

Summary Handout

Finding Joy in Temple and Family History Work

Lesson
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Summary

Scripture Summary:

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.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Saviors on Mount Zion: On April 6, 1890, President Wilford Woodruff said, “We are called upon, as saviors on Mount Zion . . . to go forth and redeem our dead. I do not want to go into the spirit world to meet these people and have them say . . . ‘You had power to enter into these Temples to get redemption for me, but you have not done it.’” (*Brian H. Stuy, Collected Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, 5 vols. Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992*)

Passover Week—the Best Jewish Family Holiday: There are manuals called the “Haggadah” which often are booklets with artistic creations to capture and anchor a child’s memory. The purpose is to bring our children back to a recollection of the greatest deliverance in our history. As a believing Jew, I see a great amount of symbolism.

Parrallels: The account of baby Moses being saved during an extermination order by the Pharaoh parallels the account of the baby Jesus being saved during an extermination order by King Herod. Moses becomes a “type” of the deliverer. He was raised to deliver Israel from bondage. Jesus of Nazareth raised all people from the bondage of physical and spiritual death. He is the real deliverer.

Being Raised: The seven-day deliverance feast of Passover is called the “Seder.” Celebrated on the first full moon after the first day of spring, the first day is a “high day” and is treated as a Sabbath. To make the point clear, that “high-day Sabbath” can be on any day of the week, depending on the lunar (biblical) calendar. The day before Passover is sometimes referred to as the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. It is the preparation day when all leavened products are removed from the home. It is even the custom in Israel for the Chief Rabbi to “sell” all the grain and leavened products to an Arab so that Israelis don’t own anything that has or might “rise.” Passover is to remember “rising” quickly and being delivered from Egyptian slavery. It is a symbol of a future “rising” or deliverance that would be even greater than the first Passover.

Deliverer Born on Deliverance Holiday: Jesus was born during Passover. According to the biblical calendar and because Passover always occurs at the first full moon after the first day of spring, April 6, 1830, the date the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, leads us to look at the biblical date. It was Passover that year! “. . . being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh . . .” (*Doctrine & Covenants 20:1*) The Deliverer was born at the season celebrating the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and celebrating an expectation of an even greater deliverance in the future.

Jews Anticipate Elijah: “The Sabbath before Passover . . . connects it with the . . . day on which the Israelites in Egypt set aside the lamb that they were to slaughter on the first Passover (Exodus 12:3) . . . a special *haftarah*, [reading from the Prophets] . . . from the Book of Malachi and referring to the day on which Elijah the Prophet will reappear as forerunner of the great day of the Lord, is read.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Door Is Opened for Elijah: At the Passover meal, a seat is reserved for him and songs are sung in expectation of Elijah. During Passover, on April 3, 1836, while millions of Jews were going through the festive ritual of anticipating Elijah, he came to Joseph Smith the prophet in Kirtland, Ohio.

Remembering the Past, Anticipating the Future: During the Passover meal, the master of the house will pour and bless wine (it should be “new Wine”) three different times. He sips first, and then everyone else may sip. After each occurrence of wine there is a breaking and blessing of bread (unleavened) three different times. Again, each

time the master blesses and eats a broken piece, then everyone else eats a piece. The remarkable exception is that at the beginning of the meal the middle of the three bread pieces is broken in two and a broken piece (largest of the two) is hidden for the children to find later in the Seder service. When it is found, that piece (fourth time bread is used) is blessed, broken, and the master eats the first part, then everyone follows his example. The fourth cup of wine is then poured full (more than the previous three “sips”) and the master instructs everyone to “drink all of it.”

Weekly Reminder of Deliverance: The present Jewish Passover feast is in fact an annual event to remember Israel’s deliverance. In a religious Jewish home, a weekly reminder of the first Passover is done with a “Kiddush.” The master of the house always pours the wine with an appropriate blessing, sips first, followed by everyone else sipping the wine. He breaks a piece of bread and after the appropriate blessing, eats the first piece with everyone following his example. The prayers said include a promise that in the future another deliverance would occur greater than the first Passover.

Sacrament, a Weekly Reminder: Weekly, Latter-day Saints take a “sacrament” that consists of bread that is broken, blessed and the presiding Elder partakes first, then water (nowadays, water instead of wine) is blessed. Again the presiding authority partakes first and then everyone follows. This is done in “remembrance” of the greater deliverance provided by the Savior’s atonement. It should be considered that symbolically, the Jews take wine and bread in anticipation of a greater deliverance while Christians take bread and wine in remembrance of that great deliverance . . . a chiasmus—with the Savior’ atonement in the middle.

Another Family Memorial Called “Yahrzeit:” It is a way of keeping a link with deceased family members. “Yahrzeit is a Yiddish word which comes from the German meaning ‘year-time’ or anniversary. Among Ashkenazi Jews it has come to refer exclusively to the anniversary of the death of a relative for whom one was required to mourn. The anniversary is according to the Hebrew date of death, and so in the secular calendar it will be on different dates each year. Very pious people observe a fast on the *yahrzeit* of parents and it is the general custom that a candle or light is kindled for the whole day, and that a mourner who is able to, leads the daily services on that day. Sons recite the *Kaddish* prayer on the *yahrzeit* of parents.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Prayer at the Grave Anticipates The Messiah: “Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will . . .” “This is the opening sentence of the *Kaddish* prayer which is recited more often than any other prayer. The word *kaddish* is Aramaic for ‘Holy’ and signifies the main theme of the prayer which is sanctification of God's name. The prayer is recited by the *bazzan* several times at various parts of every daily service and there are different versions of it for different parts of the service. However, the prayer is mostly thought of as being the mourners' prayer since mourners recite it at the end of each daily service as well as on other occasions. In its original usage, the *Kaddish* is a fervent plea for the coming of the Messiah and an expression of the Jew's steadfast belief that God ‘who makes peace in the heavens will make peace for us and for all Israel.’ As the mourner's prayer it is the reaffirmation of the Jew's faith and belief in God even though he has lost a loved one.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

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