

# Old Testament

## Supplement Study Material

Holy Land and Jewish Insights  
by Daniel Rona



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# *The Ensign Foundation*

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## **The Ensign Foundation**

6589 South 1300 East  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84121  
Telephone 801-553-0184  
[Ensign@israelrona.com](mailto:Ensign@israelrona.com)

**Daniel Rona** was born in Israel -- educated in America -- and has been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since 1950. He was a well-known radio broadcaster in Salt Lake City, St. Louis, Chicago and New York, as well as an international newscaster for the "Voice of Israel."

In 1974, he returned to Israel with his wife, Marilyn, and their three children. Their family has grown to five children. Like all Israelis, his sons and daughters served in the Israeli Military before their full-time missions. His youngest son and daughter are on missions at this time.

Brother Rona directs the nonprofit **ENSIGN FOUNDATION** which unites the people of Judah and Joseph in educational, cultural and scientific activities. The Ensign Foundation also provides learning experiences in the Holy Land. Brother Rona is the only LDS licensed tour guide in Israel. His background is unique: he is an American, an Israeli, a Mormon, and a Jew!

Latter-day Saints, who have experienced **ISRAEL REVEALED** with Brother Rona, tell of greater enrichment in their lives through his spiritual and cultural insights. He harmonizes the language, the culture, the time and the places of the Holy Land, sharing the deep feelings and spirit of ancient and modern Israel. These are reflected in this Gospel Doctrine supplement material which he has also provided weekly on the Internet. His book **ISRAEL REVEALED** is an authoritative work bringing the ethnic cultures and traditions of the Holy Land into a spiritual and pictographic review. He also produced a TV mini-series, about Israel. These six TV-films are also on home-video cassettes.

Brother Rona has served many years in the presidencies of the Israel District and Jerusalem Branches. He presently is a High Councilman and High Priest Group Leader in the Israel District.



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# Supplemental Information For Old Testament Studies

This material was prepared by Daniel Rona who is the only LDS licensed tour guide in Israel. For almost thirty years he has been teaching the Old and New Testaments in tours as many as thirty times a year. He was born and lives in Israel. As an active LDS member and Church leader, Brother Rona combines his gospel knowledge, Israel ethnicity and Jewish insight to assist in bringing the tribes of “Joseph” and “Judah” closer together. His background is unique in that he is an **American**, an **Israeli**, a **Mormon** and a **Jew**.

Under each scripture listing is a summary to the chapters being discussed. These are from the LDS Scriptures and are provided only as an overview. It is important that the actual scriptures be read. The Holy Land and Jewish insights are added to help the teacher and student “go back” to the setting in which the scriptures were given and also to better understand what general Jewish views are of those scriptures. Jewish views have varied with time and dispersion. Yet understanding the Jews (basically Judah) will help Joseph in the prophetic mission of reuniting “Joseph and Judah.” That will bring us both back to the original understanding and truths that God gave to his children, yesterday and today as well as tomorrow.

## Helps for the Teacher and Student

The young prophet Nephi gave us a substantial key to understanding the scriptures. Note how subtly he teaches us through a ‘chiasmus’ (an order of words listed in one direction to a center thought and then listed in the other direction in reverse order).

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>learning of my father</b></li> <li>2. <b>highly favored of the Lord</b></li> <li>2. <b>knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God</b></li> <li>1. <b>learning of the Jews</b></li> </ol>	<p>I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the <b>learning of my father</b>; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been <b>highly favored of the Lord</b> in all my days; yea, having had a great <b>knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God</b>, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.</p> <p>Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the <b>learning of the Jews</b> and the language of the Egyptians. <i>(1 Nephi 1:1-2)</i></p>
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The center point of his instruction is the gift he acknowledges, the knowledge of mysteries. A synonym for mysteries is the “subtle understanding” of God’s word. This is available through the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

“For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.” *(1 Nephi 10:19)*

The center point is sandwiched by “learning of my father” and “learning of the Jews.” This material suggests some ‘learning of the Jews’ to add insight to the study of the same religion and scriptures that Nephi brought from Israel. Other Jewish insights may simply help Latter-day Saints better understand Judah and thereby bring our two families closer together. It is necessary for the teacher and the student to relate and coordinate this information with the material provided in their respective lesson manuals.

The basis of Jewish learning is based on the “Torah,” that is the first five books of the “Old Testament.”

“The Bible is holy to Jews because it represents the Word of God. This is particularly true of the Torah which is, so to speak, God's direct statement. The halakhah, or Jewish law, which is the authoritative guide for a Jew's life, is mainly based on the Torah, so obviously study of the Torah as well as the rest of the Bible is one of the prime religious duties.”

“The custom of reading the Torah publicly is very, very ancient --- originating with Ezra in the fifth-fourth centuries B.C.E. At some later date a reading from the *Nevi'im* was added; this corresponding passage from the Prophets is known as the *Haftorah*.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The Latter-day Saint's use of the “Pearl of Great Price” is the LDS *Haftorah*. Literally it is the reading of the *Nevi'im*, the “Prophets,” with their explanations and heavenly insights.

# “This is My Work and My Glory”

Lesson

1

*Moses 1*

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**Summary:** *God reveals himself to Moses—Moses transfigured—Confrontation with Satan —Many inhabited worlds seen—Worlds without number created by the Son —God’s work and glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The anthropomorphic nature of God was known to the Jews at the time of Jesus. The Old Testament, as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls contain several references to God in ‘human terms’. As the true nature of God is seen to diminish in history, true religion fades away. By the time the Crusaders were approaching the Holy Land, a prominent Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides, began collecting the writings and interpretations of other Jewish sages to codify and centralize them. In his work “The Guide to the Perplexed,” Maimonides included ‘Thirteen Articles of Faith’. The first three articles declared that God cannot be explained. That is probably the first published Jewish work that (in most Judaic studies) eliminated reference to the anthropomorphic nature of God.

“The great Jewish philosopher Maimonides argued for the existence of God from the idea of motion. Everything in the universe is moving, and since we know that movement is finite, it must have started somewhere; hence the idea of the Prime Mover, i.e., God.”

“In the final analysis, however, there is no direct positive evidence of the existence of God. It can be argued that if there were such evidence then there would be no virtue in believing in Him. Ultimately it is a question of faith.”

“Perhaps the most famous of the various formulations of dogmas is the Thirteen Principles of Faith of Maimonides. Originally written in Arabic, this creed is the basis of the *Yigdal* hymn which is part of the daily service and is usually recited at the conclusion of the Friday evening synagogue service. The 13 fundamentals are:

- (1) The existence of God, which is perfect;
- (2) God is "one" in every sense of the word;
- (3) God has no body or physical attributes;
- (4) God is eternal;
- (5) God alone must be worshiped;
- (6) the prophecy of the Bible is true;
- (7) Moses was greater than any other prophet;
- (8) the entire Torah was given to Moses;
- (9) the Torah will never be superseded or abrogated;

- (10) God knows the actions of men;
- (11) God rewards and punishes;
- (12) the Messiah will ultimately come; and
- (13) the dead will be resurrected.

These principles have also been put in the form of a creed in which each begins with the words "I believe with perfect faith that . . .;" the creed is printed in most prayerbooks." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

# “Thou Wast Chosen Before Thou Wast Born”

Lesson

2

*Abraham 3; Moses 4:1–4*

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**Summary:** *Abraham learns about the sun, moon, and stars by means of the Urim and Thummim—The Lord reveals to him the eternal nature of spirits—He learns of pre-earth life, foreordination, the creation, the choosing of a Redeemer, and the second estate of man.*

*How Satan became the devil—He tempts Eve—Adam and Eve fall and death enters the world.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

At the time of Jesus a Society of Jews that many call the Essenes lived at the Dead Sea. Their writings included inferences of “pre-existence.” This seems evident because their scribes referred to the Messiah they expected as known by previous prophets and sages. Again, the eighth century Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, eliminated references to a pre-existence. Various writing of sages prior to Maimonides and available in Hebrew refer to an existence before this earth life.

There is a Jewish tradition (Agaddah) of a conflict in the creation process:

“When the first man was to be created, says the Aggadah, God consulted the angels. Some favored his creation, because of the love and mercy he would show; others were opposed -- because of the falsehood and strife he would stir up. In the end, for reasons best known to Himself, the Holy One decided to create man.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

References to Satan as a personage have also largely disappeared from Jewish thought. Talmudic teachings include the following description:

“In the Talmud, Satan is at times identified with the yezer ha-rah (the evil inclination), but he also assumes certain aspects of a fully personalized entity. Thus, he is the angel of death, or he is the tempter lying in ambush not only for Job but also for Abraham and all the biblical personalities. Or he is the accuser, ha-mekatreg, constantly waiting for man to sin so as to bring down upon him the wrath of God.”

“Several references to Satan have found their way into the liturgy, for example the plea in the hashkivenu prayer of the evening service to "remove from us the enemy, pestilence . . . and Satan.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

*Moses 1:27-42; 2-3*

**Summary:** *God creates the heavens and the earth—All forms of life created—God makes man and gives him dominion over all else.*

*God creates the heavens and the earth—All forms of life created—God makes man and gives him dominion over all else.*

*God created all things spiritually before they were naturally upon the earth—First man and first flesh created—Woman a help meet for man.*

### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Before the Bible as we know it was written there were written correspondences between peoples in the Middle East. The oldest known writing may be the Ebla Tablets found in today's Syria. Approximately eighteen thousand ceramic plates were found. They even contained a language that had never been known before. Even more astounding was a set of plates that contained a sort of dictionary that translated the 'unknown' language into one that scholars had already learned to decipher.

Included in the Ebla Tablets were names of people and places that are mentioned in the Bible. They also contain the earliest written account of the creation. What Latter-day Saints would find interesting is that there are 'two' creations listed. As previously mentioned, this information was written on clay plates before the Bible was written.

In the discovery of The Dead Sea Scrolls, a so-called 'Genesis Apocryphon' scroll was revealed. It dates back twenty or more centuries and also contains reference to the creation. The text style is similar to the revelatory testimonies of Moses and Abraham.

Jewish legends and traditions from a collection called "the Agaddah" gives the following ideas that relate man and his relationship to the creation surrounding him.

"In their search for lessons on man's place in God's universe, the rabbis discussed at great length the biblical account of the creation of Adam, which is outlined above. Thus, for example, the Midrash observes that each newly created form of life ruled over what preceded it in the order of creation.

Adam and Eve were thus created last in order that they should rule over all creation, and in order that they should be able to enter a banqueting hall that was waiting ready for them. In the words of the Midrash, "The matter may be likened to an emperor's building a palace, consecrating it, preparing the feast, and only then inviting the guests." On the other hand, the rabbis taught that Adam was created last, so that if he should become conceited, he could be told: "The gnat was created before you."

*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

# “Because of My Transgression My Eyes Are Opened”

Lesson

4

*Moses 4; 5:1-15, Moses 6:48-62*

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**Summary:** *Adam and Eve bring forth children—Adam offers sacrifice, serves God—Cain and Abel born—Cain rebels, loves Satan more than God, and becomes Perdition—Murder and wickedness spread—The gospel preached from the beginning.*

*Adam's seed keep a book of remembrance—His righteous posterity preach repentance—God reveals himself to Enoch—Enoch preaches the gospel—The plan of salvation was revealed to Adam—He received baptism and the priesthood.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The fall of Adam is one of the faded doctrines of Judaism. Discovery of ancient scriptures (The Pearl of Great Price) and the restoration of temples in modern times have restored understanding that was on the earth before. Following is a collection of Jewish thought on Adam, Eve and sin.

“For most of the medieval Jewish thinkers, the biblical story of Adam has both a literal and allegorical meaning. Judah Halevi wrote that in addition to the loftiest intellect ever possessed by a human being, Adam was endowed with the divine power that enables man to achieve communion with God. Maimonides held this to be possible through the development of the intellect alone, no other special gift being required. Adam's sin is understood allegorically by Maimonides as a failure to resist the demands of physical passion.”

“In much the same way Joseph Albo interprets the whole of the story of the Garden of Eden allegorically, regarding it as a "symbolic allusion to man's fortune in the world." Thus Adam represents all of mankind; the Garden of Eden, the world; the Tree of Life, the Torah; and the serpent, the evil inclination. Just as Adam is placed in the Garden, in the midst of which stands the Tree of Life, so man is placed in the world in order to observe the commandments of the Torah. Having eaten from the forbidden fruit, Adam is banished from the Garden -- in the same way, writes Albo, as man is punished if he disobeys the divine commandments.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Death is another fact that has faded in meaning over the centuries. In Judaism, physical death is simply explained:

“The Talmud explains that there are three partners in the creation of a human being; the father and mother who supply the physical parts, and God, Who supplies the spirit. At death, God reclaims his part, and the spirit lives on even though the body has died.”

“The exact nature of this afterlife is the subject of great discussion in classical Jewish sources. All agree that after death the soul continues to live. The

souls of the righteous enter paradise, or Gan Eden (Garden of Eden) as it is generally called. In that state "there is no eating or drinking . . . no envy, hatred or competition but only this: that the righteous sit with crowns on their heads and delight in the splendor of "God's presence" [Talmud]. The souls of the wicked enter hell, or Gehinnom, as it is known, where they undergo purification before they too can enter paradise."

"Some rabbis believed in resurrection. That is that at a certain point in time God will bring everybody back to life and then the world will be a perfect place and physical life will go on indefinitely. This doctrine poses some obvious difficulties: the body actually decomposes after burial so how can it be reconstituted; furthermore what about overpopulation of the world? Those who believe in resurrection claim that anyway the whole process will be miraculous and the miracle will solve all the problems. Other rabbis however denied physical resurrection entirely and understood the afterlife to be a completely spiritual experience."

"The argument about resurrection lasted well into the Middle Ages, and was one of the reasons for the sharp attacks against Maimonides. Many believed that he denied the doctrine and his views started a controversy that lasted for hundreds of years. In modern times most Jewish theologians do not subscribe to the doctrine of physical resurrection and movements such as Reform Judaism do not consider it to be a necessary belief for the Jew."  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

The question then arises about the purpose of such intense worship at the "Day of Atonement," one of the holiest periods of a Jewish Year:

"The Day of Atonement is the last of the Ten Days of Penitence which begin with Rosh Ha-Shanah, and is the climax of the repentance and soul-searching incumbent on every Jew during this period."

"The essence of the day and the reasons for its special prayers and ceremony are expressed in the Torah: "For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord." The Torah commands that on the tenth of Tishrei every Jew must "afflict his soul," which is understood to mean that eating, drinking, wearing shoes made of leather, washing, anointing the body and marital relations are forbidden."

"In the times of the Temple in Jerusalem, the ritual performed by the high priest was the central feature of the Day of Atonement. The high priest, representative of the people, carried out the special service known as avodah. He took two identical goats and cast lots to see which would be sacrificed and which would be sent to Azazel. After sacrificing one of them, he sprinkled its blood on the altar and then confessed the sins of the people while placing his hands on the head of the live goat. Then the goat was sent into the wilderness . . ." *(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*



Jewish tradition indicates that this “scapegoat” was tied with a red ribbon and led out the “Gate of Mercy,” also known as the “Gate of Forgiveness” as well as the “Gate Beautiful.” It was led into the wilderness to “die on its own,” “bearing the sins of the people.” What is even more interesting is that on this day, the Book of Job is read in its entirety. Jonah’s account is a simple chiasmus - a lesson in opposition. Jonah was sent “up and north” to preach repentance. Instead, he went “down and south.” He went “down into the sea,” “down to his death.” Yet, he was saved. He came back up after three nights and three days. That was the only sign Jesus of Nazareth gave the Scribes and Pharisees of his Messianic role as their Redeemer, the author of the plan of Atonement.

“Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered,  
saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous  
generation seeketh after a sign. There shall no sign be given to it, but the  
sign of the prophet Jonas:

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so  
shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”  
*(Matthew 12:38-40)*

The message of the atonement is symbolic. The one scapegoat carrying the sins of the people is led away, in His mercy He forgives us. Believing and knowing that is beautiful. After three nights, on the third day, He arose!

# “If Thou Doest Well, Thou Shalt Be Accepted”

*Moses 5; Moses 7*

**Summary:** *Adam and Eve bring forth children—Adam offers sacrifice, serves God—Cain and Abel born—Cain rebels, loves Satan more than God, and becomes Perdition—Murder and wickedness spread—The gospel preached from the beginning.*

*Enoch teaches, leads the people, moves mountains – The City of Zion is established – Enoch foresees the coming of the Son of Man, his atoning sacrifice, and the resurrection of the saints – He foresees the restoration, the gathering, the Second Coming, and the return of Zion.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

References to Enoch appear in several apocryphal works. The Ethiopian Jews who claim to be descendants of King Solomon (and the Queen of Sheba) have brought their holy books from Ethiopia to Israel. Although they are recent in terms of age (less than two-thousand years old), they do contain two apocryphal books, one of which is the Book of Enoch.

“Probably the most important work in pseudepigraphical literature deals with Enoch the son of Jared. It is an account of the visions revealed to him in the heavens. It deals as well with astronomical material and establishes the “correct” calendar at 364 days, making 52 weeks.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

As to the point of free will, Talmudic literature points to two natures in man, an inclination to do good and an inclination to do evil. The sages even went so far to say that God gave both to man so that he could choose for himself.

The term “anoint thine eyes” is close to the biblical expression of keeping God’s word in front of you at all times. Jews remind themselves of this by binding leather phylacteries (Tfillin) on the arm and forehead as well as on all Jewish doorposts (Mezuzah). These are the words in the ‘Mezuzah’ and in the ‘Tfillin’:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:  
And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.  
And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:  
And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.  
And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.  
And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. (*Deuteronomy 6:4-9*)

It is a strong Jewish custom for men to bind “Tfillin” on the arm (close to the heart) and on the forehead as well as on all gates and doorposts of their buildings.

“There should be a mezuzah at the entrance to every home and on the doorpost of every living room within the home --- this of course excludes lavatories, bathrooms, storerooms and stables. It is also customary to place mezuzot at the entrances to synagogues and public buildings, including all government offices in Israel. In Israel a mezuzah must be put up immediately when a house is occupied by a Jew --- outside Israel after the householder has lived in the house for 30 days. If the house is later sold to Jews, the mezuzot must be left on the doorposts. Today the mezuzah represents one of Judaism's most widely observed ceremonial commandments.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Keeping the word of the Lord before our eyes at all times is repeated in the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, a dedication well fit for our homes as well:

“And that this house may be a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of glory and of God, even thy house;  
That all the incomings of thy people, into this house, may be in the name of the Lord;  
That all their outgoings from this house may be in the name of the Lord;  
And that all their salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with holy hands, uplifted to the Most High;” (*Doctrine & Covenants 109:16-19*)

The principle of “return to the Lord” is a great motivating factor in Jewish life. Special ‘Yeshiva’ institutes have been established to help those who have “gone astray.”

“Repentance in Hebrew is known as teshuvah, which literally means “return,” and signifies a return to God. A person who repents his sins is known as a ba'al teshuvah. Many rabbis of the Talmud believed that the real ba'al teshuvah is greater even than a person who has never sinned and they further more said that when a person repents out of love of God (and not just out of fear of divine punishment), all the sins he had committed are considered to be mitzvot. This is perhaps the most comforting doctrine that Judaism has given to the world.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In spite of “going astray,” the connection to “family” is unending and the connection to this identity is unalterable:

“Yet according to Jewish law, . . . being born of a Jewish mother, never (loses) his Jewish status . . . Indeed, as the Talmud teaches: "A Jew, even if he has sinned, remains a Jew.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

# “Noah . . . Prepared an Ark to the Saving of His House”

*Moses 8:19-30; Genesis 6-9; Genesis 11:1-9*

**Summary:** *Methuselah prophesies—Noah and his sons preach the gospel—Great wickedness prevails—The call to repentance unheeded—God decrees destruction of all flesh by the flood.*

*Sons of God marry daughters of men—Men turn to wickedness; earth is filled with violence; all flesh is corrupted—The flood promised—God establishes his covenant with Noah, who builds an ark to save his family and divers living things.*

*All men speak the same language—They build tower of Babel—The Lord confounds their language and scatters them over all the earth—The generations of Shem include Abram whose wife was Sarai—Abram leaves Ur and settles Haran.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish Insights:

There is a law that precedes the “Law of Moses.”

“**Noachide Laws**, seven laws which were supposed by the rabbis to have been binding on all mankind even before the revelation at Sinai. They are referred to as “Noachide” because of their universality, since the whole human race was supposed to be descended from the three sons of Noah, who alone survived the flood. Exegetically derived from statements made by God to Adam and to Noah, six of them are negative: not to 1) worship idols; 2) blaspheme the name of God; 3) kill; 4) commit adultery; 5) rob; 6) eat flesh that had been cut from a living animal. One is positive: to establish courts of justice. These seven laws are binding on all non-Jews even today. Whoever observes them is considered to be among the “Righteous Gentiles.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

There are several accounts in the Bible that have to do with an ‘ark,’ a ‘ship’ or a ‘boat.’ In each account, those in the crafts were “saved” or “lifted up.”

