

Summary Handout

“The Family Is Ordained of God”

Lesson

45

Summary

Scripture Summary:

Doctrine and Covenants 31:1–4; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Thomas B. Marsh, September 1830. HC 1: 115—117. The occasion was immediately following a conference of the Church. See heading to Section 30. Thomas B. Marsh had been baptized earlier in the month, and had been ordained an elder in the Church before this revelation was given. 1—6, Thomas B. Marsh is called to preach the gospel and is assured of his family’s well-being.

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. McLellin. 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; 29—35, The saints are to observe the Sabbath, labor diligently, and pray.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:40; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, May 6, 1833. HC 1: 343—346. 38—40, Children are innocent before God because of the redemption of Christ; Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–46; Prayer and prophecies written by Joseph Smith the Prophet, while he was a prisoner in the jail at Liberty, Missouri, dated March 20, 1839. HC 3: 289—300. The Prophet with several companions had been months in prison. Their petitions and appeals directed to the executive officers and the judiciary had failed to bring them relief. Why many are called and few chosen; 41—46, The priesthood should be used only in righteousness.

1 Corinthians 11:11; Paul speaks of certain customs of hair and grooming—Heresies will arise which test and prove the faithful—Sacramental emblems are partaken in remembrance of the flesh and blood of Christ—Beware of partaking unworthily.

Genesis 1:26–27; God creates this earth and its heaven and all forms of life in six days—Creative acts of each day set forth—God creates man, both male and female, in his own image—Man given dominion over all things, and commanded to multiply and fill the earth.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Family Importance for Jews and Latter-day Saints: Even with most theological differences, the family relationship remains. Family is one of Joseph’s and Judah’s strongest similarities. “The Bible appears to be more concerned with social and family relations than with individual ones, and thus puts more emphasis on being a good neighbor than it does on friendship. The Bible also warns against false friendship, saying that people might be attracted to a person solely because of his wealth, and not out of motives of respect.

Privacy of Israel’s Families: “Balaam, seeing Israel’s tents arranged in such a way that each family was assured of its privacy, praised the nation he had come to curse, with the words: ‘How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwelling places, O Israel!’” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr. - Numbers 24:5*)

Sabbath, a Family Ritual: One of the most consistent Jewish rituals includes, at the Sabbath’s beginning, a weekly pouring of “kosher wine” by the eldest male in the family. He will say a blessing, take a sip of the wine and then each family member partakes thereafter. Another part of the Sabbath’s beginning is to bless a piece of broken bread. Again, the eldest male partakes first and the rest of the family partakes thereafter.

Responsibilities of Man, Woman, Children: “‘Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward’ (Psalm 127:3). In Jewish tradition, the central purpose of marriage is to have children. Children are considered a great blessing; they are the hope and the promise of continuing life. “Responsibilities of a man, a woman and of children are stated in the scriptures, Talmudic and oral traditions. In many religious Jewish families, the father blesses his wife and children on a weekly basis. Women and children are to be cherished and blessed. They have different responsibilities, yet they should share an honorable status without preference.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) Yet, as Judaism spread without the guidance of living prophets, some discrimination became evident.

Woman’s Status: “The woman’s legal status, as defined in the Bible, is generally the same as that of man, as is her moral responsibility but certain laws do discriminate both for and against her. For example, special attention was paid to injury suffered by a pregnant woman, and the conditions applicable to a woman sold into slavery were far better than those of a male slave. The owner was expected to marry her himself or have one of his sons marry her and he had to treat her as a daughter-in-law.” The strong Jewish tradition about women places them on a lofty pedestal. “It is said that a man without a wife lives without joy, blessing and good, and that a man should love his wife as himself and respect her more than himself. Women have greater faith than men and greater powers of

discernment. The Torah, the greatest joy of the rabbis, is frequently pictured as a woman and is represented as God's daughter and Israel's bride." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Woman in Modern Israel: "In modern Israel, the Declaration of Independence ensures complete equality of political and social rights to all its inhabitants, regardless of religion, race, or sex, but the real Magna Carta of the Israeli woman was the Women's Equal Rights Law of 1951, giving women equal legal status with men. The only field of law in which there remains a degree of discrimination against women is that of personal status. Matters of marriage and divorce come within the exclusive jurisdiction of the religious courts and thus, for example, a divorce must be given by the husband to the wife. On the other hand, in accordance with the *halakhab*, children take the national identity of their mother and not that of their father." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Woman of Valor: "Woman (Eve) was created primarily to serve man (Adam) as a helper . . . expected to be a good wife and mother. But in ages when many cultures regarded their women as mere chattels, the Jews did not disregard the girl's wishes when a marriage arrangement was made. Womanly traits, good and bad, were proverbial in the Bible. Foolishness, contentiousness and indiscretion were censured. On the other hand, graciousness, industry and generosity were lauded . . . in Proverbs . . . 'A woman of valor . . . her worth is far above pearls.'

Woman's Beauty: "The Talmud teaches that it is a woman's duty to beautify herself so as to appear pleasing to her husband. The rabbis said: 'A woman beautifies herself by powdering herself, by parting her hair and leaving it loose over her shoulders, and by applying rouge to her face.' Said Rav Huna: 'Only the young ones do so, but not the old ones.' Said Rav Hisda to him: 'Even your mother does so, even your grandmother does so, and even a woman on the verge of the grave.' Though the talmudic attitude toward the use of cosmetics is basically favorable, it is combined with warnings against its utilization for immoral purposes. Furthermore, cosmetics were not permitted during periods of mourning." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Responsibility of Husband and Father: Further details of Jewish custom in the family parallel the Latter-day Saints' lifestyle. "The father's duty is to provide for his children, to give them a proper education, to teach them a trade, and to prepare them for marriage. Some authorities require that the father teach his son to swim. The father is morally accountable for the behavior and the sins of his children until they reach the age of their own responsibility—bat mitzvah at the age of 12 for girls, and bar mitzvah at the age of 13 for boys. The father retains responsibility in legal matters for his son until the age of 20 and for his daughter until she marries.

Education in the Home: ". . . education and religious training . . . should begin early in the home. The mother's role is vital since she is the one who creates the home atmosphere in which basic values are fostered and transmitted. She trains her sons and daughters in *mitzvot* and prepares them for formal education. The rabbis advised parents to be loving but firm . . . and warned against showing favoritism. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Blessing Each Other: "In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue. "Children are obliged to treat their parents with honor and respect. Children must provide dependent parents with food, clothing and personal attention if it is necessary. This obligation is removed from a daughter when she marries. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Judaism Considers Family Establishment a Holy Task: Children are a gift from God and childlessness the greatest misfortune that could befall a marriage. The virtues of domestic bliss have been frequently extolled by the rabbis, and the close knit Jewish family, where the home has been the center of religious practice and ceremony, has greatly helped the survival of Judaism and preserved the moral integrity of the Jews." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Sanctity of Family: Although there are many variances in Jewish religious interpretations and worship expressions, the family is always the central holding point. The sanctity of family is why Jews—even unobservant—always want to remain Jews. Latter-day Saints share that perspective. Even to His children that wander away from the path leading to salvation, He is still "Father" in Heaven.

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