect symbol of a meaningful and purposeful relationship and was taken by them as the closest approximation to the idealized relationship between God and Israel, and between Israel and the Torah.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Two Marriage Ceremonies Combined into One: Other details of Jewish marriage are included to explain interesting cultural and traditional practices. A similarity can be seen of an LDS secular and religious marriage combined. “A Jewish marriage consists, from the point of view of rabbinic law, of two separate acts, called *kiddushin* and *nissu’in*, which were originally performed at an interval of a year or more apart, but which from the 12th century onward became united in one ceremony.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Fasting on the Marriage Day: “Both the week before the wedding and the week after are celebrated in special fashion. In the synagogue on the Sabbath preceding the marriage, the groom is called to the reading of the Torah and, in some communities, while standing at the *bimah* is showered with nuts and candies, in symbolic representation of everyone’s wish for his fruitfulness and happiness. This custom is called in Yiddish *aufrufen*. During the days immediately preceding the wedding, bride and groom customarily do not see each other (the actual

period varies in different communities from a week to the day of the marriage), and both fast on the day of their wedding as an indication of the spiritual importance of marriage and the fact that they are about to start a new life together. Following the wedding ceremony a festive meal is served, during which the guests entertain the newly-wed couple and following which the seven wedding blessings are again recited. The seven days following the wedding are known as the *Sheva Berakhot*, for festive meals in honor of the couple are arranged each day, and at the conclusion of each the seven wedding blessings are recited in the presence of a *minyan* of invited guests.” (*Encyclopædia Judaica Jr.*)

Unending Marriage Symbolized by Ring: “Although the act of marriage can be effected in different ways it has become the universal Jewish practice to use a ring (except in very few oriental communities where a coin is used). By law, the ring must belong to the bridegroom, and can be constructed of any material, as long as it is free of precious stones and its value is more than a *perutah*, the smallest denomination of currency in Talmudic times.

“Huppah” Because There Is No Temple: “Today, the term *huppah* refers to the decorative canopy under which the wedding ceremony is performed. Originally, however, it referred to the actual bridal chamber, the tent or room of the groom to which the bride was brought in festive procession for the marital union. The Talmud relates that there was an ancient custom to make staves of the *huppah* from a cedar and a pine tree planted specifically for this purpose at the birth of a male and female child respectively. In medieval France, it was customary for the groom to cover the bride's head with his *tallit* as a symbol of sheltering her; and in modern-day Israel, for weddings of soldiers on active duty, it is not unusual to see a *huppah* constructed of a *tallit* supported by four rifles held by friends of the bride and groom. Generally, the *huppah* is erected inside the synagogue or the hall where the wedding is to take place, but among Orthodox Jews, the preferred custom is to erect the *huppah* outside, or at least in a spot open to the sky, underneath the stars, because of God's assurance to Abraham that He would make his descendants ‘as numerous as the stars of the heavens’ (Genesis 22:17).” (*Encyclopædia Judaica Jr.*)

Jews Bury in the Garment They Marry in: In some Jewish circles, a special garment is worn in remembrance of repentance and represents the purity of the covenant of marriage. It is also used to clothe the dead. It is called the *Kitel* in Yiddish meaning "gown" or garment. “In Ashkenazi tradition it is not just the bride who wears white on her wedding day. The groom, too, stands under the canopy wearing his white *kitel*, or robe, over his wedding finery. The day of their marriage is a solemn one for the bride and groom. They pray that their past sins will be forgiven and they can start their life together afresh. The white of their clothing symbolizes the purity and the forgiveness of sin for which they are hoping. For this reason a similar garment is used to clothe the dead for burial. The *kitel* therefore also serves to remind the wearer of how brief life is, and of the necessity for atonement.” (*Encyclopædia Judaica Jr.*)

Religious Marriage Supercedes Secular: Another interesting similarity to Latter-day Saint practice is the significance of a proper ritual marriage in the faith, even though a secular marriage has already been performed. “A convert to Judaism is considered a new-born child, and, from the halakhic point of view, he has no father or mother. Thus, if a whole family converts, the children and the parents start their lives as Jews with no legal relationship. Because of this state of affairs, converts are always named as though they were the sons of Abraham, the first Jew. A husband and wife who convert must also have another wedding ceremony in order to be married under Jewish law.” (*Encyclopædia Judaica Jr.*)

Sexual Sacredness: The holiness of marriage is a major part of the beliefs of both the Jews and the Mormons. “The primary restriction of sexual activity in Jewish law is that it should take place within marriage, as an expression of love between husband and wife as well as out of a desire to fulfill God's commandments. An element of holiness is added by the laws of *niddah* (separation during the period of menstruation; which ensure that the couple does not indulge in sex on impulse but rather directs the act to holiness.” (*Encyclopædia Judaica Jr.*) Marriage is one of the greatest covenants God has given to man. The sanctity of marriage is evident in the Bible. The traditions of both Jews and Latter-day Saints similarly uphold the precious responsibilities and blessings of this covenant.

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