“And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.” (*Genesis 7:17*)

“So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” (*Jonah 1:15-17*)

“And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?

Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.” (*Matthew 8:23-26*)

“Wherefore, they knew not whither they should steer the ship, insomuch that there arose a great storm, yea, a great and terrible tempest, and we were driven back upon the waters for the space of three days; and they began to be frightened exceedingly lest they should be drowned in the sea; nevertheless they did not loose me.” (*1 Nephi 18:13*)

“And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did guide the ship, that we sailed again towards the promised land.” (*1 Nephi 18:22*)

The name of the ‘Tower of Babel,’ the unfinished tower, was called Babel, because God mixed up (Hebrew *balal*) man's language. They “babbled.”

“According to some modern commentators, the building of the tower was an example of man's extreme pride in his own ability. The building became such an obsession that, according to the Midrash, when a builder fell off the tower to his death, the other builders paid no attention, but when a brick fell, they would cry: “When shall another come in its place?” According to this interpretation, every generation has its own Tower of Babel, when it begins to idolize its technology. The moral of the story is thus as applicable today as it was thousands of years ago.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The tower people wanted to ‘make a name’ for themselves rather than take the ‘name of God’ upon themselves. In Hebrew, the name of God, “Jehovah,” (English spelling) is unmentionable. It means “I AM.” That conjugation is not even used in modern Hebrew. One can say “he is,” or “she is,” but the first-person conjugation is always referred to as “on” or “toward” or “away” from me. Moses asked the Lord’s name:

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” (*Exodus 3:13-14*)

To date, only twice has the ‘tetragrammation’ (spelling) of the name Jehovah been found. Both date to 600 B.C. and were found in the Jerusalem area. One was a cave, twenty-three miles south and west of Jerusalem in an area called “Lehi.” The inscription, according to Dr. Frank Moore Cross Jr., included “. . . I Jehovah, will redeem the cities of Judah and Jerusalem . . .” The other, also dating to 600 B.C. was on a metal plate that had scripture verses on it and was found in a stone box in the Hinnom Valley. The verses include the word “Jehovah” but were translated with the word “Lord” as follows.

“Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall  
bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,  
The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:  
The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto  
thee:  
The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.  
And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will  
bless them.” (*Numbers 6:24-27*)

This was a scroll-like metal plate that was worn as an ‘amulet’ around someone’s neck so that they could keep the Lord’s name upon them. Jews use “Tfillin” (Phylacteries - Greek for ‘amulet’), their “Tallith” (prayer shawl or garment) and “Mezuzah” to keep the name of God close to them at all times.

*Abraham 1: 1-4; 2:1-1; Genesis 12:1-8; 17:1-9*

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**Summary:** *Abraham seeks the blessings of the patriarchal order—He is persecuted by false priests in Chaldea—Jehovah saves him—Origins and government of Egypt reviewed.*

*Abraham leaves Ur to go to Canaan—Jehovah appears to him at Haran—All gospel blessings are promised to his seed, and through his seed to all—He goes to Canaan, and on to Egypt.*

*Abram shall become a great nation—He and his seed shall bless all the families of the earth—He travels from Haran to the land of Canaan—Because of famine he goes down into Egypt—Abram and Sarai tested in Pharaoh's court.*

*Abram commanded to be perfect—He shall be a father of many nations—His name changed to Abraham—The Lord covenants to be a God unto Abraham and his seed for ever—Also, to give him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession—Circumcision becomes token of everlasting covenant between God and Abraham—Sarai's name changed to Sarab—She shall bear Isaac, with whom the Lord will establish his covenant—Abraham and his house circumcised.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

It can be considered that the “Abrahamic covenant” was in existence before Abraham’s time. The honor bestowed on this faithful dispensation leader was to have the covenant that eternally binds God and man named after him. A few others have been honored similarly, such as in “The Law of Moses” and the “Sign of the Prophet Jonah.”

A physical sign or ‘token’ of the Abrahamic covenant (it had hygienic as well as spiritual value) was when Abraham was commanded to circumcise himself and all male members of his family.

“Abraham accepted this new commandment without faltering. Until the mitzvah of circumcision, the patriarch had been known as Abram and his wife as Sarai. Another sign of the covenant was the inclusion in their names of the Hebrew letter heh which is one of the abbreviations for the name of God.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

It is a common practice among religious Jews that a special Hebrew name is given to the newborn child. It is an additional name to the one the person is usually known by. A girl receives her name at birth and the boy at eight days of age, at the circumcision. Conversion to Judaism is always accompanied by giving a new name, for men it is usually Abraham or Ben Avraham (son of Abraham). When blessings are given for health, at marriages and at other festive occasions, often the ‘new’ or ‘special’ name is used.

On the subject of blessings, it is interesting to note that in some Jewish communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue:

“Hands are also significant in the symbolic act of bestowing a blessing. In rabbinic literature the priestly blessing is known as nesī'at kappayim ("raising of the hands") and is pronounced with the hands uplifted, and the fingers spread in a special formation. In fact this special formation of the hands is often engraved on the tombstones of kohanim (priests).”

“In the same way that priests lift their hands in blessing, so parents place their hands on the heads of their children when they bless them. (For example, in the Bible, Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by placing his hands on their heads.) Placing the hands on another person is symbolic not only of transferring blessing but also of passing on authority. In talmudic times, scholars received their rabbinic ordination through the symbolic act of placing of the hands (known as semikhah).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Another “chiasmus” can be noted in the positioning of the ancient covenant and the restored modern covenant.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Ancient days</b></li> <li>2. <b>Crossroads of the East</b></li> <li>3. <b>Come</b></li> <li>4. <b>Word of God</b></li>   <li>5. <b>The Word</b></li>   <li>4. <b>Word of God</b></li> <li>3. <b>Sent</b></li> <li>2. <b>Crossroads of the West</b></li> <li>1. <b>Latter days</b></li> </ol>	<p><b>In ancient days in the Crossroads of the East</b> (center of the ancient world) people had to <b>come</b> to the living prophets to receive the <b>Word of God</b>.</p> <p>In the Meridian of times, there was one called <b>“The Word”</b> - he made it possible for us to return to the Fathers’ presence, the covenant.</p> <p>The <b>Word of God</b> is <b>sent</b> to the people throughout the world by living prophets living in the <b>Crossroads of the West</b> (which is the center of the modern world) in the <b>latter days</b>.</p>
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# Living Righteously in a Wicked World”

Lesson

# 8

*Genesis 13-14; 18-19*

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**Summary:** *Abram returns from Egypt—He and Lot part—The Lord will make Abram’s seed as the dust of the earth in number—Abram settles in Hebron.*

*Abraham entertains three holy men—They promise that Sarah shall have a son—Abraham will command his children to do justice and judgment—The Lord appears to him—They discuss the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

*Lot entertains holy men—The men of Sodom seek to abuse Lot’s guests, and are smitten with blindness—Lot sent out of Sodom—The Lord rains brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah—Lot’s daughters preserve his seed in the land.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Through the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we find the motivation of those many call the Essenes was to move away from wickedness and establish a singular community of righteousness. Their organization had a shadow of biblical organization. Their leader was called the “Teacher of Righteousness” and he had two assistants. There was also a council of “Twelve Overseers.” They had an order following the ‘righteous king’, which is said in Hebrew, “Melech Zedek.” The Dead Sea sect shunned others, and probably evoked one of the Savior’s comments in the Sermon on the Mount.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?” *(Matthew 5:43-46)*

The following thoughts on personal righteousness, involvement and influence in the world may also be of interest:

“Most Jewish philosophers considered the idea of free will essential to moral responsibility.”

“The most common argument brought to support the idea of free will was expressed by Maimonides: every person may choose to be good or evil. God does not determine in advance whether a particular man will be righteous or wicked.”

“Prayer begins when we sense the beauty and mystery of the world and when we yearn to be close to its Creator. Communal prayer opens the worshiper to the needs of others, it “takes the mind out of the narrowness of self-interest.” “Prayer is a way to master what is inferior in us . . . it helps us discover our true aspirations . . . Prayer teaches us what to aspire to . . .” “However, prayer is no substitute for action.” Through prayer we deepen our commitment to righteous living.”

“The rabbis of the Talmud described the righteous as individuals whose behavior went beyond merely fulfilling the letter of the law, and as those who were scrupulous in monetary matters. They praised the righteousness of zaddikim as being greater than that of the ministering angels and attributed the continued existence of the world to them. According to an aggadah in the Babylonian Talmud, in each generation there are exactly 36 righteous men -- Lamed Vav Zaddikim -- who received the Divine Presence and whose righteousness sustains the world. In the folklore of the Kabbalah and later that of Hasidism, the idea of these lamedvavniks, as they were commonly called, assumed great significance. They were believed to be anonymous saints who remained unnoticed by other men because of their humble nature and vocations.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

# “God Will Provide Himself a Lamb”

## Lesson 9

*Abraham; Genesis 15-17; 21-22*

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**Summary:** *Abraham seeks the blessings of the patriarchal order—He is persecuted by false priests in Chaldea—Jehovah saves him—Origins and government of Egypt reviewed.*

*Abram desires offspring—The Lord promises him seed in number as the stars—He believes the promise—His seed shall be strangers in Egypt—Then, after four generations, they shall inherit Canaan.*

*Sarai gives Hagar to Abram as his wife—Hagar flees from Sarai—An angel commands Hagar to return and submit herself to Sarai—Hagar bears Ishmael.*

*Abram commanded to be perfect—He shall be a father of many nations—His name changed to Abraham—The Lord covenants to be a God unto Abraham and his seed for ever—Also, to give him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession—Circumcision becomes token of everlasting covenant between God and Abraham—Sarai’s name changed to Sarah—She shall bear Isaac, with whom the Lord will establish his covenant—Abraham and his house circumcised.*

*Sarah bears Isaac—He is circumcised—Promises to Abraham preserved through Isaac—Hagar and her son cast out of Abraham’s household—The Lord saves Hagar and Ishmael—Abraham and Abimelech deal honorably with each other.*

*Abraham commanded to sacrifice Isaac, his son—Both father and son yield to the will of God—Abraham’s seed shall be as the stars and the sand in number—In his seed all nations shall be blessed—Rebekah is born to Bethuel.*

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### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Isaac was a miracle child, born of Sarah who was ninety-years old and barren. When she became pregnant, even in ancient parameters, one could ask, “what did the neighbors say?” The name Isaac in Hebrew means laughter, humor, amusing or delightful. Abraham and Sarah were delighted. A human impossibility became a God-given fulfillment. In the Lord’s own plan, he kept his promises!

“According to the aggadah, Isaac was born to Sarah on the first day of Passover.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

According to revelation, the Savior was born on the same day as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, April 6, 1830. Using the biblical and Jewish calendar, that day was the first day of Passover that year. That means that the Son of God was born to Mary on the first day of Passover.

Abraham, who was saved from a pagan human sacrifice in the Ur of Chaldees was later instructed by the Lord to sacrifice his firstborn son of Sarah. Later we see that Isaac was saved from human sacrifice as well. Those two men experienced a profound way of being taught about the planned atonement. The firstborn Son of God, however, would actually be the one to be sacrificed.

“The Hebrew term for sacrifice, korban, is from a root meaning “to draw near,” and originally denoted that which was brought near, or offered, to God. It is also possible that the term signified “that which brings man near to God” and, indeed, a late aggadic source interprets sacrifices in this sense.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

The place where Abraham was commanded to bring Isaac was Mount Moriah. In Hebrew, ‘moreh’ refers to teacher and ‘Yah’ is the shortened version of the sacred name of the Lord, Jehovah. The sacrifice of Isaac was an experience being “taught of the Lord.” It was part of the profound teaching moment about the Lord, the firstborn son, the Lamb of God, who would be offered at the same mount.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” *(John 1:29)*

“And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father . . .” *(1 Nephi 11:21)*

In ancient times, sacrifices always happened at the north end of the altar. This is mentioned in the Bible.

“And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.” *(Leviticus 1:11)*

The place of crucifixion was at the north end of Mount Moriah, north of the altar. Additional symbolism can be found by comparing the rabbinic tradition that Isaac was in his early thirties when Abraham brought him to Mount Moriah. Jesus was sacrificed on the eve of his thirty-fourth birthday, (the first day of Passover that year).

# Birthright Blessing; Marriage in the Covenant

Lesson  
**10**

*Genesis 24-29*

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**Summary:** *Abraham commands that Isaac shall not marry a Canaanite—The Lord guides Abraham’s servant in choosing Rebekah as a wife for Isaac—Rebekah blessed to be the mother of thousands of millions—She marries Isaac.*

*Abraham marries, has seed, dies, and is buried in the cave of Machpelah—His generation through Ishmael set forth—Rebekah conceives, and Jacob and Esau struggle in her womb—The Lord reveals their destiny to Rebekah—Esau sells his birthright for a mess of pottage.*

*The Lord promises Isaac posterity as the stars of heaven in number—In his seed all nations shall be blessed—The Lord prospers Isaac, temporally and spiritually, for Abraham’s sake—Isaac offers sacrifices—Esau marries Hittite wives to the sorrow of his parents.*

*Rebekah guides Jacob in seeking blessings—Jacob is blessed to have dominion and rule over peoples and nations—Esau hates Jacob and plans to slay him—Rebekah fears lest Jacob marry one of the daughters of Heth.*

*Isaac forbids Jacob to marry a Canaanite—He blesses Jacob and his seed with the blessings of Abraham —Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael—Jacob sees in vision a ladder reaching up into heaven—The Lord promises him seed as the dust of the earth in number—Also, that in him and in his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed—Jacob covenants to pay tithes.*

*Jacob meets Rachel at the well—He serves Laban seven years for her—Laban gives to Jacob, first Leah, then Rachel in marriage—Jacob serves another seven years—Leah bears Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The Biblical area of Haran may have been discovered in modern Iraq. Writings found in an ancient town of Nuzi give some insight to the culture of Biblical times:

“NUZI is an ancient city in northeastern Iraq. Between 1925 and 1931, a team of archaeologists from several American universities undertook a series of very successful excavations at the site of ancient Nuzi. They discovered thousands of tablet-documents dating from the 15th-14th centuries B.C.E., the period in which Nuzi was one of the major cities of the Hurrian empire. These tablets, when deciphered, turned out to be extremely valuable, not only shedding light on the lives and customs of the ancient Hurrians, but also for studies of the Bible. The 15th to 14th centuries was also the period of the biblical patriarchs and the city of Nuzi was part of the same social and cultural area as the city of Harran, the home of the patriarchs. On the assumption that the socio-legal features of life in Nuzi were also current in Harran, it became possible to evaluate many of the biblical tales against the background of the information gleaned from the tablets. During the last few decades, biblical scholars have undertaken just such a comparative evaluation, and have discovered that many puzzling aspects of the narratives concerning the patriarchs are, in fact, revealed to be accurate representations of legal and social features of Hurrian life of that time.”

“Esau's selling of his birthright to Jacob also has been confirmed as a legally permissible, though not common, procedure in Hurrian law.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Marriage in Jewish custom has always been regarded as forever. It may be considered that the ring is used as a symbol of “eternity.” In any case, words such as “Until death do you part” are not part of Jewish wedding ceremonies. The ring is examined by a Rabbi and is considered “kosher” only if it is unblemished and with no pits. A “huppah” or canopy is used, probably to symbolize the Temple. A glass is shattered symbolizing the destruction of the Temple. Both the bride and groom are addressed by their Hebrew “special names.” The “tallith” (prayer shawl) is used. To some it is customary to drape the “tallith” over the couple. It may be considered symbolic that the “tallith” is the remaining remnant of garments used in the ancient temples.

“By law, the ring must belong to the bridegroom, and can be constructed of any material, as long as it is free of precious stones . . . it was customary for the groom to cover the bride's head with his tallit as a symbol of sheltering her; and in modern-day Israel, for weddings of soldiers on active duty, it is not unusual to see a huppah constructed of a tallit supported by four rifles held by friends of the bride and groom. . . . among Orthodox Jews, the preferred custom is to erect the huppah outside, or at least in a spot open to the sky, underneath the stars . . . ” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Possibly connecting to Jacob’s ladder, there is a legend of a Rabbi, Pinehas Ben Yair, who is buried in Safed.

“He constructed the famous "ladder of saintliness" in which Caution (against evil) leads through Eagerness (for good), Cleanliness, Purity, Asceticism, Holiness, Humility, Fear of God, Attainment of the Holy Spirit (divine inspiration), ultimately to the Resurrection of the Dead.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

# “How Can I Do This Great Wickedness?”

Lesson

# 11

*Genesis 34; 37-39*

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**Summary:** *Shechem defiles Dinah—Hivites seek to arrange marriage with Jacob’s family—Many, being circumcised, are slain by Simeon and Levi—Jacob reproves them.*

*Jacob loves and favors Joseph, who is hated by his brothers—Joseph dreams that his parents and brothers make obeisance to him—His brothers sell him into Egypt.*

*Judah has three sons by a Canaanite woman—Er and Onan slain by the Lord—Tamar, as a harlot, bears twins by Judah.*

*Joseph, prospered by the Lord, becomes ruler of Potiphar’s house—He resists the advances of Potiphar’s wife, is falsely accused, and cast into prison—Keeper of the prison commits its affairs into Joseph’s hands.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The account of ancient Joseph is truly a chiasm paralleled by the modern story of Joseph. It is a prefiguring of the Savior’s mission. The next two lessons cover Joseph’s life as he is chosen by his father and then rejected by his brothers. In slavery, his identity is really unknown, yet he serves and saves those around him. Later, he serves and saves his brothers before identifying himself. In the next lesson we read how the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 3) connects the symbolism of the ancient Joseph with a latter-day Joseph.

Ancient Joseph was blessed and authorized by his father Jacob when Jacob laid his hands on Joseph’s head.

“In the same way that priests lift their hands in blessing, so parents place their hands on the heads of their children when they bless them. (For example, in the Bible, Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by placing his hands on their heads.) Placing the hands on another person is symbolic not only of transferring blessing but also of passing on authority. In talmudic times, scholars received their rabbinic ordination through the symbolic act of placing of the hands (known as semikhah).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In modern Judaism, there is a powerful cultural and legendary history of Joseph and his future role. Some of these excerpts can give “modern Joseph” a little insight to what the Jews are still anticipating.

“Based on the famous story of Joseph and his brothers, the Talmud warns against favoring one child over another . . . Jealousy is considered such a serious evil that it is mentioned in the Ten Commandments where the tenth commandment is an outright prohibition of envy: . . . the rabbis of the Talmud developed the philosophy that a truly rich man is one who is happy with his portion in life and does not envy others.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

“According to the Talmud, the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

When the Chief Rabbi, Avraham HaKohen Kook was appointed in Palestine in the 1920's, he was asked if the Jews could now build the Temple (destroyed since year 70 A.D.). His response was that the priestly rights were gone and referred to the great 12<sup>th</sup> century rabbi Moses Maimonides. Maimonides said, in effect, “We are waiting for a Messiah Ben-Joseph, to him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore Temple worship.”

The chiasmas shows that ancient Joseph saved his family and they did not know who he was. Latter-day Joseph is saving his brothers again, (more foreign aid goes to Israel from the U.S.A., the land of Joseph, than from all other countries combined) and they don't know that it is “Joseph.” In the meridian of times there was “One” who saved us all - and still most people don't know it.

In reflecting on ancient Joseph's high standards and principles, we read of the modern Jewish attitude for themselves and others (non-Jews) on sexuality and morality.

“Gentiles were expected to practice at least the seven Noachide Laws. These were considered by rabbinic tradition to be the minimum moral duties enjoined on all men and were derived from divine demands addressed to Adam and Noah. The laws consisted of prohibitions against idolatry, blasphemy, bloodshed, sexual sins, theft (including the taking of booty in war and dishonesty in economic life), and eating flesh from live animals, as well as the command to establish a legal system, presumably to enforce the prohibitions. The gentile was not obliged to acknowledge God, but was at least obliged to abandon the worship of false gods. Unlike Jews, Noachides were not required to suffer martyrdom rather than break the law against idolatry; they were, however, required to choose martyrdom rather than shed human blood. In some instances gentiles were also required to observe Sabbath and the festivals, and to fast on the Day of Atonement.”

“Feelings of hatred, envy, self indulgence, sexual drives, greed are woven into man's nature as God created him. But these impulses can be redirected by the *yezer ha-tov*, (the good inclination) guided and disciplined by the laws of the Torah, so that instead of destructive forces they become creative powers for good.”

“Detailed legislation concerning sexual behavior can be found in the Bible as well as in the Talmud and subsequent rabbinic literature. Celibacy (complete abstinence from all sexual activity) is discouraged as an unnatural state and detrimental to the human personality.”

