

## Summary Handout

# “Born Again”

Lesson

5

Summary

*John 3; Jesus tells Nicodemus men must be born again—God so loved the world that the Only Begotten Son came to save men—John the Baptist testifies: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*

*John 4; Jesus teaches a woman of Samaria—Men must worship the Father in spirit and truth—Those who harvest souls gain eternal life—Many Samaritans believe—Jesus heals a nobleman’s son.*

### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**The Real Israel!** There are many people who mistakenly think of Israel as a flat, dry and dangerous land. In contrast to popular opinion, Israel is mountainous, the rainfall equals that of London (average of 26-inches per year), and peaceful feelings envelope visitors the moment they arrive! Water has always been a concern because most of the rainfall occurs within the months of December, January and February. If it doesn’t rain then, Israel is in risk of a drought.

**Water is Life:** Water has been a metaphor of life throughout the scriptures and “Living Waters” is one of the many names used for the Savior, the giver of life. “The ancient Israelites were careful in their use of rain . . . stored in cisterns . . . mastered the cultivation of the soil, often farming the hills as well . . . built contoured stone terraces, some of which may still be seen today.” “. . . Water for irrigation was drawn from a well in earthenware or metal pitchers attached to a rope or chain.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Empty Water Pots Signify Death:** “When a person dies . . . there is an ancient custom . . . to pour out any water that was in containers or vessels at the time of death. This practice may be the result of superstitious beliefs but it has been suggested that it was a way to tell the neighbors that a death had occurred without having to say the actual words.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Begin Each Day with Water:** “It is a particularly important religious duty to wash . . . by pouring water over the hands from a utensil with a wide mouth, the lip of which must be undamaged . . . without any foreign object (such as a ring) to intervene between hand and the water. After this ritual washing . . . the benediction is recited.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Mormons Teach Israel About Water:** Latter-day Saints who have taught the Israelis about water conservation and distribution include the late Joel Fletcher from Southern Utah, the developer of Doppler Radar, and John Hanks of Utah State University. On his last visit, Brother Hanks told me, “I’m not teaching them anymore; they’re teaching me!” Israel’s water conservation and distribution system has become a model to many of the world’s under-developed communities.

**Biblical Prophets Brought Living Water:** Elisha blessed a brackish spring at Jericho. It is still running pure water to this day. Also, David brought life back to Jerusalem by using a water tunnel. “There is only one natural water source in the Jerusalem vicinity --- the Gihon spring on the eastern slope of the Old City. The Canaanites built a tunnel leading from the spring into the city and it was through this tunnel that David made his historic entry into the city. At the end of the eighth century B.C.E. Hezekiah, king of Judah, had a new tunnel built which conducted the waters of the Gihon to the Siloam pool . . . within . . . the city limits. This tunnel is still in existence today.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Living Water Used in the Temple:** There are also traditions that teach the value of water. Remember, that Living Water is one of the Lord’s names. The following explains “The Water-Drawing Celebration.” Note the connection of light with water (both are names of the Lord). “In the days of the Temple . . . during the last six hol ha-mo’ed days of the festival (though not on the Sabbath), the priests used to fill a golden flagon with water drawn from the beautiful spring of Siloam in the valley to the south of the Temple Mount, and carry it up the hill for a ceremony at the altar. This ceremony was called Simhat Bet ha-Sho’evah (the joy of the water drawing). According to the Mishnah, whoever failed to witness this ceremony in his lifetime “never witnessed real joy.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) Jews use “Living Water” that comes out of bed rock for immersions at conversion and repeatedly for all ritual cleansings.

**Spirit Brings Life to the Flesh:** Another powerful metaphor in the scriptures is the word “ruah.” As mentioned in a previous lesson Old Testament Supplement (# 43), the word ruah means “wind, breath and spirit.” “Ruah Elohim” is the spirit or breath of God. “Flesh is the term used in the Bible to distinguish mortal man from God. The Hebrew word for flesh, basar, is contrasted with the Divine Spirit, ru'ah . . .” “Ruah ha-Kodesh (holy spirit) is often used as a synonym for prophecy . . . there are some types of ruah ha-kodesh which also can be attained by doing good deeds.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Ezekiel spoke of breath, wind bringing life:** As the sticks (ETZ-emot) of the body are clothed again with flesh and come alive, so shall the stick (ETZ) of Judah, the dead skeleton of a once true and living religion, come together with the stick of Joseph. This embodies the true religion and with the “breath” of the Lord, his spirit - a resurrection - a new life begins again. That new life will include a new sanctuary of the Lord. “. . . and the bones came together, bone to his bone . . . the sinews and the flesh came up upon them . . . and the breath came into them, and they lived . . . Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel . . . And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou [meanest] by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. . . . Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side . . . And I will make them one nation . . . Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.” (*Ezekiel 37*)

**Samaritans in Israel:** In Israel’s history, a foreign ethnic group, Samaritans, intermarried with Israelites and wanted to assist in building the temple at Jerusalem, but they were refused. These Samaritans then built their own temple (sanctuary) on Mount Gerizim. Thereafter, their interaction with the rest of Israel was tenuous at best. “Samaritans (are) a small religious sect residing in Israel whose members consider themselves to be direct descendants of the Israelite tribes. They have . . . continued to live around Shechem and to make pilgrimages to Mount Gerizim.” “The Samaritan community is headed by priests who are interpreters of the law and keepers of the secret calendar. Until the 17th century these priests claimed direct descent from Aaron. But the last descendant died in 1624 and the priesthood passed to another family. The Samaritan population has remained small due to persecutions and plagues throughout the centuries. By the beginning of the 20th century there were only 150 of them left. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 this minute community was split into two centers --- one under Jordanian rule and the other in Israel. But the Six-Day War in 1967 ended the isolation of the two branches and under the protection of the Israel government, their population has grown to about 500 persons.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**“Born Again” is for All People:** The ethnic character of people did not alter the Lord’s mission. He came to provide living water for all. In a later lesson (# 14), we’ll discover that we are the ones that label a Samaritan as “good.” Neither the Gospel writers nor the Savior referred to a “good Samaritan.” In the account of the woman at the well, it becomes evident that all people can be “born again,” or in other words, receive new life – His life.

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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