

## Summary Handout

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# “Every Member a Missionary”

Lesson

41

Summary

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### Scripture Summary:

*Doctrine and Covenants 1:4–5, 30; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, during a special conference of elders of the Church, held at Hiram, Ohio, November 1, 1831. HC 1: 221–224. Many revelations had been received from the Lord prior to this time, and the compilation of these for publication in book form was one of the principal subjects passed upon at the conference. This section constitutes the Lord’s Preface to the doctrines, covenants, and commandments given in this dispensation. 24–33, The Book of Mormon brought forth and true Church established.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 65; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, October 1831. HC 1: 218. The Prophet designates this revelation as a prayer. 1–2, Keys of the kingdom of God are committed to man on earth, and the gospel cause shall triumph; 3–6, The millennial kingdom of heaven shall come and join the kingdom of God on earth.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 88:81; 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. 81–85, Every man who hath been warned should warn his neighbor.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 109:72–74; Prayer offered at the dedication of the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, March 27, 1836. HC 2: 420–426. According to the Prophet’s written statement, this prayer was given to him by revelation. 68–80, May the saints be crowned with glory and honor and gain eternal salvation.*

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### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**Jewish Perception of Missionary Work:** In the previous Lesson 26, “Go Ye into All the World and Preach My Gospel,” we considered that to many Jews, Christian missionary work among the Jews is considered blasphemy and even anti Semitic. There is a certain Rabbi Goldstein in Jerusalem who counteracts this activity by conducting seminars and lectures to refute missionaries and Christian polemics.

**Disputation and Debates Can Lead to Bitterness:** “Throughout history Jews have often been called on to defend their faith against non believers in public debates known as disputations or polemics. Often these disputations were conducted in friendly atmospheres of mutual respect, but all too often these debates took on aspects of bitterness.

**Considering Other Points of View:** “In the Greco-Roman era, pagan polytheism challenged Jewish monotheism. The Mishnah records that pagans asked the Jewish elders in Rome: if God does not desire idolatry, why does He not destroy it? The Jews answered: If men had worshiped objects unnecessary for the cosmos He would have destroyed those objects, but they worship the sun and moon and the stars and the planets. Should He destroy His world because of fools?” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Religious Rights in Israel:** There are two legal systems, secular and religious so that religious people of some major religions in Israel can take disputes or legal processes to their own judges. The British set up this system before the State of Israel was formed. There are several different religious courts throughout Israel. They include the Orthodox Jews, Moslems, Greek Orthodox, Armenians, Catholics, Syrian Orthodox and the Bahais. The Bahai religious courts are the only ones established after the State of Israel was recognized.

**Jewish Proselytizing:** There is some Proselytizing done by the Jews to bring more Jews to a higher degree of Orthodoxy. One such group felt that their late Rabbi Schneersohn was likely the Messianic figure. The entire concept of Messianism is a difficult thing for Jews to accept. “To some, Messianism undermines the first line of defense against Christian missionizing which has always been that Judaism cannot accept a Messiah who dies in the midst of his redemptive mission. To others, Rabbi Schneersohn is the one who will be resurrected to complete a process of redemption for the Jewish people.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Jewish “Mission Presidents:”** The word “Zionism” is usually connected with the “gathering” of Jews. Some consider coming to Israel as a return to their ancient roots. Some feel it is a religious experience while others gather in a secular sense. Some of the Jews in the diaspora take years to make up their minds to “gather” while others make up their minds quickly. The State of Israel, although not “religious,” sends emissaries throughout the world to “gather” or assist Jews who wish to reestablish themselves in their ancient homeland. These are called a

“Shaliach” and they are somewhat similar to the “Mission Presidents” who administer the work of “emissaries” who bring the blood of Israel “home.”

**Zionism:** “The movement known as Zionism can be described as the national liberation movement of the Jews. As a formal, fully-organized movement, Zionism came into existence only in the last decades of the 19th century, at a time when nationalism had become the dominant political force throughout Europe, but the idea of Zionism—reclaiming Erez Israel (Zion) as the national homeland of the Jews—was then far from being new. Ever since the destruction of the sovereign Jewish state by the Romans in 70 C.E., the Jewish people hoped and prayed for its restoration. From that time onward, the return to Zion became a central theme of Jewish prayer, and even today the Jew, no matter where he is, turns towards the Land of Israel whenever he prays.

**Return to Israel:** “A very important aspect of Zionism was the education of Jews throughout the world towards immigration (*aliyah*) to Erez Israel. For this purpose every group in the Zionist Organization set up youth movements which were described as halutzic (from the word *halutz*, which means a pioneer). These groups also provided practical training for life in Erez Israel. Many even set up training farms to teach the members agriculture.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Being Adopted:** Conversion to Judaism is also a literal adoption into the family of Israel. It involves a religious as well as a cultural change and subsequent involvement. Let’s consider again the Jewish view of conversion. “A convert to Judaism is considered a newborn 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.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**No Law Against Missionizing in Israel:** In context with this lesson, let me repeat a few points that were stated in Lesson 26. A matter called “missionizing of the Jews” became an issue of dissent and subsequently faded away when the State of Israel’s government had approved the building of the “Mormon” center on Mount Scopus where the BYU Study program is currently located. The building was well under way when an Orthodox Jewish group (dedicated to crushing Christian activities) started a twofold campaign. First was discrediting the government (which they did not support anyway) for allowing the BYU facilities to continue. Secondly, striking a chord of antisemitism, they called the center a “missionary activity.” (There are three kinds of antisemitism to the Jews; 1) kill the Jews, 2) let someone else kill the Jews, and 3) convert the Jews.) This same Orthodox group has attempted to pass a law against proselytizing in Israel and have failed. There is NO Israeli statute prohibiting missionary activity. In any case, missionary activity is deemed highly insensitive and frankly, antisemitic.

**The Real Reason LDS Do Not Missionize in Israel:** They did manage to pass a law that prohibits any type of bribe or payment to induce Jews to change their religion. (Mormons do not pay people to become members—they charge them!) BYU did sign a statement announcing they had no intention of doing missionary activities. Elder Howard W. Hunter as President of the Quorum of the Twelve also signed a statement to the same effect with the statement added, “. . . so long as such activity is prohibited by the government of Israel.” Repeating that there is no such law in Israel, the real reason Latter-day Saints are not proselytizing in Israel is because it is the Lord’s will. “And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations, both unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles; and after he has manifested himself unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles, then he shall manifest himself unto the Gentiles and also unto the Jews, and the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.” (*1 Nephi 13:42*)

**Jerusalem Center Viewed Positively:** Israeli government leaders kept their commitment to allow the building. The Orthodox group did not manage to convince the government to stop the BYU project. No legal precedent was established that might affect the Latter-day Saints or for that manner, any other church.

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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