“The primary restriction of sexual activity in Jewish law is that it should take place within marriage, as an expression of love between husband and wife as well as out of a desire to fulfill God's commandments. An element of holiness is added by the laws of *niddah* (separation during the period of



menstruation;) which ensure that the couple does not indulge in sex on impulse but rather directs the act to holiness.”

“In general, moderation and self-control in sexual activity are encouraged. Chastity, the goal to be aimed for, does not mean the avoidance of all sex but of illegal sex. This includes adultery, incest, sodomy, rape and seduction.”

“Judaism encourages modesty as one of the means to chastity. Thus the Jewish woman is enjoined to dress and act modestly at all times. Furthermore, a man is forbidden to be alone with a woman with whom he is not permitted to have sexual relations from considerations of both chastity and modesty.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Summary:** *Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh’s chief butler and chief baker—The butler fails to tell Pharaoh of Joseph.*

*Pharaoh dreams of the kine and the ears—Joseph interprets the dreams as seven years of plenty and seven of famine—He proposes a grain storage program—Pharaoh makes him ruler of all Egypt—Joseph marries Asenath—He gathers grain as the sand upon the seashore—Asenath bears Ephraim and Manasseh—Joseph sells grain to Egyptians and others during the famine.*

*Jacob sends his sons to buy grain in Egypt—They bow before Joseph—He accuses them roughly, imprisons Simeon, and sends them back for Benjamin.*

*Joseph arranges to stop the return of his brethren to Canaan—Judah offers himself in place of Benjamin for their father’s sake.*

*Joseph makes himself known to his brethren—They rejoice together—Pharaoh invites Jacob and his family to dwell in Egypt and eat the fat of the land.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Ancient Joseph learned a profound lesson in becoming a slave. Once he changed his mind, he simply became the very best slave or servant he could be. He learned what the Lord would later teach to his disciples.

“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.  
And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall  
humble himself shall be exalted.” (*Matthew 23:11-12*)

“He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to  
be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all.”  
(*Doctrine & Covenants 50:26*)

When his brothers sought “foreign aid” from the Egyptians, their own brother, Joseph, was the “servant” to save them. First, he did so without revealing his true identity. When he finally revealed himself it was in humble family circumstance and he apparently prophesied that in Latter-days another Joseph would save his family again. From the Book of Mormon we find a reiteration of that prophecy:

“. . . For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and I am a descendant  
of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants  
of the Lord which he made unto Joseph.

Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of  
the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a  
righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch  
which was to be broken off, nevertheless, to be remembered in the cove-  
nants of the Lord that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in  
the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of dark-

ness unto light--yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom . . .

Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers . . .

And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation . . .

. . . who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren.” (*Excerpts from 2 Nephi 3*)

Latter-day Saints feel this prophecy has been fulfilled in the nineteenth century through the mission of Joseph Smith Jr. Part of the testimony of Joseph Smith included the heavenly visitor who laid his hands on him and his companion, Oliver Cowdery.

“. . . While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying: Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.” (*Joseph Smith History 1:68-69*)

Ancient Joseph overcame his “pride” and served his brothers forgivingly (at first without identifying himself). He thereby established a pattern for a latter-day Joseph, who for the time being is keeping his identity from Judah and should release all forms of pride as he serves his family forgivingly.

The concept of being a servant is also paramount in Judaism:

“Being the Chosen People means receiving God's love and protection, but it also means accepting responsibilities. The prophet Isaiah says that Israel, God's servant, has been chosen for the task of spreading salvation. Israel must convince the other nations of the world that there is only one God, and must spread the true religion, and through it, happiness.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Another pattern that is interesting is that the first Israelite temple in the land of Israel was in the hands of the tribe of Ephraim.

“Situated in the mountains of central Erez (land of) Israel, Shiloh was in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim and housed the "temporary sanctuary" or Tabernacle containing the Ark of the Law.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The latest temples outside the land of Israel are now in the hands of Ephraim, the Latter-day Saints. The destiny is that Joseph and Judah will eventually come together to build the temple in Jerusalem.

# Bondage, Passover, and Exodus

Lesson  
13

*Exodus 1-3; 5-6; 11-14*

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**Summary:** *The children of Israel multiply—They are placed in bondage by Egyptians—Pharaoh seeks to destroy sons born to Hebrew women.*

*Moses is born to Levite parents; raised by Pharaoh's daughter; in defense of an Israelite he slays an Egyptian; flees to Midian; and marries Zipporah—Israel in bondage cries to the Lord.*

*The Lord appears to Moses at the burning bush—Moses called to deliver Israel from bondage—The Lord identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and as the Great I AM—He promises to smite Egypt and bring his people out with great wealth.*

*Moses and Aaron ask Pharaoh to free Israel—Pharaoh responds: Who is the Lord?—He places greater burdens upon the children of Israel.*

*The Lord identifies himself as Jehovah—Genealogy of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi set forth.*

*Departing Israel authorized to ask for jewels and gold from their neighbours—The Lord promises to slay the firstborn in every Egyptian home—He puts a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.*

*The Lord institutes the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread—Lambs slain are without blemish—Israel saved by their blood—Firstborn of all Egyptians slain—Israel thrust out of Egypt after 430 years—No bones of paschal lambs shall be broken.*

*Firstborn of man and of beasts to be sanctified unto the Lord—Feast of unleavened bread to be kept in land of Canaan—Moses takes Joseph's bones out of Egypt—The Lord attends Israel in a pillar of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.*

*Israel goes out of Egypt—They pass through the Red Sea on dry ground—The Lord overthrows the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

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.

The seven-day deliverance feast of Passover is called the “Seder.” It is one of the most important and festive holidays in Judaism. 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.

Jesus was born during Passover. There was no spring month of April when Jesus was born, so, 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. The two deliverances are linked by a journey of time through two millennia.

“On the first day of Passover (the first two days in the Diaspora) the *full Hallel* (full praise) prayer is recited. After that, during *hol ha-mo'ed*, and on the last day (or days) only part of *Hallel* (half praise) is recited. The practice differs from Sukkot on which the *full Hallel* is chanted every day. The reason given is that freedom was achieved as the result of the death of many Egyptians, and therefore Israel's rejoicing is not complete.”

“The Sabbath before Passover is known as Shabbat ha-Gadol. Tradition connects it with the tenth of Nisan, the day on which the Israelites in Egypt set aside the lamb that they were to slaughter on the first Passover (Exodus 12:3). On Shabbat ha-Gadol, a special *haftarah*, (reading from the Prophets) taken 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.*)

At the Passover meal, a door is opened for Elijah, 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.

“After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said: Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi--testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come -- To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse -- Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 110:13-16*)

The Passover story includes plagues brought on the Egyptians. The first plague parallels the first miracle of the Savior. His changing of water into new wine (better than the old) is opposite of the Egyptian's water turning to undrinkable “blood.” The ten ancient plagues are mentioned in the Passover meal. (Some can be compared to modern plagues).

“According to Exodus the plagues were:

1. BLOOD. The river Nile, the main source of water for ancient Egypt, turned to blood. Its pollution was disastrous: the river stank, fish died, and the Egyptians searched desperately for fresh water.
2. FROGS. They covered the land, and found their way into the people's homes, clothing and food.
3. LICE. "As thick as the dust of the earth," they attacked both man and beast.
4. SWARMS OF FLIES, which "ruined all the land of Egypt."
5. PESTILENCE. The livestock of the Egyptians perished from virulent diseases.
6. BOILS. They afflicted men and animals causing much discomfort.
7. HAIL AND FIRE of such intensity that they destroyed not only plant life, but also beasts and men.
8. LOCUSTS, so numerous that they "darkened the land," and ate every growing thing that had survived the hail.
9. DARKNESS, a pitch darkness that lasted for three days and nights. It was so thick that the lamps lit by the Egyptians could not penetrate it.
10. DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN. (It was) the last and most terrible of the plagues. Every firstborn child of man and beast perished in one night at midnight. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

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.”

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.

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 chiasmas - with the Savior’ atonement in the middle.





# “Ye Shall Be a Peculiar Treasure unto Me”

## Lesson 14

*Exodus 15-20; 32-34*

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### Summary:

*Israel sings the song of Moses—They extol the Lord as a man of war, and rejoice in their deliverance from Egypt—Waters of Marah healed—The Lord promises to free Israel from the diseases of Egypt.*

*Israel murmurs for want of bread, and lusts for the flesh pots of Egypt—The Lord rains bread from heaven, and sends quail for meat—Israel given manna each day, except the Sabbath, for forty years.*

*Israel murmurs for want of water—Moses smites rock in Horeb, and water gushes forth—Aaron and Hur uphold Moses' hands so that Joshua prevails against Amalek.*

*Jethro comes to Moses bringing Moses' wife and sons; he offers sacrifice to the Lord—Moses sits in judgment seat and bears all cases—Jethro counsels Moses to teach the law, to appoint lesser judges, and to delegate power to them.*

*The Lord covenants to make Israel a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation—People sanctify themselves—The Lord appears on Sinai amid fire and smoke and earthquakes.*

*The Lord reveals the Ten Commandments—Israel is to bear witness that the Lord has spoken from heaven—They are forbidden to make gods of silver and gold—They are to make altars of unbewn stones, and to sacrifice to the Lord thereon.*

*Aaron makes a golden calf, which Israel worships—Moses serves as a mediator between God and rebellious Israel—Moses breaks the tablets of stone—Levites slay about 3000 rebels—Moses pleads and intercedes for the people.*

*The Lord promises to be with Israel and drive out the people of the land—Tabernacle of the congregation moved away from the camp—The Lord speaks to Moses face to face in the tabernacle—Later, Moses sees the glory of God, but not his face.*

*Moses hews new tables of stone—He goes up into mount Sinai for forty days—The Lord proclaims his name and attributes and reveals his law—He makes another covenant with Israel—The skin of Moses' face shines and he wears a veil.*

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### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Manna is sometimes referred to as the “bread” that kept the Israelites alive.

“From Talmudic times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath. This bread, usually prepared from white flour, is also called *“hallah.”* Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Showbread in the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

When the children of Israel complained that there was not enough water, Moses provided them with a miracle source of water as he struck the rock. The greatest lesson he learned - so that he could teach the Israelites - was that he, Moses, was not their “deliverer.” The deliverance always comes from “The Rock of Salvation,” “The Fountain of Living Waters.”

“The reading from the Torah describes the sacrifices brought by the princes at the dedication of the sanctuary, and the kindling of the candelabrum;

special *haftarot* are prescribed for the Sabbaths of Hanukkah. In the Ashkenazi rite, a hymn called *Ma'oz Zur* (O Fortress, Rock of my salvation) is sung.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The expression “Bread of Life” is about the leaven which makes the dough “rise” or come to life. During Passover, the Israelites were to have nothing in their presence that had leaven or could rise. That was done to concentrate on how the Lord had them rise out of bondage and to look forward to a future “rising” that would be greater than deliverance from Egypt.

In a religious Jewish home, every Sabbath Eve begins with an old ritual of a blessing and pouring of a little pure wine (or living [spring] water if wine is not available). It is followed by a blessing, breaking, and eating of a little piece of the “Hallah” bread. This procedure is called “Kiddush.” The father or grandfather in the home always partakes first, and then others receive the Kiddush.

“The table is set for the festive meal, with the Sabbath candles glowing in polished holders. The family stands and the father raises the brimming silver cup to say *Kiddush*, the blessing and sanctification over wine. This age-old ceremony is in fulfillment of the biblical command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." (Exodus 20:8)”

“*Kiddush* is recited on the evening of the Sabbath, or the festival, before the start of the meal. Nothing may be eaten before *Kiddush*. On Sabbath eve, the first paragraph of *Kiddush* includes a phrase from the end of the first chapter of Genesis and the passage at the beginning of the second which describe God's completion of Creation and His sanctification of the seventh day as a day of rest. *Kiddush* continues with the benediction for wine, preceded by the word *savri* (Attention!) so that all present, men and women, may fulfill the requirement of *Kiddush* by listening carefully to the recital of the prayer and by responding "Amen" afterwards.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Consider the leadership of the children of Israel, a council of three, with Moses, Aaron & Hur, a Council of Twelve Elders and a Council of Seventy. It is comparable to the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The latter-day Israelites led now by the tribe of Ephraim (Joseph) are also organized with a “First Presidency of three, a Quorum of Twelve and a Council of Seventy.

Some excerpts from Daniel Rona’s book, ISRAEL REVEALED, may also be of value in understanding this lesson.

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**Manual of Discipline:** The best preserved of these Qumran scrolls is called *The Manual of Discipline*, a sort of doctrines and covenants of these religious people. It describes their organization that included a Teacher of Righteousness and two assistants. There was also a council of twelve overseers. Their priestly system included two castes: One of a higher authority that connected with an order of the *Melech Zedek* (righteous king), and another of lesser authority that connected with the Levitical, or order of Aaron. They

were bound by a strict order of unity. An Essene's membership in a kibbutz-like united order came into effect only after a two-year trial period. The Essenes kept copies of the scriptures, interpretations of the scriptures, and their own scrolls of doctrines and covenants.

**Teacher of Righteousness and Council of Twelve:** The scroll of their principles and vows, *The Manual of Discipline*, describes their organization which included the office of a Teacher of Righteousness who had two assistants, a Council of Twelve overseers, as well as a system of higher and lesser authorities. Some people suggest that this governing system was copied by Jesus, and that he may have studied with this sect. It seems highly unlikely that this is the case. However, Jesus did use the same system of government that was given to Moses, a system that partially continued to exist in other Jewish traditions up to and at the time of Jesus.

*And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; LUKE 6:13*

*After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. LUKE 10:1*

*And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. EXODUS 24:1*

**Presidency of Three:** The Qumran community did not follow the Mosaic governmental pattern completely. Jesus did. For example, Moses had a governing leadership of three persons, Moses and his two assistants, Aaron and Hur.

*And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have matters to do, let him come unto them.” EXODUS 24:14*

Moses had a governing body of twelve elders, one from each tribe.

*These are those that were numbered . . . and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers. NUMBERS 1:44*

This order was continued after Moses as well.

*Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. JOSHUA 3:12*

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A previous Gospel Doctrine discussion in this series compares the modern Jewish concept that the Law of Moses is for the Jews and the Law of Noah (Noachide Laws) are for the Gentiles. The Apostle Paul explains the proper perception of the same law for everyone as he spoke to King Agrippa at Caesarea.

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” (*Acts 26:22-23*)

Some thoughts on gold and the golden calf may also be interesting.

“According to the midrash, God created gold specifically for use in the Temple . . . On account of the idolatrous worship of the Golden Calf, gold became a symbol of sin and was not to be used to sheath the *shofar* mouth-piece. On the Day of Atonement there was no gold on the vestments of the high priest; he officiated in robes of pure white linen. International treaties were inscribed on bronze tablets. Corinthian bronze, famous for its luster and quality, was used for the Nicanor Gates of the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

*Numbers 11-14; 21:1-9*

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**Summary:** *Fire from the Lord consumes rebels in Israel—Israel murmurs and lusts for flesh instead of manna—Moses complains that he cannot bear the burden alone—He is commanded to choose seventy elders to assist him—The Lord promises flesh until Israel is surfeited therewith—The seventy elders chosen; they prophesy; the Lord comes down; Eldad and Medad prophesy in the camp—Israel surfeited with quail—They lust, a great plague follows, and many die.*

*Aaron and Miriam complain against Moses, the most meek of all men—The Lord promises to speak to Moses mouth to mouth, and to reveal in him his similitude—Miriam becomes leprous for a week.*

*Moses sends twelve spies to search land of Canaan—Ten of them bring an evil report, telling only of the strength of its inhabitants.*

*Israel murmurs and speaks of returning to Egypt—Joshua and Caleb give a good report of Canaan—Moses mediates between Israel and the Lord—Adults of Israel shall not enter promised land—The Lord slays false spies by a plague—Some rebels try to go alone and are slain by Amalekites and Canaanites.*

*Israel destroys those Canaanites who fight against her—She is plagued with fiery serpents—Moses lifts up a serpent of brass to save those who look thereon—Israel defeats Amorites and destroys people of Bashan and occupies their lands.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

For Judaism, “looking to God” and “revelation” are almost figurative and in modern times have become unexplainable.

“Revelation, the act by which the hidden, unknown God shows himself to man. There is no specific term corresponding to "revelation" in the Bible or in rabbinic Hebrew. God is said to "appear" to the patriarchs and prophets, and the appearances are described by a series of anthropomorphic (i.e., human) expressions and concrete images. Sometimes God manifests Himself "in a vision" or "in a dream" or he appears through the mediation of an angel. However, the Bible emphasizes that no direct, sensory perception of God is possible. Thus, various phrases are used when describing appearances of the Divine, for example *kavod* ("glory") or *shekhinah* (. . . "Divine Presence") or *davar* ("word" of God).”

“Any event in which the Divine presence is felt is called a revelation, but the term is applied more particularly to communications of the Divine will as revealed through God's messengers, the prophets. The Bible itself, and later the rabbis, discerned among the prophets a hierarchy of form and degree, with that of Moses as supreme and unique. At Sinai, the principal revelation of God to man took place. At that time, all the assembled "heard" the Voice of God, and through the mediation of Moses (who, according to the rabbis, functioned there as a scribe), received the complete text of the Torah and its interpretation, the Oral Law.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

When Moses sent the spies into the land of Canaan, two came back with a good report and evidence of a fruitful land. They were Caleb, of the tribe of Judah and Joshua, of the tribe of Joseph. In Israel today, the Israeli government uses the symbol of Caleb and Joshua carrying a huge clump of grapes between them as the official seal of the Ministry of Tourism.

“TU BE-AV or the 15th day of the month of Av, was the date of a minor festival, observed only in the days of the Second Temple, which marked the beginning of the grape harvest in Erez Israel.”

“In the Talmud, several additional reasons for the festivity of Tu be-Av are given. It was believed to be the day on which the Israelites in the desert ceased to die for the sins incurred following the return of the spies sent to spy out the land of Canaan . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

It is significant that Caleb and Joshua, who reflected faith in Moses’ prophecies and brought back the good report, were the only original emigrants from Egypt that were allowed into the promised land. They maintained their faith throughout the wilderness journey. That journey introduced symbols (like the serpent) to maintain faith in the Lord.

“The Mishnah states that the copper serpent (*nabash neboshet* in Hebrew) was not the power which cured the people. Rather it was when the people finally turned their eyes upward toward Heaven and listened to the will of God that they were cured. After the plague ended, the *nabash neboshet* served as an ever-present reminder of the dangers and evils which could befall the people in the desert were it not for God's constant loving care.”

“The people kept the copper serpent when they settled in Erez Israel and remembered its significance. However, when they began to look up to it instead of gazing beyond it to heaven, King Hezekiah had it destroyed so that it should not lead to idol worship.”

“Seals employed from the beginning of historical time as the most common means of identifying property, appear both functionally and incidentally in various biblical stories, and many seals from biblical times have actually been uncovered by archaeologists. “

”Jewish seals were distinguished from others by their inscriptions in Hebrew and the absence of the human figure.”

“Sometimes seals . . . bore emblems with . . . a serpent on it, since the Hebrew word for snake was numerically equivalent to the word for Messiah.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

When the Jerusalem Center, where the BYU Jerusalem Studies are housed, was completed, Apostles Howard W. Hunter and James E. Faust, who were the LDS General Authorities in charge of the project, related the miracles of its approval and construction. After a marvelous meeting recounting the solid approval of the Israeli Government and the failure of a small religious band to thwart the completion of the Jerusalem Center, Elder Faust hastened to say, “We take no credit for these miracles -- we want to enter the “promised land.”



# “I Cannot Go Beyond the Word of the Lord”

*Numbers 22-24; 31:1-16*

**Summary:** *Balak offers money and cattle and great honors to Balaam to curse Israel—The Lord forbids Balaam so to do—An angel opposes Balaam on the way.*

*The Lord commands Balaam to bless Israel—He does so, saying: Who can count the dust of Jacob? and, What hath God wrought!*

*Balaam sees in vision and prophesies of the destiny of Israel—He prophesies of the Messiah: There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.*

*Moses sends forth 12,000 warriors who destroy Midianites—Prey divided in Israel—None in armies of Israel were lost.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

There is quite a collection of Jewish traditions about Balaam, mostly negative and confusing. First of all, he is considered a “gentile prophet.” What makes this of interest is the acknowledgment, or at least the inference, that there were prophets outside of ethnic Israel. Unfortunately, the same Jewish tradition distrusts “gentile” prophets. In the same breath, it diminishes the importance of the positive Biblical accounts of Balaam before his apostasy.

Balaam was very politically involved and apparently prophesied of a latter-day King David:

“Even in parashat-Bilam, the prophecy in that section bears upon two Mashiachs; the first, namely David, who helped to save Israel from the hand of their enemies, and the future Mashiach, a descendant of David, who will help Israel.” (*Torah and Existence - Dr. Chaim Zimmerman*)

“I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.” (*Numbers 24:17-19*)

There is a Jewish tradition that after a good life, an evil spirit entered Balaam and he “counterfeited” God’s word.



