

Summary Handout

“The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn to Their Fathers”

Lesson

39

Summary

Scripture Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 2; An extract from the words of the angel Moroni to Joseph Smith the Prophet, while in the house of the Prophet's father at Manchester, New York, on the evening of September 21, 1823. HC 1: 12. Moroni was the last of a long line of historians who had made the record that is now before the world as the Book of Mormon. Compare Malachi 4:5—6; also Sections 27: 9; 110: 13—16; and 128: 18. 1, Elijah is to reveal the priesthood; 2—3, Promises of fathers are planted in hearts of children.*

Doctrine and Covenants 110:13—16; Visions manifested to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery in the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, April 3, 1836. HC 2: 435—436. The occasion was that of a Sabbath day meeting. The Prophet prefaces his record of the manifestations with these words: “In the afternoon, I assisted the other Presidents in distributing the Lord's Supper to the Church, receiving it from the Twelve, whose privilege it was to officiate at the sacred desk this day. After having performed this service to my brethren, I retired to the pulpit, the veils being dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer. After rising from prayer, the following vision was opened to both of us.” 1—10, The Lord Jehovah appears in glory and accepts the Kirtland Temple as his house; 11—12, Moses and Elias each appear and commit their keys and dispensations; 13—16, Elijah returns and commits the keys of his dispensation as promised by Malachi.

Doctrine and Covenants 138; A vision, given to President Joseph F. Smith in Salt Lake City, Utah, on October 3, 1918. In his opening address at the eighty-ninth Semiannual General Conference of the Church, on October 4, 1918, President Smith declared that he had received several divine communications during the previous months. One of these, concerning the Savior's visit to the spirits of the dead while his body was in the tomb, he had received the previous day. It was written immediately following the close of the conference; on October 31, 1918, it was submitted to the counselors in the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Patriarch, and it was unanimously accepted by them. 1—10, President Joseph F. Smith ponders upon the writings of Peter and our Lord's visit to the spirit world; 11—24, He sees the righteous dead assembled in paradise and Christ's ministry among them; 25—37, How the preaching of the gospel was organized among the spirits; 38—52, President Smith sees Adam, Eve, and many of the holy prophets in the spirit world who considered their spirit state before their resurrection as a bondage; 53—60, The righteous dead of this day continue their labors in the world of spirits.

Joseph Smith History 1:37—39; Moroni appears to Joseph Smith—Joseph's name is to be known for good and evil among all nations—Moroni tells him of the Book of Mormon and of the coming judgments of the Lord, and quotes many scriptures—The hiding place of the gold plates is revealed—Moroni continues to instruct the Prophet. (Verses 27-54.)

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights: **Specific Seat for Elijah:** As previously mentioned, for the Jews, Passover is a time for Elijah to return. The ancient eating arrangement at the Passover meal (Seder) was “U” shaped with the oldest seated at the second seat with one of the youngest of his choice seated at his right hand, in the first seat. At the other end of the “U” shaped seating arrangement was an empty chair for Elijah. His place was directly opposite the youngest and the oldest, symbolic—if you please—of Elijah turning the hearts of fathers to children and the children to the fathers.

“He's Already Come!” At one Passover in Jerusalem with my mother and two sisters, I asked my youngest son at the appropriate time to open the door for Elijah. The seven-year-old said, “I don't have to open the door for Elijah, he's already come!” He was referring to Elijah's appearance in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836, the Passover season that year! My mother leaned over and said to him, “Josh, he may have come for you but he hasn't yet come for me . . . open the door!” Only then, Josh jumped up and said, “Okay, Savta!” (Grandma)

Jewish Thirst for Family History: The “spirit of Elijah” is considered to be inspiring family history research. Jews have a remarkable thirst for family history. I have a large book describing Jewish genealogy. In the foreword, there is a not-so-obscure mention that the largest source of Jewish genealogy is safely preserved in a “granite mountain in Salt Lake City.” “Genealogy is the listing of ancestors in the order of their succession, and occurs in the Bible as lists of ‘generations’ and as tribal, clan and family lists, such as those of the houses of David, Zadok (see Zadokites), and Saul. All were based on the assumption that nations, tribes and clans were descended from a single father.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Secular Reason for Genealogy: “The tradition of listing family histories is an ancient one in Israel, for only by thus proving connection with some family or clan could a man claim the privileges of citizenship. If, as happened, members of the local population joined the Israelites (in the period of the Conquest or early monarchy) they were brought into the genealogical framework of the tribe as a means of assimilating them; similarly artisans, poets, and wise men not originally members of the tribe, were also generally linked with some ancient ancestor. Genealogies were not simply historic records but might be used in a national census . . . or for military or tax purposes. They