# “Beware Lest Thou Forget”

Lesson  
17

*Deuteronomy 6; 8; 11; 32*

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**Summary:** *Moses proclaims: The Lord our God is one Lord; and, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God—Israel commanded to teach their children—Moses exhorts Israel to keep commandments and testimonies and statutes of the Lord, that they may prosper.*

*The Lord tested Israel in wilderness for forty years—Eating manna taught them that man lives by word of God—Their raiment waxed not old—The Lord chastened them—If Israel shall serve other gods, they shall perish.*

*Thou shalt love and obey the Lord thy God—If Israel obeys they shall be blessed with rain and harvests and drive out mighty nations—Israel must learn God's laws and teach them—Blessings flow from obedience; cursings attend disobedience.*

*Israel shall sing the song of Moses, acclaiming: God speaks to heaven and earth; Israel was known in pre-existence; God chose them in this life; they forgot the Rock of their salvation; he sent terror and a sword and vengeance upon them; there is no God beside him—Moses gathered to his people.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The Children of Israel did so poorly in keeping a “spiritual” standard that Moses endeavored to give them a more “physical” standard. The advantage of having physical items as “anchors” to keep reminding us of spiritual goals is evident and useful. However, to many people like the Children of Israel, the physical aspects became more important than what they should be reminders of.

Examples of this are the “Tfillin” (phylacteries) and “Mezuzah.” They are in common use for religious Jews in keeping the word of the Lord as “frontlets before your eyes.” There was an explanation of these in the previous Lesson #5 supplement.

The term “Rock of Salvation” is precious in Jewish terminology. As in many terms or phrases, their familiarity in the present tense will be a mindful leap to their full-intended meanings in the future. In the following quotes, the references to “rock” have been underlined for emphasis.

“The Synagogue Prayers - During the morning service the entire *Hallel* is said on each of the eight days and a special addition, *Al Ha-Nissim* (For the miracles . . . ) is made in every *Amidah* as well as in the Grace After Meals. The reading from the Torah describes the sacrifices brought by the princes at the dedication of the sanctuary, and the kindling of the candelabrum; special *haftarot* are prescribed for the Sabbaths of Hanukkah. In the Ashkenazi rite, a hymn called *Ma'oz Zur* (O Fortress, Rock of my salvation) is sung. This song originated in Germany, probably in the 13th century. It consists of five stanzas, each of which describes a period in Jewish history, the last being the Hanukkah miracle. A final stanza is a prayer for the coming of the Messiah.”

“During Remembrance Day itself, memorial services are held at public monuments to the fallen and in military cemeteries throughout Israel. All flags are

lowered to half-mast. Special prayers include the recital of Psalm 9: "For the leader, on the death of the son," and Psalm 144: "Blessed be the Lord, my Rock, who traineth my hands for war and my fingers for battle."

"*ADON OLAM* ("Lord of the world") . . . is a rhymed poem of unknown authorship, which was probably written in Babylon around the tenth century. The present version, as it appears in the Ashkenazi service, consists of ten verses. The first six speak of God the eternal, all-powerful and ever-ruling Creator of the universe. The next four verses are more personal in nature. Here, God is much closer to the individual worshiper, his hopes and his fears. "He is my God, my Redeemer, my Rock in time of trouble." Because the worshiper is confident of God's power and also aware of His personal concern, he closes his song by saying:

*Into His Hand I entrust my soul  
Both while I sleep and when I am awake  
And with my soul, my body too  
The Lord is with me, I shall not fear.*

In many congregations, *Adon Olam* is sung at the conclusion of the *Musaf* service for Sabbath and holidays." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

There is another sensitive parallel to be seen in the lesson Moses learned as he struck the rock. Giving "Living Water" to the Israelites, Moses was reminded who the real "Rock of Salvation" was. Peter (a Greek nickname for Simon), son of Jonah, who when sinking in the Sea of Galilee cried out to the Lord, "Save me," was probably being taught – as Moses was – who the real "Rock of Salvation" was. The Lord's highest trusted servants on the earth were honored with titles or names emulating their Master. And that was just the point - HE is the master.

As to Moses' death and burial, it is interesting that the Moslems have venerated a place west of the Jordan river, at the beginning of the mouth of the canyon that leads up to Jerusalem from the Dead Sea called "Nebi Musa," where Moses was buried.

The Jews are still waiting for the prophets Moses and Elijah to return. Two seats are traditionally and historically reserved for them in every synagogue. At one of the early meetings of the "Bnai Shalom" group (Jewish/Mormon cultural group), the late Apostle LeGrand Richards once remarked that he saw two beautifully decorated chairs fastened to the wall of a synagogue he was visiting. Knowingly, he asked the Rabbi, "What are those two chairs for?" The reply came quickly that they were being kept for Elijah and Moses. Elder Richards, seizing the moment and using his wonderful sense of humor said, "Get them down, they've already been here!"

# “Be Strong and of a Good Courage”

*Joshua 1-6; 23-24*

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**Summary:** *The Lord speaks to Joshua—He is commanded to be of good courage, to meditate upon the law, and to keep the commandments—He prepares Israel to enter Canaan.*

*Joshua sends spies to Jericho—They are received and concealed by Rahab—They promise to preserve Rahab and her household.*

*Joshua leads Israel to Jordan—The Lord cuts off the water of Jordan; it stands up as a heap, and Israel passes over on dry ground.*

*Israel places twelve stones to commemorate crossing of Jordan—Joshua is magnified before Israel as they cross Jordan—After priests bearing the ark pass over, the river returns to its course.*

*Inhabitants of Canaan fear Israel—Males of Israel are circumcised—Israel keeps the passover, eats fruit of land, and manna ceases—Captain of the Lord’s host appears to Joshua.*

*Jericho is taken and destroyed—Only Rahab and her household are saved.*

*Joshua exhorts Israel to be courageous; keep the commandments; love the Lord; and neither marry among nor cleave unto remnants of Canaanites who remain in land—When Israel serves other gods, they shall be cursed and dispossessed.*

*Joshua recites how the Lord has blessed and led Israel—Joshua and all the people covenant to choose the Lord and serve him only—Joshua and Eleazar die—Bones of Joseph, taken from Egypt, are buried in Shechem.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The selection of Joshua to replace Moses was anticipated by the Israelites. There was (and still is) a system that God established that there would always be a worthy “Prophet in waiting.” Known examples include Joseph for Jacob, Joshua for Moses, Nephi for Lehi and presently the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. These prophets were and are still led by the Lord. History sometimes only records the results of their decisions without elaborating on the revelatory decision making process.

“The actions of Joshua raise the moral issue of the right to take by conquest a land inhabited by another people. To this, the rabbis of the talmudic era argue that the land of Israel was divinely designated for the children of Israel, and that the Canaanites were merely acting as caretakers of the land until the Israelites arrived.”

“During the conquest of Canaan, Joshua always issued proclamations inviting the nations to choose peace and abandon idolatry. Jericho refused and was destroyed. The Gibeonites, fearing the same fate, chose peace, gave up idolatry and became servants, the “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for the sanctuary.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The name Joshua means “Jehovah saves.” In Hebrew it is pronounced “Jeho-Shua.” That is the original pronunciation for the Savior’s name. Through Greek and then into Latin and finally into English it has transformed into “Jesus.” Accepting the Savior, Jeho-shua, requires stepping into a spiritual “gateway” or entering His kingdom.

“Since the tribes of Israel under Joshua crossed the Jordan to enter Erez (land) Israel after the Exodus from Egypt, the Jordan river has come to have a deep significance for Jews, symbolizing the gateway to the homeland after years of wandering in exile in the desert. The Bible relates that Joshua led the Israelites to a place across the Jordan from Jericho, and that the waters suddenly and miraculously stopped flowing, enabling the Israelites to cross into the Promised Land. Folklore and mythology have popularized the Jordan as the gateway to Paradise, and crossing it is seen as stepping from a world of troubles to one of peace. The river is also important to Christians because John the Baptist performed baptisms on its banks and Jesus was baptized there.”

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Some religious Jews who experience repeated immersions, (monthly for women and regularly for men) step into their immersion font from the east side, immerse themselves, and then exit to the west side. This could be a reminder of entering into the gateway of cleanness as the Children of Israel entered into their Promised Land.

For the religious Jews, immersions are favored below ground level in flowing water that emanates from bedrock - the “Rock of Salvation.” Consider that the lowest spot on the face of the earth where water flows that originated in bedrock is where the Children of Israel crossed into their erstwhile homeland. Judaism and Christianity agree that it is also the likely spot where Jesus came to John in Judea to be immersed.

The twelve stones that the Children of Israel removed from the Jordan River were probably used as the altar at Gilgal, just East of Jericho. Gilgal became the temporary site of the center of worship, in effect, a temporary Temple.

“According to the Bible the altar was made of stones joined together with earth, the wider stones being placed below and the narrower above. The stones of the altar of the Temple were smooth and were plastered over twice a year, and according to Judah ha-Nasi were smoothed down with a cloth every Sabbath eve. Four stones were placed at the four corners of the altar; these were known as the "horns" of the altar.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Already discussed, the Lord has many names such as “Rock of Salvation.” Another name is the “Bread of Life.” There is a distinct connection of rock and bread considering the ancient methods of preparing flour to make bread.

“When threshing, in order to separate the kernels from the husks, a large wooden board whose underside was set with basalt stones was dragged over the grain by a pair of oxen. The grains could then be shaken horizontally in a round sieve with a fiber net attached. This winnowing caused the lighter elements to be carried away by the wind while the heavier kernels fell down in a heap. The kernels were then milled or crushed (by stone).”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The Law that Moses negotiated for the Children of Israel was written on stone. Stones have always been symbolic for Jews.

“On the breastplate were embedded 12 precious stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and the Talmud speculates that the oracular message was miraculously spelled out by the protruding of letters out of the tribal names inscribed on the stones.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The account of the fall of Jericho is regularly remembered in Jewish tradition as the holiday of Sukkot is celebrated. Sukkot happens for eight days beginning with the first full moon after the first day of fall. It is a reminder of wandering through the wilderness and living in a “Sukkah,” a “bowery” which is a temporary housing also called a “Tabernacle.” The festival of Sukkot is a sequel to the eight days of Passover (seven days preceded by a preparation day) which occurs at the first full moon after the first day of spring. Both of these spring and fall holidays have Biblical instructions to gather all of Israel for Holy Convocations. Latter-day Saints gather twice a year for General Conference that for decades emanated from the “Tabernacle.”

“The Bible records that Joshua, while besieging Jericho, made a circuit around the city every day for six days, and seven circuits on the seventh, when the walls fell (Joshua 6:12--20). Today, in the synagogue, on the first six days of Sukkot (except Shabbat), a single circuit is made around the *bimah* (pulpit) by the congregants . . . and chant *hoshanot* (praises to the Lord). On the seventh day, *Hoshana Rabba*, the procession is repeated seven times. . . . Every adult male in the congregation is honored with carrying a Torah, and . . . there is much singing . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The account of Joshua and Caleb as spies or emissaries for Israel has additional symbolism because they returned with a good report -- a faithful example of choosing to serve the Lord and then continuing to lead Israel. They were of the tribes of Joseph (Joshua) and Judah (Caleb). These tribes always led Israel in the past and must through a good report be faithful examples in choosing to serve the Lord and continue to lead Israel in the Latter-days. The two tribes will once again combine as emissaries for the Lord preceding the gathering of the rest of Israel. As mentioned previously, the symbol of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism is the characterization of the two emissaries (Joshua and Caleb) carrying a clump of grapes between them - bringing good news!

*Judges 2; 4; 6-7; 13-16*

**Summary:**

*An angel rebukes Israel for not serving the Lord—A pattern of future events: A new generation arises that forsakes the Lord and serves Baal and Ashtaroth—The Lord is angry with Israel and ceases to preserve them—He raises up judges to guide and lead them—Canaanites left in land to prove Israel.*

*Deborah, a prophetess, judges Israel—She and Barak deliver Israel from Canaanites—Jael, a woman, slays Sisera the Canaanite.*

*Israel is in bondage to Midianites—An angel appears to Gideon and calls him to deliver Israel—He overthrows altar of Baal, the Spirit of the Lord rests upon him, and the Lord gives him a sign to show he is called to deliver Israel.*

*Gideon's army is reduced to 300—They frighten Midianite armies with trumpets and lights—Midianites fight among themselves, flee, and are defeated by Israel.*

*Israel in Philistine bondage for forty years—An angel comes to Manoah's wife and promises a son who shall begin to deliver Israel—The angel comes again; he ascends in a flame from the altar—Samson is born, and the Spirit of the Lord moves upon him.*

*Samson slays a young lion with his bare hands—He marries a Philistine wife, propounds a riddle, is deceived by his wife, and slays thirty Philistines.*

*Samson burns corn of Philistines—They burn his wife and father-in-law—Samson slays a thousand Philistines at Lehi with jawbone of an ass.*

*Samson carries away doors of gate of Gaza—He loves Delilah, who delivers him to Philistines—He destroys building, killing himself and 3000 others.*

**Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:**

The information about the Judges of Israel may, at best, be incomplete. Their positions are generally considered local and did not seem to be responsible to or for the entire nation of Israel. Jewish sources identify them more as local military leaders who were God inspired.

“These Judges were not judges in the legal sense, but heroes upon whom "rested the spirit of God" and who led single tribes or groups of tribes in military campaigns to free Israel from periodic foreign oppression. The rule of each judge was temporary and in no case did these leaders receive the allegiance of all the tribes. Only in the case of Deborah is there any hint of a judicial function among the activities of a Judge-savior.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The most famous story of Deborah is the conquering of the Canaanites. Barak (‘lightning’ in Hebrew), the military leader of Israel, was hesitant to follow her prophetic instruction to engage the enemy. He acquiesced after she agreed to accompany him. (There may have been fewer wars if presidents and prime ministers had accompanied their young soldiers to battle).

There were other peoples who were aware of and agreeable to Israel's God-given inheritance in the land. The Kenites seemed to have been one of those peoples. Modern archaeology has discovered Kenite temples that are identical to Israelite temples. Heber, Jael's wife, of the Kenite people, apparently was a descendant of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Jethro taught and ordained Moses.

“And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro;” (*Doctrine & Covenants 84:6*)

“Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, slew the Canaanite general Sisera in the war of Deborah and Barak against the Canaanite king Jabin of Hazor (Judges 4-5). Sisera had fled to Jael's tent after the rout of his army by the Israelites; she offered him comfort and hospitality but killed him while he slept, using a hammer and a tent pin rather than a sword, in accordance with the biblical command prohibiting the use of weapons by women (Deuteronomy 22:5). The murder thus fulfilled Deborah's prophecy to Barak that God would "sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" (4:9). Heber was descended from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses; his wife's slaying of Sisera apparently signified a switch of loyalties back to Israel on the part of his clan, which had previously been allied to Israel's enemy Jabin.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

“According to the *aggadah* (Jewish legends), Jael's action teaches that a sin performed with good intention is better than a command obeyed with indifference. Jael was blessed by Deborah (Judges 5:24--27) and was considered even greater than the matriarchs Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In the account of Samson, “a judge in Israel twenty years,” we can be reminded of the blessing and to some the “cursing” of blindness. Samson was “blind” to his gift from the Lord -- his strength. The scripture writer called his gift “The Spirit of the Lord,” which Samson abused to seek selfish revenge.

Samson, a Nazarite, covenanted to abstain from anything that would draw him away from the Spirit of the Lord. A Nazarite would have nothing to do with the dead other than the firstborn, unblemished sacrifices at the Temple or appointed Altar of the Lord. Samson, blind to his covenant, slew an unclean animal (a carnivorous lion - not Kosher) with his bare hands but did not tell his parents. He later ate honey from the carcass of that lion and gave it to his priestly parents. Samson was in that account triple non-kosher!

In other Biblical accounts, physical blindness actually aided spiritual vision. Paul was struck blind and was told that he would open the eyes of the Jews and Gentiles.

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” (*Acts 26:18*)

To some, modern miracles can be equated to Biblical ones, take blindness as an example.

“Because Israel is a country whose inhabitants have immigrated from all parts of the world, including many backward nations, there is a larger percentage of blind people in Israel than in other Western countries. Nevertheless, in Israel today, blind people can lead a normal life thanks to the fine educational institutions and numerous agencies and associations which aid in their job placement, training and rehabilitation. In addition they can enjoy a vast amount of literature, biblical, secular, Hebrew and foreign, which has been printed in Hebrew Braille. (Strangely, Hebrew Braille is written from left to right, like English writing).”

“Moreover, Israel has developed two machines to further aid blind people. The Transicon is a type of computer that electronically photographs printed material, and converts it into Braille script. Thus, a blind man does not have to wait for a particular book to be printed in Braille, but can read whatever he pleases. The second machine, the Philapbraille, is a typewriter which produces whatever is typed both in ordinary script and Braille, so the blind person typing may check his own work.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Not all Jews accept miracles at their face value. Just for your information, the following Judaic explanation of miracles is interesting.

“. . . Judaism believes that after creating the world God is very interested in what happens in the world and particularly in how people conduct themselves. . . . God not only follows the course of human events, but He also interferes in them and in the natural world, over and above the fact that it was He who originally laid down the laws of nature. This means that God on occasion changes the normal course of the world for some specific purpose. From this derives the whole theory of miracles.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

“The rabbis of the Talmud unquestionably accepted the biblical miracles as related, but they were troubled by the fact that they seemed to imply a lack of perfection in the very act of Creation. They solved this theological problem by postulating that miracles were, so to speak, provided for already at the time of creation. Thus, although they were "extraordinary" they were still manifestations of the natural order. Many rabbis reversed this perspective and emphasized that the very regularity and harmony of the natural world were in fact "miraculous." It is this thought which is vocalized in the thanksgiving prayer which is part of the daily *Amidah*: "We thank You for Your miracles which are daily with us, and for Your wonders and benefits, which are wrought at all times, evening, morning and night.”

“The rabbis rejected, however, the belief in "miracle performers" as bearers of religious truth. Once the Torah had been revealed to man, it was no longer "in heaven." It could not be altered by extraordinary means, but only by a natural process of development which was purely in the hands of ordinary human beings. And although the rabbis emphasized the miraculous aspect of the story of Hanukkah, they generally believed that by their time the age of miracles had ceased, since only in biblical times were people "willing to sacrifice themselves for the sanctification of the Name of God.”



“In the Middle Ages, the biblical miracles posed a great problem for Jewish philosophers. They could not be explained in terms of contemporary science and they flew in the face of the philosophers' strong belief in the existence of an unchanging order to the universe. As a solution, many of the medieval philosophers adopted the Talmudic position outlined above which attempted to "naturalize" the miracles by seeing them as having been woven into the order of nature from the very beginning; their miraculous nature stemmed from the fact that they were expressed at the key moment in history when they were most needed.”

“In modern times, some people have attempted to offer scientific explanations for several of the biblical miracles, such as the parting of the Red Sea. Others have "relativized" them by viewing them as natural occurrences which were recorded as if extraordinary and supernatural, because of the crucial role they played at the particular time.”

“Having been created by God, the universe is also totally subject to His control. As a result, God can impose His will upon the workings of the natural world as He pleases (the miracles of the Bible) but He can also transfer some of His controlling power to others. This God did when He created and blessed man. Although part of the natural world, man was given dominion over it, and told that the natural world was to serve his greater interests.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

# “All the City . . . “Doth Know That Thou Art a Virtuous Woman”

*Ruth 1; Samuel 1*

**Summary:** *Elimelech and family go to Moab because of famine—Marriages—Death of father and sons—Ruth the Moabitess, her husband having died, remains constant to Naomi—They come to Beth-lehem.*

*Hannah prays for a son, and vows to give him to the Lord—Eli the priest blesses her—Samuel is born—Hannah loans him to the Lord.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

There are a few women greatly revered in Jewish thought. Ruth is one of them. A woman convert to Judaism is given or “takes upon herself” a “New Name,” usually that of Ruth or another of the righteous women of the Bible (convert men are usually named “Ben Avraham -- Son of Abraham).

“The sages regarded Ruth as the prototype of the righteous convert. They taught that Elimelech and his sons were punished for going to Moab during the famine in Judah. They should have remained to share the hardships of their own people, and to help them with their own wealth. Ruth on the other hand left her home not to seek an easier life, but to devote herself to the God of Israel, and to share the fortunes of Naomi and her people, whatever they were destined to be.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

On the other hand, the stigma of “gentile” has been carried for a long time in Judaism. Although modern Israel is now reflecting more gentile habits, some Orthodox describe assimilation of some gentile habits as a major problem.

“The custom of decorating graves with flowers is strongly opposed by some Orthodox rabbis on the ground that it is a “gentile custom.” Neither Conservative nor Reform Judaism, however, objects and it is also common practice in Israel, particularly in military cemeteries.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Understanding some of the thought processes and “genetic memory” in Jewish thinking can assist Latter-day Saints (who are truly a part of the House of Israel) in improving their “Gentile” way of thinking.

“An undoubted factor in the survival of the Jews as a people with a common identity has been their shared experience of persecution at the hands of gentiles (non-Jews). In general the Jewish attitude toward the gentile has been conditioned, since the Exile, by the gentile's attitude toward the Jew --- tolerance being met with tolerance.”

“In ancient Israel the acceptance of monotheism (the belief that there is only one God) became the chief factor distinguishing Jews from gentiles, who

then worshiped many gods. In addition, the dangers of being affected by the gentiles' assumed lower moral and social standards were constantly stressed.”

“At this time gentiles were either natives living in Erez Israel or travelers passing through it. Resident gentiles were protected by traditional hospitality and by contractual agreements made between Israel and the neighboring states. Native gentiles were expected to be loyal to Israel's civil laws in return for protection, but were generally in a humbler position than the Israelite population.”

“The gentile was not obliged to acknowledge God, but was at least obliged to abandon the worship of false gods. Unlike Jews, Noahides were not required to suffer martyrdom rather than break the law against idolatry; they were, however, required to choose martyrdom rather than shed human blood. In some instances gentiles were also required to observe Sabbath and the festivals, and to fast on the Day of Atonement. Social differences remained, nonetheless . . .”

“During the latter part of the Second Temple period (from the second century B.C.E.) the prohibition against Jews marrying gentiles, limited originally to the seven Canaanite nations --- Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites ("neither shalt thou make marriages with them" Deuteronomy 7:3) --- was extended to include all gentiles, who might lure Jews away from the true God. In order to prevent the possibility of intermarriage the rabbis enacted a series of laws intended to limit social contact between Jew and non-Jew. These included a strict prohibition on the use of gentile wine, originally limited to that used in idolatrous libations, but later extended to cover all non-Jewish produced wine.”

“According to the *aggadah* Midian allied with Moab against Israel. By making the Israelites drunk they succeeded in luring them to idolatry and forbidden relations with the daughters of Midian; for this reason the drinking of gentile wine was forbidden.”

“Jews were forbidden to emulate gentile customs of an idolatrous or superstitious nature. The prohibition (*hukkat ha-goi*) was derived from the biblical commandment "ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation" (Leviticus 20:23 and 18:13). Its purpose was to prevent Jews from being converted to other religions. In Talmudic literature the term "the customs of the Amorites" (*darkei ha-Emori*) was also used to cover all heathen practices of the gentiles of that time. Even gentile dress associated with non-Jewish religious practice was forbidden ("martyrdom should be accepted rather than changing the style of a shoelace"). Jewish garb thus became an emblem of traditional Judaism, especially in eastern Europe, and modern dress was frowned on as a cunning method of Christianization. Many of the restrictions against involvement with gentiles made during Talmudic times were reduced as economic contact increased between the Jewish and gentile communities during the Middle Ages.”

“During the 500 years of the Talmudic period to 499 C.E. widely differing attitudes toward gentiles were expressed. When Jews were being tortured during the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian, Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai stated that the best of gentiles should be killed. In later, less hostile times, it was sometimes claimed that no difference between Jew and gentile would be made on the Day of Judgment. The concept of the righteous gentile (*hasidei ummot ha-olam* -- the pious ones of the nations of the world) is first found in the Midrash. The Tosefta teaches that they are as eligible to a place in the hereafter as any member of the House of Israel. Rabbi Isaac Arama states that "every true pious gentile is equal to a son of Israel." The Zohar states that all gentiles who do not hate Israel, and who deal justly with Jews, qualify as pious ones. According to Maimonides righteous gentiles were those who observed the Noachide laws and were motivated by belief in the divine origin and authenticity of Moses' prophecy, and not merely by the reasonableness of the laws, in which case they were considered simply wise men but not *hasidei ummot ha-olam*. Since World War II the concept of the righteous gentile has been used to refer to those non-Jews who helped Jews escape the persecutions of Nazism.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

At Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, there is an avenue of planted trees. Each one is dedicated to a “Righteous Gentile.” There is one planted in memory of a Dutch Latter-day Saint who helped Jews escape in Nazi occupied Europe. However, the Latter-day Saint is a member of the House of Israel, not a gentile!

“**RIGHTEOUS GENTILES** (Hebrew: *Hasidei Ummot ha-Olam*), rabbinic term for those non-Jews who, because of their moral character or virtuous acts, rank equally in merit and grace with Jews. According to the Talmud, the righteous gentile is as eligible as any Jew for a place in the world to come.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

One of the Israeli travel agents once commented to a prospective traveler to the USA, “You’ve got to visit Salt Lake City, that’s the only place a Jew can walk down the street and feel like a gentile!” Of course, this needs correction. Latter-day Saints know they are a part of the House of Israel, in large part from the tribe of Joseph.

“According to the Talmud, the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

There is a Jewish tradition that the Messiah’s return will reflect either the date or event of the destruction of the First and Second Temples. Joseph Smith’s mission was to restore temple worship. Eventually, the “Lord will suddenly come to his Temple (Malachi 3:1).”

Abraham brought his son to the Mount Moriah (Hebrew: “Taught of the Lord”) which was later to become the place of the Temple, to offer Isaac as a human sacrifice. Human sacrifice is precisely the trouble that Abraham was spared in the Ur of Chaldees. It was a profound lesson in opposition, a Chiasmus. Jewish tradition states that Isaac was in his early thirties when he was to be sacrificed. The “trouble” was spared when God provided instruction that a “Lamb” was to be offered as a sacrifice.

Abraham and Isaac found an “alternative sacrifice,” a ram in the thicket, and it was offered as a substitute for Isaac. Later, other animals, first born and unblemished, were brought to the same place where the Temple now stood. In some cases they were “blessed” with the sins (troubles) of the people in attendance. In one case, a lamb or goat would “escape” out the Gate Beautiful (also Gate of Forgiveness and Gate of Mercy). It would be tied with a red ribbon and let out into the wilderness to die on its own (carrying the sins of the people).

Isaiah portrays the same principle when he describes the “glory” fastened in a “sure place.” It is a glory that we can bring our troubles (sins) to the Lord, at his house, and leave with greater blessings than we ever imagined.

“And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it.” (*Isaiah 22:21-25*)

In Jerusalem, there have been thousands of nails pounded into the old Western (Wailing) Wall, a remnant of the last known Jewish Temple. They remind us of a practice the Jews had until about a hundred years ago. They would “nail their sins in a sure place” and then get on with life. A glorious thought! Going to the Temple for Latter-day Saints not only blesses the ancestors whose work is being done, but those who are serving them. It is the Lord’s house where virtuous people meet, renew their souls, and remind themselves of the name they have taken upon themselves.

**Summary:** *Hannah sings praises to the Lord—Samuel ministers before the Lord—Eli blesses Elkanah and Hannah, and they have sons and daughters—Sons of Eli reject the Lord and live in wickedness—The Lord rejects the house of Eli.*

*The Lord calls Samuel—House of Eli not purged by sacrifices and offerings—Samuel recognized as a prophet by all Israel—The Lord appears to him.*

*Samuel's sons take bribes and pervert judgment—Israel seeks for a king to rule over them—Samuel rebearses the nature and evils of kingly rule—The Lord consents to give them a king.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The story of the Prophet Samuel has great significance in dedication and service to the Lord. Hannah, the wife of Elkanah and the mother of the prophet Samuel, is described as a devout woman who made an annual pilgrimage to the Temple in Shiloh to offer sacrifices. Once, as she stood in the Temple, pouring out her anguish at her barrenness and vowing to dedicate any son born to her to the Temple and to the service of God, the high priest Eli heard her and eventually added his blessing to her pleas. Her vow was that she would dedicate her firstborn son to the Lord.

“And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.” (1 Samuel 1:11)

First fruits and first born were offerings to the Lord in any case. They could be redeemed by paying money instead. In Hannah's case, she gave her firstborn son to the High Priest (Kohen) and hence to the Lord.

“Shavuot is *Hag ha-Bikkurim*, festival of the first fruits. The word *bikkurim* is derived from the same root as *bechor*, the firstborn of man and animal, which were also to be dedicated to the service of God.”

“Firstborn is the term referring to a male offspring who is the first issue of his mother's womb. According to the Torah, the firstborn, known in Hebrew as *bechor*, has special sanctity. Therefore, he is subject to specific Torah laws which apply to all firstborn human beings and animals of the following types: cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys. The purpose of these laws is to teach us that everything in the world belongs to God and man owns only what God has given to him. When a man has worked hard to raise a family or rear a herd of animals, and finally sees the first fruits of his labor, the Torah tells him that these first fruits belong to God. Therefore, if man wishes to own and enjoy these gifts, he must redeem them from their rightful owner.”

“The ceremony of the redemption of the firstborn is of great significance. In the case of a human *bekhor*, this ceremony . . . consists of redeeming the child from a *kohen* (priest) by giving the *kohen* five silver coins. During the ceremony, the father presents his son, often on a specially embellished tray, to the *kohen*, who asks him in an ancient Aramaic formula, whether he wishes to redeem the child or to leave him to the *kohen*. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

As to Eli’s sons, their taking advantage of worshipers and thereby profiteering is still repugnant in Jewish Law. Providing religious service for money is improper. Yet one can see religious men at the Western (Wailing) Wall waiting to assist Bar Mitzvah services on Mondays and Thursdays, (not on Saturday, which is the Sabbath, because no money is handled on this day). The families allowing them to assist are supposed to pay money in return. It is apparent that if the sum is not sufficient, the religious men simply demand more. One can see blessings being given with one hand while the other is cupped for a “donation.”

When Jesus cleansed the temple, he was filled with reverent indignation because men were desecrating his Father’s house, selling doves and lambs to be offered as sacrifice, not so much for the service but for the money they would make. He overturned the moneychanger tables and said to the sellers of doves,

“Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.” (*John 2:16.*)

The essence of service to God instead of self-service is evident in Jewish culture. There is special care in emphasizing the proper attention to certain principles.

Entertainment:

“After the *shivah*, (mourning period at death) a modified period of mourning continues till the thirtieth (Hebrew: *sheloshim*) day after death. During this period the mourner should not attend places of entertainment or participate in social gatherings. A mourner may not marry during the *sheloshim*.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Sabbath:

“In the course of time observance of the Sabbath became the identifying mark of the Jew. It set him apart from all other religions. According to the First Book of Maccabees (2:31--41), at the beginning of the Hasmonean revolt against Syria, the Jews would not fight on the Sabbath but let themselves be killed. Later they realized that was a mistake and that if danger to life is involved, the Sabbath is suspended.”

“The rabbis of the Talmud thought that the Sabbath is the most important of all the laws of the Torah and that by itself it is equal to all the rest. One statement is that "if Israel keeps one Sabbath as it should be kept, the Messiah will come." They saw Shabbat as a special privilege; a gift that God gave His people Israel and as a foretaste of the world-to-come.”

“Other biblical laws repeatedly show concern for the well being of animals. Man must rest on the Sabbath and may not work his animals either. "Thou shalt not do any manner of work, neither thy son . . . nor thy servant . . . nor thy cattle" (*Exodus 20:10.*)”

“The Sabbath and the festivals are particularly times of joy, and indeed it is a positive commandment, often difficult to observe, to be happy on them. The joy required is not frivolity but, contradictory though it may sound, a serious happiness. The highest level of joy according to the rabbis is the *simbah shel mitzvah*, the joy felt at performing a commandment or doing a good deed.”

“For the Sabbath, there are special candlesticks and oil lamps, *Kiddush* cups, *hallah* covers and tablecloths; and for *Havdalab*, special candleholders and spice containers in many shapes and sizes, some of them masterpieces of artistic workmanship.”

“Women usher in the Sabbath each week by lighting candles and blessing God "who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light." On Saturday night, traditional Jewish families light a *havdalab* candle made of several wicks braided together, raise a cup of wine and sniff fragrant spices, thus bidding farewell to the Sabbath peace and beginning a new week.”

“From Talmudic times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath. This bread, usually prepared from white flour, is also called "*hallah*." Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Showbread in the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

On the Sabbath, a special bread called hallah is used. The Hallah is baked sweeter than regular bread because the Sabbath is a “sweeter” day.

“Funerals may not take place on the Sabbath or on the Day of Atonement . . .”

“In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue.”

“In every town where there are Jews they must appoint 'charity wardens,' men who are well-known and honest that they should collect money from the people every Sabbath eve and distribute it to the poor . . . We have never seen or heard of a Jewish community which does not have a charity fund.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

It is interesting to see the similarity of young Aaronic Priesthood bearers gathering “Fast Offerings” at the beginning of the month. Fasting is an integral part of Jewish life, yet never on a Sabbath unless it is Yom Kippur. There is a monthly Yom Kippur Katan (lesser), a day before the beginning of every month. It is a fast day, again, never on a Sabbath.

Fasting:

“The purpose of the fast days in the Jewish calendar, such as Tish'ah Be'Av and the Day of Atonement is mainly educational and spiritual. Tish'ah Be'Av strengthens the Jew's identification with the Jewish People by remembering the catastrophe of the destruction of the Temples. The fast of Yom Kippur



comes to remind us how we have used our bodies to disobey God's will and to hurt our fellow man. Both the prophets and the rabbis stressed that mere fasting without repentance for our bad deeds is valueless.”

“Fasting is an act of repentance or of supplication seeking divine forgiveness or the prevention of disaster. Public fasts also commemorate catastrophic events in Jewish history . . . On fast days one neither eats nor drinks. On major fasts, other prohibitions are washing, wearing leather shoes, using ointments or perfumes, and other physical pleasures. There are special prayers and the Torah is read in the synagogue. Yom Kippur and Tishah be-Av are observed from sunset to sunset. All other fasts are from sunrise to sunset.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Morality:

“Amos cried out against the careful observance of the Temple ritual when it ignored morality as an integral part of religion. Ritual alone does not please God, who demands that it go hand in hand with mercy and compassion.”

“Judaism encourages modesty as one of the means to chastity. Thus the Jewish woman is enjoined to dress and act modestly at all times. Furthermore, a man is forbidden to be alone with a woman with whom he is not permitted to have sexual relations from considerations of both chastity and modesty.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

It should be considered that even though the children of Israel wanted a king for their own personal reasons, God allowed them to have kings as role models of an even greater “anticipated” King of Kings. The clothing (deep red) and the entry into Jerusalem on donkeys that have never been ridden before are examples of signs of the King of Kings.

**Summary:**

*Saul the son of Kish, a Benjamite, is a choice and goodly person—He is sent to seek his father's asses—The Lord reveals to Samuel the seer that Saul is to be king—Saul goes to Samuel and is entertained by him.*

*Samuel anoints Saul to be captain over the Lord's inheritance—Samuel manifests gift of seership—Saul prophesies among the prophets, and the Lord gives him a new heart—He is chosen king at Mizpeh.*

*Ammonites encamp against Israelites of Jabesh-gilead—Saul rescues them and wreaks havoc upon Ammonites—His kingship is renewed in Gilgal.*

*Saul offers a burnt offering, and the Lord rejects him and chooses another captain over his people.*

*Saul commanded to smite and destroy the Amalekites and all that they have—He saves some animals to sacrifice—Saul is rejected from being king, and told that to obey is better than sacrifice—Samuel destroys Agag.*

*The Lord chooses David of Beth-lehem as king—He is anointed by Samuel—Saul chooses David as his companion and armourbearer.*

*Israel and the Philistines engage in war—Goliath of Gath, a giant, defies Israel, and challenges any Israelite to personal combat—David goes against him in the name of the Lord—David slays Goliath with a sling and a stone—Israel defeats the Philistines.*

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**Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:**

In Judaism, “belief” is superceded by “doing.” Hence the 613 commandments (365 do not’s and 248 do’s) have preeminence over faith.

“The biblical word *emunah* (and its other forms) which is often translated as "belief" really means "trust" or "confidence," which is something quite different.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Even prayers and benedictions are prepared - to be followed, rather than be spoken from the heart. However, some of these benedictions still carry an admonition to go beyond the “do” to embrace “faith” (Emunah) in God.

“They advise man not to put his trust in earthly rulers, but rather to have faith in God Who made heaven and earth, Who helps the oppressed, and heals the broken-hearted. "Let every living soul praise the Lord, Hallelujah!" . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The choosing of a new king after Saul was to become a spiritual exercise rather than using human comprehension. It resulted in finding, in obscurity, as a child and a shepherd, a king of the Lord’s choosing with the Lord’s spirit (who turned out to be the finest king Israel

would ever have). That principle is still not really recognized in popular Judaism, yet notice the commentaries that keep referring to a spiritual connection.

“From the political point of view, the people of Israel have more often been ruled by monarchies than by democratic forms of government. The Book of Deuteronomy makes provision for the people of Israel to have a king, but insists that the king must rule by law and "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren." In biblical times, the Israelites believed that their government had to derive from God. Thus, when Moses accepted the advice of his father-in-law Jethro to appoint leaders, he first obtained God's permission and then, with God's authority, appointed judges. Later, the people rejected the advice of the prophet Samuel and insisted on having a king --- this led to the reign of Saul, followed by that of David. In spite of this, Jewish law still states that decisions are to be made and conflicts to be resolved according to the principle of majority rule.”

“In biblical times in the ancient Near East, the monarch was accepted as the sole ruler, with complete authority over his subjects. The status of kings varied from emperor to vassal as the kingdoms varied in size from a tribe like Midian to a vast empire such as Egypt. But the idea common to all was that the direct relationship between the king and the deity was part of the natural order.”

“The primary feature of the coronation was the anointing of the king's head with oil by a priest or prophet, the sign of the divine covenant --- that is, he had been chosen as God's anointed.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The term anointed is the word ‘Messiah’ in Hebrew. The Messiah would come from the Davidic line. David, being chosen by spirit rather than by man’s qualifications, is a model of recognizing the Messiah. However, the spiritual aspect is missing in Jewish expectation.

“In traditional Judaism, the Messiah will be a human being --- albeit a perfect one --- who will come and bring harmony to the world. He will not have a divine aspect other than having been chosen by God for his task . . . The coming of the Messiah therefore has come to mean the redemption of the Jewish people and an end to its suffering and tribulations.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

“Nathan prophesied that the dynasty of the House of David would last forever, and indeed, Jews today believe that the Messiah will be a direct descendant of David. One of the blessings which follows the reading of the *Haftarah* on the Sabbath and festivals proclaims: "Gladden us, O Lord our God . . . with the kingdom of the House of David thine anointed. Soon may he come and rejoice our hearts.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The following is a section from the book, **ISRAEL REVEALED**, which explains something about David’s real mission.

\* \* \* \* \*

“. . . the Lord gave some profound advice and insight to Samuel (which we could take to heart):

*Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; . . . for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. 1 SAMUEL 16:7*

It is human nature to see the obvious, but with God's insight the not so obvious, the subtleties, become profound. After interviewing all the obvious sons of Jesse, Samuel asked,

*Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. 1 SAMUEL 16:11*

Samuel was inspired to ordain the shepherd boy David as the next king of Israel.

*And the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. 1 SAMUEL 16:13*

David, who eventually became the finest and most revered king Israel had, was ordained a king in obscurity and kept his obvious God-given calling quiet until the proper time. His descendant Jesus of

Nazareth also came from obscurity and kept his holy calling unspoken until the proper time . . .

. . . A young shepherd boy visiting his brothers at the front, saw and heard Goliath. By this time, young David had already been ordained king of Israel by the prophet Samuel (however, in obscurity and without public knowledge). When David heard and saw Goliath and then saw the men of Israel retreat in fear, he volunteered to remove this menace from them. David said to Saul,

*The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. . . . [Then, David] . . . chose him five smooth stones out of the brook . . . 1 SAMUEL 17:37-40 (see also 1-51)*

David took just one stone, and struck Goliath in the head. It is obvious in the reading of this account that David killed Goliath with a sling and a stone. To make it more obvious, he cut off his head. But more important is the not so subtle implication that he conquered Goliath with his faith in the Lord, the spirit that led him . . .”

\* \* \* \* \*

# “The Lord Be Between The and Me Forever”

*1 Samuel 18-20; 23-24*

**Summary:** *Jonathan loves David—Saul sets David over his armies—David is honored by the people, and Saul becomes jealous—David marries Michal, a daughter of Saul.*

*Saul seeks to kill David—Michal saves David by artifice—David joins Samuel and the company of prophets.*

*David and Jonathan make a covenant of friendship and peace—They take leave of each other.*

*David smites Philistines and saves Keilah—He continues to flee from Saul—Jonathan comforts him in Ziph.*

*David finds Saul [asleep] in a cave and spares his life—Saul confesses that David is more righteous than he—David swears that he will not cut off the seed of Saul.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Most of what we know about David, Saul, and his son Jonathan, comes from the Holy Scriptures. Some creative works have been produced, fired by imagination and legends. The only non biblical text ever discovered that includes the name of David with a time reference that connects it to his time was a stone used in a walkway leading to the entrance of “Tel Dan” in upper Galilee. Originally, that stone was part of a memorial stele that was a monument of some kind in its day.