might also reflect political events: thus, the merging of two tribes might be represented by an account of a marriage between heads of their leading families; and the absorption of a newly settled tribe among a local population might be described by the marriage of a tribal leader to one of the native women.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Oral Genealogies: “Genealogies of individual families seem to have been based on oral (spoken) tradition. In the period of the return to Zion (fifth to fourth century B.C.E.) it became especially important to prove the lineage of the priests and Levites, for without such proof of priestly descent, claimants could not qualify for service in the Temple or the priestly privileges. Other families were also keen to have proof of descent in order to justify claims to abandoned family property.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Genealogy for Temple Service: “In the period of the Second Temple purity of descent was important chiefly for the *kohanim* [priests] and for those Israelite families who claimed the right of their daughters to marry *kohanim*. “Since the various offices in the Temple service passed from father to son, the purity of those families whose priestly roles were known by long tradition was beyond question. “But Judaism never claimed that wisdom was the monopoly of prominent families (‘A learned bastard takes precedence over an uneducated high priest’— Mishnah, Horayot 3:8). Indeed some sages were even said to have been descended from evil gentiles who repented their ways and became good Jews. However, purity of blood did play a part in the fight for political power between prominent rival Jewish families. Thus, the Hasmoneans, who had to defend themselves against the contention that only descendants of David could rule, in turn questioned the purity of David's blood, in view of his descent from Ruth the Moabite. According to the third century Christian historian Africanus, King Herod forged for himself a descent from David, having first destroyed the genealogical records in the Temple.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Jews Maintain Identity by Hanging on to Roots: “After the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. the *kohanim* clung to their lineage as the only remaining symbol of their past glory. Babylonian Jewry considered that the purity of its descent was of a higher order than that of Erez Israel, basing its claim on the tradition that all whose lineage was in doubt had returned to Israel with Ezra. With the Temple no longer in existence, genealogy lost much of its meaning and became merely a symbol of social status. In the Middle Ages some sages, such as Rashi and his grandsons Jacob b. Meir Tam and Samuel ben Meir, was claimed to have been of Davidic descent. From the 12th century on in Central and Eastern Europe the question of good birth (known as *yibhus*) became increasingly important . . . (in) arranging marriages. By the 19th century in Germany great pains were taken to prove how deep were the Jewish community's roots in the locality . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Moslem Identity: The Arabs as a people, on the other hand, have a much less unified identity. Although their families are important and many memorize generations of their family genealogy, they have not been able to carry on any major unity as communities or countries. For the religious Moslems, going to Mecca is a once in a lifetime goal. Along with the washings done at Mecca and the wearing of white robe-like clothing, Moslems are given a “new name,” one that they must not reveal—for it is theirs to use in the next life when they approach Allah. It is interesting that Moslems are urged to return to Mecca again and again, but these pilgrimages are for or in behalf of other people, preferably relatives, who did not have the chance to go. They may get the “new name” for them as well. Mecca is the holiest spot for Moslems; it is where Mohammed was born. Close to Mecca is Medina, the second-holiest site for Moslems because it is the place where Mohammed was buried.

Memories of Ancient Israelite Temple Rituals: Clothing, washing, synagogue layout and seating arrangements reflect practices done in temple times. A hope for its return was and still is constantly repeated. “The rabbis of that generation enacted new laws whose purpose was to fulfill the biblical verse, ‘If I forget thee, O Jerusalem . . .’ (Psalm 137). They decreed that a corner of every house, a part of every meal, even some of every woman's jewelry, be set aside—in memory of the Temple. Special prayers were formulated to express the yearning of the people to return to Zion and to worship once again in the Temple of God. Instrumental music was banned from the synagogue service, a glass was broken at every wedding, and the words ‘Next year in Jerusalem’ were recited on Passover and at the end of the Day of Atonement—all in memory of the Temple. Most historians believe that these prayers, customs, and hopes helped to unite the Jewish people and kept alive the hope of returning to Zion, a hope which was fulfilled in our days.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

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”)

(1) a short e-mailed WEEKLY REMINDER

(2) a one-page two-sided SUMMARY HANDOUT (plus a “PDF” version for printing)

(3) the COMPLETE SUPPLEMENTAL MANUAL LESSONS. All are available FREE at www.HolyLandsRevealed.com

You may copy and print the information from any of the website versions to distribute to your class members and friends.