As was discussed in the previous lesson, the choosing of Saul was to satisfy the demands of the people who wanted to be like their surrounding neighbors and their kings. The worthiness of Saul waned as he disobeyed God, thereby losing the Spirit of the Lord. Without the Lord’s spirit, evil spirits “moved in” on Saul. This is reflected in the fixation he had in killing David, who according to Jewish tradition was ordained King of Israel at an age of about twelve or thirteen.

One of the dramatic attempts at taking David’s life was at Ein Gedi. It is close to the Dead Sea and as one goes up the canyon away from the Dead Sea, the desert turns into a narrow oasis. Nowadays, as well as in former days, abundant wildlife thrives in the oasis canyon of Ein Gedi. There are waterfalls fed by springs that crash about three hundred feet down. Close by, numerous hot sulphur springs spew out their healing waters. A modern sign at the roadway leading to Ein Gedi might read, “Welcome to take a bath at Ein Gedi - we have hot and cold running water, naturally!”

In that canyon is a cave where David was hiding from Saul, who was on one of his murderous episodes. Saul, inadvertently, went into that same cave to “cover his feet.”

The meetinghouse library picture of this event usually shows Saul asleep with his feet covered. The term actually means to “relieve himself.” (Maybe we’ll just leave this event un-illustrated!)

When David had cut Saul's garment and showed him the piece, Saul realized that David could have killed him. Yet David used the opportunity to bear his witness. He would not kill the Lord's anointed. Saul probably understood that the statement was also valid in reverse . . . neither should Saul kill the Lord's anointed. This logic is better understood by realizing that Hebrew is a language of inference. Often things said contain more meanings than the obvious words.

The friendship of David and Jonathan is still reflected in Israeli society. Long term, true friendships are created as young men and women serve in the military at the age of eighteen. In the army a bank president can be a jeep driver for an officer who is his employee. They trust and depend on each other. Their friendship transcends their civilian relationship.

The biblical verses read at the memorial services of a fallen Israeli soldier include the following lamentation of David.

“The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!” (*2 Samuel 1:19-27*)

**Summary:** *David lies with Bath-sheba and she conceives—He then arranges for the death in battle of her husband Uriah.*

*Nathan tells David the parable of the ewe lamb—The Lord gave many wives to David, who is now cursed for taking Bath-sheba—David fasts and prays for his son, but the Lord takes him—Solomon is born—David conquers the royal city of the Ammonites.*

*David pleads for forgiveness after he went in to Bath-sheba—He pleads: Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

As discussed in lesson 22, the Jews expect a “latter-day” David. He would be similar to the former David in that he would be militarily, politically and spiritually capable. The tradition continues on, however, Jews choose to reflect on David’s good characteristics rather than on his grievous mistakes. His repentance is recognized. Yet, we feel that the payment for his immorality and murderous conspiracy extends into the eternities. In comparing Saul of Tarsus (Paul) with David, President Joseph F. Smith said the following.

“. . .and yet this man (Saul) committed no unpardonable sin, because he knew not the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:3; 9:1; 22:4; 26:10, 11); while, for the crime of adultery with Bathsheba, and for ordering Uriah to be put in the front of battle in a time of war, where he was slain by the enemy, the Priesthood, and the kingdom were taken from David, the man after God's own heart, and his soul was thrust into hell. Why? Because "the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David"--or, in other words, David possessed the gift of the Holy Ghost, and had power to speak by the light thereof. But even David, though guilty of adultery and murder of Uriah, obtained the promise that his soul should not be left in hell, which means, as I understand it, that even he shall escape the second death.” (*Gospel Doctrine, Joseph F. Smith, page 433*)

There is a tradition to anticipate the expected latter-day David. This is done in joyful singing at a Bar Mitzvah celebration when a boy is thirteen years old (some do it at twelve years if the boy has no father). That is the age Jews traditionalize the ancient David was chosen and ordained by the Prophet Samuel to be the King of Israel. The folk song of David has even become a pop-song: “David, Melech Israel, hai, hai ve kayam.”

“It is interesting that in an absolute monarchy such as David's, Nathan was able to publicly criticize the king without being killed immediately; what is even more remarkable is that David apparently realized his transgression, and repented his act. Nathan subsequently became a partisan of Bath-Sheba, and



prophesied that her son Solomon would become king.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

A selection from the book “**ISRAEL REVEALED**” includes a scriptural background for this Jewish tradition.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Latter-day Joseph and David:** There are rabbinic suggestions of expected heaven-sent visitors that include a latter-day Messiah, Ben-Joseph, who will receive the keys of the gathering of Israel and restore temple worship. This was referred to by the Chief Rabbi Abraham HaCohen Kook when he explained that the Temple could not be built right away because there was no priesthood. There are other versions of this tradition of a Joseph of latter days. Also a latter-day David is expected (this is implied at almost every Bar Mitzvah as the congregants sing “David King of Israel” to the young lad). Their expectation is of a David who will emerge from obscurity to be a great king or leader in these last days.

*But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.*  
(JEREMIAH 30:9)

*And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.* (EZEKIEL 34:24)

*Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.*  
(HOSEA 3:5)

Latter-day scripture refers to the Lord, to the Lord’s servant (possibly a latter-day David), and to another latter-day servant (Joseph Smith). These servants are of dual descendency. These ideas are seen in the answers given to questions from Isaiah chapter 11.

*Who is the stem of Jesse? . . . It is Christ.  
What is the rod? . . . It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim. . . .*

*What is the root of Jesse? . . . it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.*  
(DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 113:1-6)

\* \* \* \* \*

Again, David's righteous life is the model. The sinful part of his life is considered something he must work out with God. On the subject of repentance, Jewish thought includes the following.

“Also to be learned is the fact that true repentance is accepted by God and earns His pardon for almost any sin. Because of its theme of sin, repentance, and forgiveness the Book of Jonah is read every Day of Atonement at the *Minhab* service.”

“SIN AND REPENTANCE - The very fact that Judaism has a doctrine of *mitzvot* means that it must also take sin into consideration. Performing a *mitzvah* is doing God's will; sin is doing something which is against God's will. In biblical Hebrew there are about 20 different words which denote sin which range from a deliberate act in defiance of what God has forbidden to accidental, unwilling transgression. The Bible is therefore very much aware of sin.”

“Sins can be divided into two categories --- those of commission and those of omission. The former are more serious insofar as they involve a positive action -- doing something which is forbidden. The latter consist of the failure to perform *mitzvot*. As far as the rabbis were concerned, the three most serious sins are murder, idolatry, and adultery or incest. They ruled that rather than commit these, a person must give up his life. In order to save his life, a person is allowed to commit the other sins.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

On the subject of moral cleanness, Judaism is strong in its standard for Jews and non-Jews. Since there is an inclination for sinful drives, a purposeful effort to replace them is necessary.

“Feelings of hatred, envy, self indulgence, sexual drives, greed are woven into man's nature as God created him. But these impulses can be re-directed by the *yezer ha-tov*, guided and disciplined by the laws of the Torah, so that instead of destructive forces they become creative powers for good. The sages taught that studying the Torah and living according to its commandments are the best way to assure this good. Men then marry, have children, develop commerce, act against injustice and persecution in a spirit of responsibility and high purpose. One need only look at the world around us to see the tragic results when the *yezer ha-ra* is irresponsible and unrestrained.”

“Neither great personalities nor simple folk are immune to the power of the *yezer ha-ra*, which in rabbinic literature, is usually depicted as the influence of Satan. The function of Satan is to tempt all humanity and to test a person's sincerity. The rabbis taught that one must therefore always be aware of the power of temptation, for the *yezer ha-ra* can grow and become a bad habit. At first it resembles the thread of a spider's web, the wise men tell us, -- fragile and barely visible. If not controlled it will become as strong as a stout rope. Judaism places a high value on the good that results from man's victory over his evil inclinations. "Who is mighty?" ask the sages. "One who subdues his inclinations." ”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)



# “Let Every Thing That Hath Breath Praise the Lord”

*Psalms*

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**Summary:**

*No book of the Old Testament is more Christian in its inner sense or more fully attested as such by the use made of it than the Psalms. Out of a total of 283 direct citations from the Old Testament in the New, 116 have been counted from this one book. Much of Christianity by its preference for the Psalms reverses the custom of the Synagogue, which judged the psalmists' inspiration inferior to that of the prophets, and set Moses on high above them all, so that no prophet might teach any new thing but only what was implicitly contained in the law.*

*Seventy-three of the psalms are ascribed to David, and so it was natural that the whole collection should be referred to as his, and that this convenient way of speaking should give rise in time to the popular belief that “the sweet psalmist of Israel” himself wrote all the so-called Psalms of David. (Bible Dictionary)*

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**Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:**

Reading the scriptures is a very important part of Jewish Life. There are normally three days a week when the first five books of the Bible, the “Torah,” known as the Law, are read. Every congregation, whether Orthodox, Conservative or Reform reads the same Torah section on Mondays, Thursdays and Sabbaths (Saturdays). There are additional readings on High Days such as Yom Kippur, Passover, Sukkoth, Rosh Hannah, Shavuot, etc. In addition to reading the Torah segments, additional readings from the “Neviim,” the Prophets, and the “Ketuvim,” their writings, are added. Over the years, these additional readings have been added to assist in explaining the Torah portion being read.

At one time in history, approximately 150 B.C., the foreign occupying government of the Greeks and Syrians forbade the Jews to read the Torah, so they began reading the Psalms, part of the Ketuvim, instead. Nowadays, selected Psalms and other writings of the Old Testament constitute a regular part of daily Jewish reading.

It should be noted that reading scriptures and praying are to be done in a singing or chanting way to differentiate the common everyday sounds of the mouth with the Word of the Lord or words to the Lord. A pattern of singing has developed that puts emphasis on particular syllables and words. When a boy has a Bar Mitzvah, he is accompanied by a person who may prompt him to sing his words correctly while making sure that his clothing, cap, robe, sash, etc. is worn correctly.

Singing is a festive part of many Jewish occasions. Many times, the Eastern Jews (Sephardic) and Western Jews (Ashkenazi) sing the same lyrics with their own ethnic music and intonation.

The following selections from the *Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.* give a wonderful background on the Psalms:

“PSALMS - the first book of the *Ketuvim* section of the Bible, constituting an anthology of lyric poems universally recognized as the foremost collection

of Hebrew religious poetry. The English name "Psalms" is derived from the Greek word for a "song sung to a stringed instrument" while the Hebrew name, *Tebillim*, is derived from the root meaning praise and glorification. The Hebrew title characterizes the book in terms of its essential contents --- a collection of profoundly religious poems of praise to God --- while the English title characterizes it in terms of its form: lyric poems designed for elaborate musical accompaniment."

"The Psalter, as the work is often called in English, contains 150 Psalm-chapters, divided into five books, each of which, except the last, concludes with a doxology, or formulaic hymn of praise to God. This division seems to represent successive stages in the composition of the work as a whole, in such a way that the final crystallized form of 150 reflects a cumulative edition of what were once separate collections. The five-fold arrangement was apparently chosen in conscious duplication of the five books of the Pentateuch. It may have been the result of the reading of the Psalms week by week in association with the Torah readings."

"Traditionally, authorship of the book of Psalms has been ascribed to King David. 73 of the 150 Psalms begin with the superscription *le-David*, although the precise connotation of this term is uncertain; it could mean "concerning David" or "a dedication to David" and not necessarily "by David." Furthermore, of the remaining Psalms, many bear superscriptions relating them to ten other figures of early Israelite history, ranging from Adam to Moses. However, the association of King David with Psalms rests on strong, ancient traditions. Moreover, in other books of the Bible David appears as a skillful player on the lyre, as an inventor of musical instruments and as a composer of dirges, and is described in one place as the "sweet singer of Israel."

"Some evidence further suggests that King David organized guilds of Psalm singers in the Tabernacle (I Chronicles 6:16), which were certainly functioning during the period of the First Temple. The fact that the names of some of these groups (the "Korahites" and the "Asaphites") appear in the superscription of various psalms, indicate their strong involvement in the early public worship of Israel. Bible critics today (unlike those of 100 years ago) almost all agree that the Psalms represent a very early form of Israelite literature, bearing no Hellenistic influences and thus predating, at the very latest, early Second Temple times."

"The Psalter contains an unusual variety and complexity of literary forms, including hymns, laments, prayers of thanksgiving and didactic poems of various sorts. Within it are to be found both deeply personal lyrics, reflecting the solitary confrontation of the individual with God, and poems written from the perspective of the community as a whole, reflecting the combined concerns of all Israel. The Psalms thus reflect a large array of specific situations in the life of the individual and the community and offer profoundly moving and deeply religious formulations for those seeking religious expression. It is for this reason that the Psalms has become the best-known and most widely-read portion of the Bible, not only in the

original Hebrew but in all the many languages into which the Bible has been translated.”

“The great popularity of the Psalms can be judged from the fact that most large prayer books contain the Psalms in their entirety, and that special *hevrot tehillim*, societies for the recitation of Psalms, exist in many parts of the world. In Jerusalem, two separate groups recite all of the Psalms daily at the Western Wall.”

“In the liturgy, readings from the Bible play a prominent role. The *Shema* as well as the Song of Moses after the crossing of the Red Sea are central to the daily morning service, and the prayers are studded with various selections from the Book of Psalms as well as verses from other Books.”

# King Solomon: Man of Wisdom, Man of Foolishness

Lesson  
26

*1 Kings 3; 5-11*

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## Summary:

*Solomon loves the Lord and keeps his commandments—The Lord appears to Solomon and promises him a wise and an understanding heart—He judges between two harlots, and determines maternity of a child.*

*Solomon solicits and gains Hiram's help in getting timber to build the temple—Israelites bew stones and cut timber for the temple.*

*Solomon builds the temple—The Lord promises to dwell among Israel if they are obedient—Ornaments of the temple are described.*

*Solomon built himself a house also—For the temple, Hiram of Tyre made the two pillars, the molten sea, the ten bases, the ten lavers, and all the vessels—The molten sea (baptismal font) rests on the backs of twelve oxen.*

*The ark, containing the two tablets of stone, is placed in the holy of holies—The glory of the Lord fills the temple—Solomon offers dedicatory prayer—He asks for temporal and spiritual blessings upon repentant and prayerful Israel—The people sacrifice and worship for fourteen days.*

*The Lord again appears to Solomon—The Lord promises great blessings if Israel is obedient, and great cursings if they forsake him—Solomon reigns in splendor, levies tribute upon the non-Israelites, and builds a navy of ships.*

*The queen of Sheba visits Solomon—His wealth and wisdom exceed those of all the kings of the earth.*

*Solomon marries outside Israel, and his wives turn his heart to the worship of false gods—The Lord stirs up adversaries against him, including Jeroboam the son of Nebat—Abijah promises Jeroboam that he shall be king of ten tribes—Solomon dies and Rehoboam reigns in his stead.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Recent developments in Israel have brought the name of King Solomon to the foreground again. One news item is that various archaeologists feel that a lot of building attributed to him may have been actually constructed by someone else. This kind of controversy is typical among archaeologists, in any case.

The most interesting development is the influx of tens of thousands of black Jews from Ethiopia. They feel they are descendants of King Solomon through one of his wives, the Queen of Sheba.

“In Ethiopia, members of this group refer to themselves as Beta Israel . . . They practice an early form of Judaism; the chief rabbis of Israel have recognized them as Jews. Until brought to Israel, they lived in the provinces around Lake Tana. According to their tradition, their ancestors were Jerusalem notables who came with Menelik, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, when he returned home.”

“They said that he brought Judaic customs and civil law to Ethiopia. The lion of Judah was the symbol of the emperor of Ethiopia.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

“Operation Solomon” was the name of a remarkable plan to bring these Jews to Israel. In the early 90’s fifteen thousand Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel in thirty-one hours. One 747 Jumbo had more than eleven hundred of them on one flight. In order to keep count and due to the basic illiteracy of Hebrew, each had a number stuck to his clothing. When they landed, there were two, unnumbered, newborn babies!

The Ethiopian’s Judaism differs from the Western Rabbinical Judaism that most Jews relate to. It is possible, through anthropological studies, to catch a closer glimpse of Judaism as it might have been three thousand years ago.

Because of Solomon's fame as a wise king, a wide variety of poetry and wisdom works have been attributed to him.

“The Song of Songs, a joyous tribute to life and love, was written in his youth; Proverbs, a more serious and scholarly work, was produced in his middle age, and Ecclesiastes, on the surface a very cynical book, was written by Solomon in his final years.”

“ECCLESIASTES or Kohelet, is one of the five *Megillot*. It has won enduring popularity because of its wise maxims and its counsel on life. "Ecclesiastes" from the Greek and "Kohelet" in Hebrew, mean leader or teacher of a group.”

“Traditionally, the Book is ascribed to King Solomon, and is included among the Writings of the Bible. Its wisdom has been a continuing source of inspiration. Some of the maxims are: He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; Sweet is the sleep of a laboring man . . . ; To every thing there are a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born and a time to die; . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh; . . . a time to love and a time to hate; . . . a time for war and a time for peace.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

There are symbols in modern Judaism that purportedly date back to David’s and Solomon’s times. One of the most popular is known by non-Jews as The Star of David. Those of the House of Israel call it the Magen David, the sign or shield of David.

“MAGEN DAVID ("Shield of David"), the six-pointed star, has become the generally accepted emblem of the Jewish people. Tradition tells us that King David wore a *magen David* on his shield, and that King Solomon had the symbol inscribed on his ring in place of the name of God to give him dominion over demons. In spite of its long history, it is however only recently that the *magen David* has become an exclusively Jewish symbol.”

“During the early Middle Ages, Christians decorated their churches and cathedrals with the *magen David*. For Muslims it was a magical sign; in Arabic sources the *magen David* was also known as the "seal of Solomon" and this alternative name was taken over by Jewish groups as well.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)



The Magen David is always shown as two triangles, interwoven. One possible explanation is that the two triangles represent a characterization of the Urim and Thummim. According to statements attributed to Joseph Smith, the Urim and Thummim were two triangular stones connected by a silver bow. One pointed up and the other pointed down. Superimposed they make a fascinating Magen David!

According to a paper given at Hebrew University by John Tvedtnes, now Senior Researcher at FARMS (BYU), the words Urim and Thummim may come from Egyptian words similar to "RMMM" and "TMMM," one meaning yes or act upon it (positive), the other a more negative meaning (leave it alone).

Since the Urim and Thummin were revelatory tools, it is possible that they represent or operate on a simple principle of revelation. The answer is yes or no.

"But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right." (*Doctrine & Covenants 9:8*)

As popular as the Magen David is, the official symbol of the State of Israel is the seven-branched Menorah.

"God showed Moses the prototype of the *menorah* when He handed down the Torah on Mount Sinai: from the central shaft of the *menorah* six branches, three on either side, curved upwards, making seven branches in all; it was carved from one solid piece of gold. It was a sacred object to be used only in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple, and no imitation was permitted."

"The original *menorah* was 18 handbreadths high and burned in the Tabernacle as a perpetual light. When Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, he placed ten golden *menorot* inside it, probably in addition to the *menorah* of Moses. Both these and the original *menorah* were destroyed completely when the First Temple was desecrated in 586 B.C.E." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

After Solomon built the Temple, the holiday of Sukkoth was used to keep the remembrance of the building and dedication of the Temple.

"SUKKOTH (Hebrew for "huts" or "tabernacles"), a seven-day festival beginning on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei, which falls in September or October. (In the Diaspora an extra eighth day is celebrated.) One of its main observances is living temporarily in huts, called *Sukkot*, resembling those in which the Children of Israel dwelt during their forty years in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt."

"This autumn festival was the last of the three "pilgrim" festivals connected with the farming year. From all corners of the Land of Israel throngs of pilgrims used to make their way up to Jerusalem carrying the gaily decorated baskets of fruit and grain which they brought to the Temple as a thanksgiving offering. At the gates of the city the townsfolk greeted them with music.

The pilgrims then ascended the broad marble staircase that led from the City of David to the summit of the Temple Mount, where they would present their offerings to the Priests.”

“This holiday was also the occasion for the consecration of the Temple built by Solomon and every seventh year on Sukkoth, the Torah was read by the king before the assembled people. In his vision of the end of days, the prophet Zechariah foretells that all the nations of the world will assemble for the festival of Sukkoth in Jerusalem to worship God.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

It was at this particular holiday season, in 1982, that the LDS Branch Meeting facility, “Mormon House,” in Jerusalem was dedicated. On the other hand, there is another holiday that is a reminder of the destruction of Solomon’s Temple. Later, after Herod built the temple again, it was destroyed at almost the precise same date.

“TISH'AH BE-AV (the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, usually falling within the first week of August) is the traditional day of mourning for the destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem. It is the culmination of the three weeks of mourning that start on the 17th of Tammuz. On Tish'ah be-Av in the year 586 B.C.E., the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar stormed the great Temple built by Solomon, turned its marbled columns and gilded rooms into a useless pile of rubble and exiled Jerusalem's inhabitants.”

“After long years of suffering and effort, the Jews managed to rebuild the Temple, which stood for more than 600 years as a symbol of spiritual and national unity. But on the ninth of Av, in the year 70 C.E., the walls of the Temple were once again broken through --- this time by the Romans --- and the Temple and all its structures were completely razed.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Since Later-day Saints have such an intense interest in temple culture and its ritual symbolism, a few comments about the temple may be interesting. There were curtains in the temple that the Sanhedrin sat behind when speaking with participants in the temple.

“. . . the Great Sanhedrin was the name of the unique court consisting of . . . judges which sat in a special part of the Temple in Jerusalem. These judges had to know a great many languages in order to understand the witnesses and the litigants without an interpreter (who might change — ever so slightly the original statement). They never saw the litigants or the accused, in case their judgment might be influenced by their appearance. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Nowadays, a curtain or cloth is used to create a canopy (Huppah) under which marriages are performed. This cloth is usually a “Tallith,” a garment that represents the clothing used in temple times with marks (four sets of strings with knots) that represent binding ourselves to keep the commandments.

“. . . it was customary for the groom to cover the bride's head with his *tallit* as a symbol of sheltering her; and in modern-day Israel, for weddings of soldiers on active duty, it is not unusual to see a *huppah* constructed of a *tallit*

supported by four . . . friends of the bride and groom. . . among Orthodox Jews, the preferred custom is to erect the *huppah* outside, or at least in a spot open to the sky, underneath the stars,” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

A festive meal is always a part of a Jewish wedding, it being a connection to the temple, as well.

“With the destruction of the Second Temple sacrifices were no longer made. It was then said: "Now that there is no altar, a man's table . . . and prayer takes the place of the sacrifices.”

“The Talmud describes in detail the various modes of conduct to be observed at meals. For example persons should engage in a discussion of Torah during the meal so that they will be "as though they had eaten at the table of God." Furthermore, the table is regarded as a substitute for the altar in the Temple, and therefore, it must be treated with reverence. Before any meal, the hands must be washed pronouncing the appropriate blessing over the washing, after which bread is eaten. The meal is concluded with the Grace after Meals.”

“. . . (a) benediction (after meals), called *Boneh Yerushalayim* . . . asks God to have mercy on Israel and to restore the Temple and the Kingdom of David. It includes a plea that He may always sustain and support Israel.”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The Dead Sea “Temple Scroll” describes a temple to be built in “latter-days.” The Essenes believed that they were in the latter-days and referred to themselves as “Saints.” The dimensions of the Temple they planned were similar to the dimensions described by Ezekiel. However, the outer dimension seems to include the entire walled city of Jerusalem.

“LATTER-DAY TEMPLES FORETOLD. That temples and temple ordinances are essential to the (true) faith is well established in the Bible. Malachi predicted the coming of the Lord suddenly to his temple, in the day of vengeance, in the latter times, as a refiner and purifier. Ezekiel predicted the building of a temple in Jerusalem which will be used for ordinance work after the gathering of Israel from their long dispersion and when they are cleansed from their transgressions. John the Revelator saw the day when, after the earth is sanctified and celestialized, the presence of the Father and the Son in the New Jerusalem would take the place of the temple, for the whole city, due to their presence, would become a temple.” (*Doctrines of Salvation - Joseph Fielding Smith - Vol.2, Pg.244*)

# The Influence of Wicked and Righteous Leaders

Lesson  
27

*1 Kings 12-14; 2 Chronicles 17; 20*

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**Summary:** *Rehoboam seeks to impose greater burdens upon the people—The ten tribes revolt and turn to Jeroboam—Jeroboam turns to idolatry and worships false gods.*

*Jeroboam is smitten and then healed by a prophet from Judah—The prophet delivers his message, is led astray by a prophet from Beth-el, and is slain by a lion for his disobedience—Jeroboam continues false worship in Israel.*

*Abijah foretells the ruin of Jeroboam's house, the death of his child, and the scattering of Israel because of their idolatry—Jeroboam dies and Nadab reigns—Judah, under Rehoboam, turns to wickedness—Shishak of Egypt takes treasures from temple—Rehoboam dies and Abijah reigns.*

*Jehoshaphat reigns well and prospers in Judah—Priests travel and teach out of book of the law of the Lord.*

*Ammonites and others come against Judah—Jehoshaphat and all the people fast and pray—Jabaziel prophesies deliverance of Judah—Their attackers war among and destroy themselves.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Politics seem to have been a divisive factor in Israel's history. It seems that the Lord wants the Children of Israel to learn and accept their true leader. Yet, surrounded by other peoples with governments of "men," Israel lost the vision of a Lord's government.

"Following Solomon's death, dissension and rebellion broke out in Israel. Rehoboam, Solomon's son and heir to the throne, was unable to maintain the unity of the kingdom and the northern section seceded as a separate state. Rehoboam maintained control of Jerusalem and the territory of Judah in the south, encompassing the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, while Jeroboam was crowned ruler of the kingdom of Israel to the north, with the remaining ten tribes. In order to assert his independence from Judah, Jeroboam built new temples in his territory and appointed new priests. This religious rebellion became a source of great sorrow for the prophets, who saw it as the beginning of the decline of Israel . . . For over two centuries the two kingdoms remained thus estranged, often warring with one another when not preoccupied with battling invaders from the outside. While Judah retained the leadership of the descendants of the House of David, Israel suffered a series of revolutions and coups, resulting in constant changes in leadership." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

That government soon became the vehicle for apostasy and ultimate destruction.

"While there is no record of Jeroboam's activities in the administrative and military organization of his new kingdom, there are records that he instituted the ritual of calf worship in Israel by making two golden calves, placing one at Dan in the north and the other at Beth-El in the south, and proclaiming them holy places. The *aggadab* (legends) criticizes Jeroboam severely for this, claiming he tried to replace the Law of Moses with idol worship and failed because the people of Israel would not accept this."

“Jeroboam is remembered as a man who started with good intentions, trying to oppose the excessive power which the House of David had accumulated, but who was himself tempted by power and whose wisdom and judgment were subsequently impaired.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr*)

Jehosaphat, a righteous king, reflects the name he bore. Since the Hebrew name of the Lord, Jehovah, is unspeakable, it has been replaced by many forms. Subsequently, a name or word that begins or ends with Jeho, Yah, Iah, Ah, etc. is referring to the Lord. The word ‘shofet’ in Hebrew means judge. Jeho-shofet means Jehovah is Judge.

The place where the kings of Israel and after the division, Judah, lived at was known as the Mount Moriah (Moreh is teacher - ended with Ah - and means taught of Jehovah or Jehovah teaches). The place where the king’s bodies were placed when they died is on the Mount of Olives. Between the two mounts is a valley, popularly known as the Kidron Valley. One of its ancient names is the Valley of Jehoshofet. The valley separates the Mount of Olives, a place where the Lord atoned while living and Mount Moriah where he atoned in death.

High places and groves became places of entertainment. Theatrics, entertainment and a substitute religious excitement replaced true religion and its edifying spiritual gifts. Some of the popular theatrics included priests “fighting” against evil. When they were about to fail, a beautiful, unmarried woman would come to the rescue. Together, they fought off evil and won! Ah, how terrific, “good” triumphs over “evil.” Then, as history and legend tell us, the victories were celebrated by the priests and the virgins as they faded into the sunset (a basic James Bond movie scenario). Consider how crafty Satan is - sexual aberration and immorality became a justified reward for “fighting evil.”

To begin with, “high places” may have been intended for “district temples” because travel to Jerusalem might have taken too much time and effort. Soon, they corrupted.

“From the moment of its dedication, the Temple in Jerusalem served as the central sanctuary for the Children of Israel. The Bible speaks of the existence of other "high places" at which sacrificial worship did take place. Although scholars differ as to whether these places had a legal status, they all agree that from the time of Josiah (622 B.C.E.) at least, there was no other legal sanctuary in Israel or Judea.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr*)

Our homes can become the “temple” model of the Lord’s house. Entertainment brought in by various “vicarious” means may challenge us today as it did in the past! On the other hand, our homes may just be the model to prepare us daily to live with Him, in His house and in His city.

# “After the Fire a Still Small Voice”

Lesson  
28

1 Kings 17-19

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**Summary:** *Elijah seals the heavens, and is fed by the ravens—At his command the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil of the widow of Zarephath fail not—He raises her son from death.*

*Elijah is sent to meet Ahab—Obadiab saves a hundred prophets, and meets Elijah—Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to call down fire from heaven—They fail—He calls down fire, slays the prophets of Baal, and opens the heavens for rain.*

*Jezebel seeks the life of Elijah—An angel sends him to Horeb—The Lord speaks to Elijah, not in the wind, nor the earthquake, nor the fire, but in a still small voice—Elisha joins Elijah.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The connection of rain and life is expressed in Jewish prayers, and it also includes a subtle (still small voice), recurring inference to the Messiah.

“. . . benediction also praises God for His power, or *gevurah*. Among the manifestations of God's power are His providing sustenance for all living creatures, His healing the sick, and His causing rain to fall. Stress is laid on the revival of the dead, and the benediction which concludes with *Barukh mehayyeh ha-metim* ("Blessed be... He Who revives the dead") is therefore also known as *Tehiyat ha-Metim* ("Resurrection of the Dead").

“Bountiful rain in season is a blessing and its absence is regarded as a punishment from God. Dew, the nightly condensation of vapor is also emphasized as a symbol of beneficence since it is a source of water for plant life during the dry season. Its absence is also considered to be drought.”

“Prayers for rain are found among the earliest liturgies. In the time of the Second Temple, the high priest recited a prayer for rain on the Day of Atonement. During periods of drought special prayers and fasting were ordained. The prayers for rain and dew in the daily *Amidah* evolved from these practices. Today the principal prayers for rain are recited during the *musaf* service on the eighth day of Sukkot, and a benediction ("Who causes wind to blow and rain to fall") is recited in the *Amidah* daily thereafter until Passover, when the rainy season comes to an end. The special prayers for dew are chanted during the *musaf* service on the first day of Passover and the benediction for dew is substituted thereafter in the daily *Amidah* until Sukkot. From about the fifth or sixth of December until Passover the *Amidah* also includes a benediction for both rain and dew.”

“There are two seasons in Israel: winter --- the cold, rainy season from about October to April, and summer --- the hot, dry season when rain is virtually non-existent.

“Because Passover falls around the beginning of spring, and because in Erez (land) Israel the rainy season ends approximately at the time, a special prayer for dew (*tal*) is recited on the first day and the prayer for rain (*morid ha-geshem*) is suspended.”

“In biblical Hebrew, *tal*, the word for dew, may also mean a light rain. A comparison of biblical and talmudic quotations and the contemporary rainfall tables of Israel's meteorologists shows that the ancient records were accurate observations of weather phenomena. Rains fall in most of Israel from late October to May; and except for dew, the other months are dry. The amount of rain is also variable, so that crop irrigation has been developed to supplement the rainfall and to extend the growing season.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, the rainfall is equivalent to London, the capital of England, although Israel gets their rain all at once! An annual average of twenty-six inches of rain falls in Israel during the months of December, January and February (Utah gets about thirteen inches per year).

Rain is a powerful Biblical metaphor in emphasizing reward and punishment:

“In the Bible, reward and punishment --- whether individual, national or universal --- is described as appertaining to this world. It is recognized as axiomatic that God rewards the righteous by granting them prosperity and well-being, and punishes the wicked with destruction. This forms the basis of the passage from Deuteronomy which constitutes the second paragraph of the *Shema*: adherence to God's commandments will bring "the rain in its seasons"; disobedience will cause God "to shut up the heavens that there be no rain, and the land will not yield her fruit.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In response to the faithlessness of Israel, the “sealing” prophet, Elijah, used his God given authority to seal the heavens. The physical phenomenon of drought and losing their crops reflected the spiritual phenomenon of disregarding the “still small voice” and thereby, losing their eternal families.

“The prophets attacked idol worship not only on the grounds that it violates God's covenant with Israel, but also because it was useless. While the pagans believed that the natural phenomena rain, fertility, health etc. were controlled by idols, the prophets taught that God is in control of nature.”

“A special chair is set aside for Elijah at circumcisions, as he is called the protector of children, and the upholder of the covenant between God and Israel, and Elijah is supposed to visit every Jewish home on Passover, so a special cup of wine is set aside for him. And, says the Midrash, when the time is right, it will be Elijah who will herald the coming of the Messiah.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

It may be an interesting note to consider the suggestion that the word ‘ravens’ in ancient Hebrew can also mean Arabs. Since ancient Hebrew had no vowels, the spelling of both is

virtually the same. It still keeps the sacred message the same. The prophet is fed by God through miraculous means (ravens or Arabs)!

“On the basis of the unclean birds mentioned in the Bible, the rabbis of the Talmud compiled a list of 24 birds which are forbidden, among them birds of prey such as the vulture, raven, eagle and hawk.”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The name of Elijah literally means “my God is Yah (Jehovah),” an appropriate name at a time when a proliferation of gods was popular in the land. Ba’al in Hebrew means ‘master’. The Ba’al religion named gods (masters) of such things as rain, earth, wind and fire. It is interesting that a modern “rock group” choose to call themselves, “Earth, Wind and Fire.” In modern times, groups like these become the popular “idols” that seek to master the attention of people.

The religion popularized at the time of Elijah was Baalism. As mentioned in the previous lesson supplement, the priests of Ba’al entertained the people by creating theatrics where they would fight against evil, fail, and then be rescued by a beautiful woman. This, of course, drew attention away from the need of personal repentance that God required of his people. Turning to God required self-mastery, in Hebrew “Ba’al Tshuvah.”

“Repentance in Hebrew is known as *teshuvah*, which literally means "return," and signifies a return to God. A person who repents his sins is known as a *ba'al teshuvah*. Many rabbis of the Talmud believed that the real *ba'al teshuvah* is greater even than a person who has never sinned and they furthermore said that when a person repents out of love of God (and not just out of fear of divine punishment), all the sins he had committed are considered to be *mitzvot* (commandments and blessings).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Taking care of the widows is also a high Jewish *mitzvah*. Yet, Elijah, who could have blessed the widows in Israel went to Sarepta, a suburb of Sidon, and blessed the “foreign” widow, there.

“One of the most frequently mentioned *mitzvot* in the Torah is to protect the widow, the convert (the Hebrew word *ger* also means stranger) and the orphan who, like the converts, has no parents. This is because these people are alone in the world they are entering and need help in adjusting to new ways of acting and thinking.”

“The earliest ethical teachings are commandments in the Bible: to do justice, to avoid bribery, gossip, robbery, oppression, to protect the weak --- the widow, the orphan, the slave, the stranger; to be kind to animals. Man is obliged to overcome his normal feelings and to obey these commands --- even with respect to his enemy.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In blessing the “foreign” widow, Elijah set up a lesson that Jesus would later use at Nazareth, in plain view of Mount Carmel, still known for Elijah’s “droughtful” response to Israel’s faithlessness. In response to the Nazarene’s mocking request to “show them a sign” he said:



“But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias (Elijah) sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.”  
*(Luke 4 25-26)*

In the Bible, another righteous widow, Ruth, cared for by a righteous Israelite, Boaz, produced the royal line of David, and ultimately the Savior, the Messiah. These are repeated lessons; “take care of the widows!”

# “He Took Up . . . the Mantle of Elijah”

Lesson  
29

*2 Kings 2; 5-6*

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**Summary:** *Elisha and the prophets know Elijah is to be translated—Elijah divides waters of Jordan, and is taken up into heaven in a whirlwind—Mantle of Elijah falls on Elisha, who also divides waters of Jordan—Elisha heals waters of Jericho—Youths torn by bears for mocking Elisha.*

*Naaman, the Syrian, comes to Elisha to be healed of leprosy—He rejects the prophet's instruction, but relents and dips himself in Jordan seven times; he is healed—Elisha refuses to accept a reward—Gehazi accepts a gift from Naaman and is cursed with leprosy.*

*Elisha causes an axe to float—He reveals to the king how to conduct a war with Syria—Horses and chariots of fire protect Elisha—Syrians smitten with blindness—Ben-hadad besieges Samaria, and foodstuff sells for a great price.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The name Elisha means “My God Saves.” It includes the inference that it is God, not the prophet, who is the maker of miracles. Jewish thought has alternated between recognizing the power of man or the power of God.

“Elisha's prophetic powers were indeed increased after the master's death --- he performed 16 miracles compared to Elijah's eight, and brought back to life two people to Elijah's one.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The greatest miracle in Jewish history is the grand exodus from Egypt. The account is repeated every year at Passover, the feast (celebration) of deliverance. A handbook (*Haggadah*) explains the miraculous event.

“Since the overriding theme of the *Haggadah* is that God saved the Jewish people from their enemies, Moses' name is not mentioned in the *Haggadah* (except for one passing instance). This emphasizes that it was God Himself --- not an angel and not a messenger --- who redeemed Israel. Accordingly, a large part of the *Haggadah* is filled with songs of praise for the great miracles that God performed.”

“The mystics believed that the regular laws of man and nature do not reveal God's essence. Rather it is phenomena, miracles and unusual happenings which reveal the true nature of God, and the pious and learned scholar interprets them in order to understand God.”

“. . . the biblical accounts stress the distinction between . . . occult practices and the miracles which such men as Moses perform. The latter are the result solely of the command of God, who changes the laws of nature in accordance with His will, and not human designs.”

“Miracles (are) extraordinary phenomena that seem to fall outside the pattern of normal, explainable occurrences are frequently referred to in English as miracles. In the Bible, such events are termed *otot* or *moftim* ("wondrous signs"), and in the talmudic literature as *nisim* ("heralds"). The terms point to the fact that both for the Bible and for the rabbis, miraculous events were caused by God and served as clear indicators of His controlling power in the universe.”

“Later thinkers, for whom "the natural order" had an existence independent of God, were troubled by the question whether biblical miracles were "natural" or "supernatural," but the Bible makes no such distinction and never questions God's ability to do anything, by any means.”

“The rabbis of the Talmud unquestionably accepted the biblical miracles as related, but they were troubled by the fact that they seemed to imply a lack of perfection in the very act of Creation. They solved this theological problem by postulating that miracles were, so to speak, provided for already at the time of creation. Thus, although they were "extraordinary" they were still manifestations of the natural order. Many rabbis reversed this perspective and emphasized that the very regularity and harmony of the natural world were in fact "miraculous.”

“The rabbis rejected, however, the belief in "miracle performers" as bearers of religious truth. Once the Torah had been revealed to man, it was no longer "in heaven." It could not be altered by extra-ordinary means, but only by a natural process of development which was purely in the hands of ordinary human beings.”

“Having been created by God, the universe is also totally subject to His control. As a result, God can impose His will upon the work-ings of the natural world as He pleases (the miracles of the Bible) but He can also transfer some of His controlling power to others. This God did when He created and blessed man. Although part of the natural world, man was given dominion over it, and told that the natural world was to serve his greater interests.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Traveling in the Jordan Valley, one passes by Jericho and a well, which supplied the ancient city with water, which is still called the "Spring of Elisha." It is a reminder that the brackish water was healed by God through his newly appointed prophet Elisha, who replaced Elijah. That water supply is still one of the main fresh water sources for Jericho today.

Elisha's continued theme was that he was a servant of God, even refusing payment from Syria's highest-ranking officer in the Land of Israel at that time. The anomaly is that the children of Israel strongly objected to the Syrian "occupying" forces. The prophet was probably teaching the same principle that Jesus taught and that has been revealed again in our day:

“Then saith he unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.” (*Matthew 22:21*)

“We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.” (*Articles of Faith 11*)

The faithful young woman, probably serving in Naaman’s household, was a believer and prompted the “occupying” Syrian officer to come to the prophet to be blessed. He sent a message to do something simple - bath in the Jordan River. When he finally “swallowed his pride,” he was blessed! Imagine - the “enemy” was blessed!

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (*Matthew 5:44*)

We don’t know for sure if that even resulted in the conversion of Naaman and it does not matter. The blessing was unconditional on that point. The lesson for the unbelieving Israelites was repeated by the Savior as he said:

“And many lepers were in Israel in the time of (Elisha) the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” (*Luke 4:27*)

It is interesting to note the “unbelief” of today as the following statement refers to Naaman, assuming that he did not become a real believer.

“Persons who, without actually being Jewish, follow Jewish practices or claim to be Jews are termed Judaizers. The model of the Judaizer was Naaman, minister to the king of Syria around 850 B.C.E. who, after being cured of leprosy by the prophet Elisha, worshiped the God of the Jews while continuing outwardly to pray to the idols of the state religion.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Summary:** *Hezekiah reigns in righteousness and restores worship of Jehovah—Levites cleanse and sanctify the house of the Lord—Priests offer sacrifices and make reconciliation and atonement for the people—Hezekiah and all the people worship the Lord and praise his name.*

*Hezekiah invites all Israel to a solemn passover in Jerusalem—Some accept the call; others laugh him to scorn—Faithful portion of Israel worship the Lord in Jerusalem.*

*Sennacherib invades Judah and besieges her cities—He rails against the Lord—Isaiah and Hezekiah pray, and an angel destroys the leaders of Assyrian armies—Hezekiah reigns in righteousness despite some faults.*

*Josiah destroys idolatry in Judah—They repair the house of the Lord—Hilkiah finds a book of the law—Huldah, the prophetess, reveals the desolations to come upon the people—Josiah and the people covenant to serve the Lord.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Hezekiah is highly favored among the Jews. Several scriptures are attributed to his prompting. We can consider several things in his life that are powerful metaphors to the Savior. One is bringing "Living Water" to Jerusalem and another is bringing the people to the Lord and bringing them back to the Temple by awakening the scriptures to them.

“Hezekiah was king of Judah for 29 years in the late eighth or early seventh century B.C.E. Hezekiah is remembered as a great king by Jews, both for his religious virtue and his political and military skill. In the Books of Kings and Chronicles, Hezekiah is depicted as a king who purified the religion of the people of Judah by eliminating idolatry, and who tried to return to the glorious days of David and Solomon. Through his piety, Hezekiah was responsible for a national awakening in Judah.”

“In the aggadah, Hezekiah is idealized as a completely righteous man, devoted to the study of Torah and to "strengthening the bonds between Israel and its Father in Heaven." The Talmud states that in his time there was not a child in the whole of the land who was not expert in the complicated laws of ritual purity, so great was the knowledge of the Torah. One sage went so far as to say that "there is no messiah for Israel because all the scriptural verses prophesying the coming of the Messiah were fulfilled in Hezekiah's time." Hezekiah was the father-in-law of the prophet Isaiah.”

“King Hezekiah and his colleagues committed the Book of Isaiah to writing; and Ezekiel and the Twelve Prophets were committed to writing by the Great Assembly, an institution that existed some time after Ezra.”

“The Song of Songs is read on the Sabbath of Passover. The Book is a song of love which the rabbis interpreted as being a poetic expression of the love

between God and Israel. King Solomon is said to have composed this Book in his youth, though one tradition attributes its commitment to writing to King Hezekiah.”

“Another tradition has it that King Hezekiah committed Ecclesiastes to writing. This Scroll is read during Sukkot.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Hezekiah reinforced the walls of Jerusalem and repaired the temple. Remembering David's time and the vulnerability of the city through its water source (a short tunnel leading into the city from a spring outside the walls) he built a longer water tunnel capable of supplying the city in times of emergency. He covered the Gihon spring outside the walls "sending" the water to the pool of Siloam, the name meaning "sent" (Shiloah in Hebrew).

“Siloam is a pool of water and an artificially constructed tunnel leading to it, which constituted the main water source for the city of Jerusalem during biblical times. Located in the Kidron Valley to the south and east of the present-day Old City of Jerusalem, the Siloam Pool (Shiloah in Hebrew) was fed by the waters of the Gihon, a natural spring source situated deep within the valley. Because the spring lay outside the city walls, attempts were made as early as the days of King David to construct canals or channels which would bring the water into the city and sustain the inhabitants even in the time of siege. At the end of the eighth century, King Hezekiah sponsored the most successful of these undertakings --- the construction of a 1,756 foot tunnel which connected the Gihon with the Siloam Pool which was then located within the extended walls of the city. The construction of this tunnel was a remarkable engineering feat. It was dug in hard rock by two groups of diggers who began working at the same time from opposite ends. After several twists and turns, the two groups eventually met, and left an inscription at their meeting place commemorating their joy at their achievement. The inscription was removed from the tunnel at the end of last century and today can be seen in the museum of Istanbul.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The significance of this water is that it emanates from springs. Spring water is "kosher." It is used for ritual purposes such as temple washings, immersions and other ceremonies. Immersions in Judaism require "Living Water;" that is, water from a spring, from bedrock, "The Rock of Salvation." That water must flow naturally and the immersion font (mikveh) is best suited below ground level. Incidentally, in present Judaism, there is no immersion for "forgiveness of sins."

“1) A mikveh must not be filled with water that has been drawn (i.e., has been in a vessel or a receptacle), but with water from a naturally flowing source; spring water or rainwater are the ideal sources, but melted snow and ice are also permitted.

2) The water must be able to flow into the mikveh freely and unimpeded (any blockage renders the water "drawn water") and must reach the mikveh in vessels that are not susceptible to ritual uncleanness.

3) The minimum size of the mikveh is of a vessel which has a volume of "40 seah," variously estimated at between 250 and 1,000 liters (quarts).

4) The mikveh must be watertight and must be constructed of natural materials on the spot, for otherwise it is deemed itself to be a "vessel" and renders the water in it "drawn water."

"It is a particularly important religious duty to wash the hands before eating bread and this washing must be performed by pouring water over the hands from a utensil with a wide mouth, the lip of which must be undamaged. Prior to this ritual washing, the hands must be clean and without any foreign object (such as a ring) to intervene between hand and the water."

". . . from the Siloam pool . . . water was taken for the Red Heifer ceremony in Temple times." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

As stated in the Book of Numbers (19:1-9), the Red Heifer ritual was for forgiveness of sins. This was made possible through the "red" atonement of the Lord on the Mount of Olives. Jews have a tradition that this red calf offering had to be high on the Mount of Olives, above the Temple itself and opposite the Gate Beautiful. Those who have had the experience of sitting on the upper part of the Mount of Olives opposite of the present day Gate Beautiful can attest to the spirit of Gethsemane (well away from the traditional Church of Gethsemane on the lower part of the mount).

Water and sins do have a connection and a place in Jewish traditions:

"On the afternoon of the first day (of Rosh Hashana), it is customary to walk to the nearest body of running water and there symbolically "cast" one's sins into the water. The ceremony may be based on a verse in the biblical book of Micah: "And Thou (referring to God) shall cast all their sins into the depths of the seas" (Micah 7:19). This practice, to which there is no reference in the Talmud, is generally called *Tashlikh*, probably after the Hebrew word meaning "cast" (va-tashlikh) in the verse from Micah." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

During the renovation of the temple, the book of Deuteronomy, a distinctive part of the "Torah" was discovered in one of the storage chambers.

"The biblical Books had previously been destroyed by Amon so that the find caused a sensation. When the Book was read to Josiah he was deeply shocked by its prophecies of doom. He immediately sent a delegation to the prophetess Hulda to ask her advice. The answer was forthright and not reassuring --- Jerusalem and the Temple were doomed, but Josiah himself would not live to see their destruction. Josiah led the people to the Temple in repentance." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Before the temple was built, the entire encampment of Israel was a "city temple" (apparently it will be that way again when the Lord returns to Jerusalem):

"In pre-Temple times, in the desert, the whole encampment was considered to be in a state of sanctity, and hence anyone who was *tameh* (unclean) was forced to go outside the marked boundaries and was forbidden to return until he had completed the purification ritual. With the destruction of the

Temple, such sanctions ceased to apply. Nevertheless, the maintenance of ritual impurity has remained an essential aspect of Jewish life. Thus, because all Jews are now assumed to be ritually impure, they are even today forbidden to enter the Temple area in Jerusalem.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)



# “Happy Is the Man That Findeth Wisdom”

*Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*

**Summary:** *The first section, chs. 1 - 9, is the most poetic and contains an exposition of true wisdom. Chs. 10 - 24 contain a collection of proverbs and sentences about the right and wrong ways of living. Chs. 25 - 29 contain the proverbs of Solomon that the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out. Chs. 30 and 31 contain the “burden” of Agur and Lemuel, the latter including a picture of the ideal wife, arranged in acrostic form. (Bible Dictionary)*

*A Greek translation of the Hebrew Kōbeleth, a word meaning “one who convenes an assembly,” sometimes rendered Preacher. The book of Ecclesiastes consists of reflections on some of the deepest problems of life, as they present themselves to the thoughtful observer. The epilogue (Ecl. 12: 9-14) sets forth the main conclusions at which the writer has arrived. The author describes himself as “son of David, king in Jerusalem” (Ecl. 1: 1). (Bible Dictionary)*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

In Judaism, books, words and letters have a distinctive value and afford great respect. It is completely irreverent to place any kind of writing on the floor or the ground. The scriptures are kept in special cabinets (reminiscent of the Ark in Temple times) and are often covered with silk or other precious cloths.

If a book falls to the floor, it is the habit to pick it up, render a kiss and return it to its place. Since Biblical Hebrew (the Old Testament) was written with fewer than nine thousand root words, the value of the words as they created illustrations and images was important. Ancient scripture writers used imagery that extended into related meanings. In some cases the sayings reflected the times they were written in as well as views of the future.

“In his youth King Solomon wrote the lyrical Song of Songs, in his maturity the wisdom of Proverbs, and in his old age he wrote Ecclesiastes, in which he looks back and realizes what emptiness there is in many people's lives. The sages saw this as a symbol of the changes which take place in a man's way of thinking as he ages: “When a man is young, he quotes poetry; when he matures, he quotes proverbs; when he grows old he speaks of the things he has found to be worthless.”

“There is no evidence about special literature in Hebrew for children in very ancient times. Presumably children then, like now, were told stories and taught proverbs. Clearly, many of the stories in the Bible were as interesting reading for children as for adults and each age group would understand the significance of the stories according to its own intellectual capacity.”

“The objective of Proverbs, indicated in the work itself, is to develop the habits of piety and ethical practice by training the mind to understand them. Two methods are used: one is *musar*, the training and instruction in do's and don'ts by parent and teacher; the other is *ezrah*, counsel by a wise man, or the teacher in that role, describing the ways of life and of the world, in proverbs,

questions, poetry and metaphors. Being wise is often a divine grace, but can be attained by training. Virtues are praised and vices are deplored and ridiculed. Here are some quotations: "My son, if sinners entice thee consent thou not . . . restrain thy foot from their path for their feet run to evil . . . Forget not my teaching, but let thy heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace will they add to thee. Let not kindness and truth forsake thee . . . write them upon thy heart and find grace and good favor in the sight of God and man." The final chapter contains the well-known acrostic poem which begins, "A woman of valor who can find . . ." and gives us fascinating insights into the activities and responsibilities of the capable matron."

"Neither the date nor the authorship is certain. Some scholars place it in the eighth and some as late as the first century B.C.E. King Solomon is named as the supreme sage, and traditionally the work is considered to be his, but scholars are divided in their opinion. With the books of Job and Ecclesiastes, Proverbs is one of the three "wisdom books" of the sacred writings." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The subject of wisdom is often connected with respect for the aged. It is something that is inherited, learned and taught:

"Respect for the aged is always a *mitzvah*: "You shall rise before gray hairs, and show respect to the old man" (Leviticus 19:32). Indeed, the prophet Isaiah speaks of disrespect for the aged as a sign of a corrupt generation (3:5)."

"The *shofet*, or judge, had to meet strict qualifications, besides just knowing the law. Among these qualifications were piety, wisdom, humility, gentility and human understanding. When Moses set up the first courts, he looked for "able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain" (Exodus 18:21) and "wise men, and understanding and full of knowledge."

"Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" is the recurring motto of the Book of Proverbs, and a good and satisfying life is the reward promised if one cultivates wisdom." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In a rabbinic discussion, scholars are enjoined to be amiable to each other and to respect one another in their halakhic discussions for "if a sage becomes angry, his wisdom departs from him."

"The term "wisdom" (Hebrew *hokhmah*) has a wide range of meanings in different contexts, ranging from intelligence to an ethical and religious quality of life. As an historical phenomenon, biblical wisdom designates a distinctive cultural tradition and scholarly activity in the history of ancient Israel, continuing in Judaism and early Christianity. It was a way of thinking and an attitude to life that emphasized experience, reasoning, morality, and the concerns of man as man rather than as Israelite. Wisdom, however, was not considered to be just intellectual ability or capacity; true wisdom had to be based on the fear of God and on a moral way of life."

“Although the capacity to obtain wisdom might be considered a natural endowment, wisdom itself had to be learned, and could be taught. The two principal methods of teaching were *musar* (instruction or training) and *ezab* (counsel, or persuasion) according to whether the teacher's authority was imposed or freely sought. In general, the teacher's *musar* was an appeal to reason and conscience and to the pupil's own desire for knowledge and understanding. The wisdom was transmitted by a saying or proverb; a rhetorical question; a parable or allegory; and imaginative tales and anecdotes.”

“Despite this great emphasis on teaching and learning, however, wisdom ultimately remained a divine gift rewarding those who desired it enough to submit to its discipline.”

“In the Bible there are no articles of faith or dogmas in which the Jew is commanded to believe. Belief in God's existence and infinite ability is taken for granted and is the basis of the Bible. This is the importance of the story of the Exodus from Egypt; the Children of Israel witnessed God's wonders and passed on the record of their own personal experience to their descendants. The biblical word *emunah* (and its other forms) which is often translated as "belief" really means "trust" or "confidence," which is something quite different.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The “Word” is one of the names of the Lord and apparently people resorted to wearing a “word” or “words” to take the name of the Lord upon themselves.

“It became the custom for people to wear amulets, which were pieces of paper or metal disks with inscriptions on them, which would protect the bearer from sickness, the "evil eye" and other troubles. The inscriptions commonly consisted of verses from the Bible or names of various angels. The use of writings as a way to keep off evil spirits came from the belief in the holiness and power of certain words.”

“The most important book in Judaism is, of course, the Bible. Therefore it is crucial to have an exact, established text. The Hebrew language is made up of consonants and vowels --- the books of the Bible were originally written without the vowels and so some words can be read in different fashions. Also, the Torah (as well as parts of the rest of the Bible) is read in the synagogue with a special melody which is marked on the words by what is known as cantillation marks. These too were not in the original text.”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

On the subject of pride, Latter-day Saints have been given special counsel. In 1989, President Ezra Taft Benson said, “Pride is ugly.” There is no justifiable use of the words pride or proud. Apparently every mention of pride in the scriptures is negative. As a replacement for the word pride or proud let us consider the highest compliment and honor as stated in the scriptures.

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (*Matthew 17:5*)

“When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other--This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (*Joseph Smith History 1:17*)

In Hebrew the root meaning for pride is actually “excellence.”

“According to some modern commentators, the building of the tower (of Babel) was an example of man's extreme pride in his own ability. The building became such an obsession that, according to the Midrash, when a builder fell off the tower to his death, the other builders paid no attention, but when a brick fell, they would cry: "When shall another come in its place?" According to this interpretation, every generation has its own Tower of Babel, when it begins to idolize its technology. The moral of the story is thus as applicable today as it was thousands of years ago.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

One of my Jewish-Orthodox friends taught me a great lesson when he said, “It is easy being friendly and rare being a friend.”

“Friendship is a relationship between people arising from mutual respect and affection. The ideal of friendship in the western world is derived from classical Greece, which exalted friendship as one of the great human achievements and prime goals of life. The significance of friendship is recognized in the Bible, but is never raised to such an important place. A friend is defined as "one who is like your very self" (Deuteronomy 13:7) and as one "who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). Of the few depictions of close friendship in the Bible, perhaps the most famous is that of David and Jonathan. 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.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The Lord spoke of being as little children. It is interesting to consider how in some cultures, respect for the aged surpasses care of children. This became apparent when Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel. The drought stricken peoples they left would preserve and feed the oldest first, leaving the children to perish. This is opposite of Jewish tradition:

“Jewish custom provides for great festivity and joy following the birth of a child. A boy is named when he is eight days old at his circumcision ceremony, an event of great religious importance and happy celebrating. A girl is named in the synagogue on the first day following her birth on which the Torah is read. The service, usually on the Sabbath, is likewise followed by a festive meal popularly known as a *Kiddush*.”

“Great emphasis is placed on the importance of education and religious training, which 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 in the upbringing of their children, and warned against showing favoritism.”

“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.”

“Children may not abuse their parents. According to the Bible, if a son is extremely rebellious and incorrigible and refuses to mend his ways (*ben sorer u-moreh*), his parents may agree to bring him to the town elders for judgment and punishment, which could be death by stoning. However, there is no record of such punishment ever having been carried out.”

“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 . . .”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Jesus taught that we must be as little children:

“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”  
(*Matthew 18:3*)

“In the same way that priests lift their hands in blessing, so parents place their hands on the heads of their children when they bless them. (For example, in the Bible, Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by placing his hands on their heads.) Placing the hands on another person is symbolic not only of transferring blessing but also of passing on authority. In Talmudic times, scholars received their rabbinic ordination through the symbolic act of placing of the hands (known as *semikhab*).”

“Israel's population, unlike that of the Diaspora, has a high rate of natural increase (average 2.9 children, and among orthodox Jews it is much higher).”

“The religious person employs his heart, his soul, and all of his might in an attempt to build a relationship with his Creator. This feeling is strengthened when one speaks God's words as he sits in his home and when he is traveling, when he lies down and when he rises (Deuteronomy 6:7). This

personal relationship is transferred from generation to generation when one teaches the words diligently to one's children. By determining to love God, and to seek His ways, the worshiper engages in an act called by the rabbis *kabbalat ol malkhut shamayim* ("acceptance of the duty of God's kingship"). This means that he will conduct his life as an obedient servant of God who has commanded him to pursue justice, love the stranger and his neighbor, as well as God."

"A Jewish custom developed of planting a tree at the birth of a child (a cedar for a boy and a pine for a girl) and then cutting the trees down when the children married, to be used in the construction of the bridal canopy."

"In the Middle Ages it was quite common for great rabbis or thinkers to leave a document --- to be read after death --- for their children in which they pointed out the correct way the children should live and even giving instructions with regard to specific ethical or religious behavior."  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

# “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”

*Job 1-2; 13; 19; 27; 42*

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**Summary:** *Job, a just and perfect man, is blessed with great riches—Satan obtains leave from the Lord to tempt and try Job—His property and children are destroyed, and yet he praises and blesses the Lord.*

*Satan obtains leave from the Lord to afflict Job physically—He is smitten with boils—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar come to comfort him.*

*Job testifies of his confidence in the Lord, and says: Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; and, He also shall be my salvation.*

*Job tells of the ills that have befallen him, and then testifies: I know that my Redeemer liveth—He prophesies of his own resurrection and that in his flesh he shall see God.*

*Job asserts his righteousness—When the wicked are buried in death, terrors shall take hold on them.*

*Job repents in dust and ashes—He sees the Lord with his eyes—The Lord chastises Job's friends, accepts him, and blesses him, and makes his latter end greater than his beginning.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The essence of the Book of Job really focuses on the Lord rather than on Job or any other individual. The agency that mankind was given allows a choice of following the Lord with progress that develops Godlike characteristics or following our own inherent aptitudes and the less-than-maximum possibilities God gave us.

The following quotes give some Jewish insight on the subject of Job:

“The Book of Job is the story of one man, Job, and his acceptance of the sufferings God brings upon him and his family. But the problem of the final meaning and message of the book has over the centuries aroused a wide variety of responses. To some sages of the Talmud and Midrash, Job is to be regarded as one of the few truly God-fearing men of the Bible, the most pious non-Jew who ever lived. To others he was a blasphemer.”

“Because of the experience of the aged, old age and wisdom are sometimes regarded as going together. Thus, throughout the Bible and Talmud, the word "elder" means judge, leader, or sage. On the other hand, the Book of Job also stresses that there are young men who are wiser than old men. Nevertheless, respect for the aged is always a *mitzvah* . . .”

“The Talmud states that Moses wrote the Book of Job, and records a difference of opinion as to whether Job ever really existed, or whether the story is a parable.”

“Job, like Abraham, had open doors on all four sides of his house so that strangers might have easy access. Breaches of hospitality, on the other hand, were considered punishable offenses.”

“The Book of Job is one of the *ketuvim*, which make up the third part of the canon of the Bible, is a profound expression of religious experience written by an unknown poetic genius, probably around the fifth century B.C.E. The problem posed by the book is how to reconcile seemingly unjustified suffering with belief in God who is all-powerful and just.”

“The book's hero, the gentile Job (whose name possibly derives from *ay'av* --- ("where father?") was an inhabitant of the land of Uz; his wealth in livestock and slaves exceeded that of any other man among the Edomites. Job was a righteous man and would offer sacrifices to expiate any possible sins of his ten children. Seeing his piety, an accusing angel argued with God that the true test of Job's loyalty required that he be stripped of his wealth. God agreed to test His subject, and so the story tells how Job loses all his property, his children and then his health and is reduced to disease and ruin. Yet in his suffering he utters no word of complaint against God. On the contrary, he declares "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked again will I depart. The Lord has taken what the Lord gave. The names of the Lord are blessed. "His wife attempts to persuade him to denounce God but he replies "Can we both accept the good from God and not accept the bad?" His three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, journey to his home to console him in his sufferings, which they take to be a punishment for sin, but Job adamantly rejects their comforts as illusory and denies that he is guilty of anything. He cries out against his fate and challenges God directly to justify what appears to him as mere spite. How can God require purity from creatures who are by nature impure? God replies that man is impertinent to seek answers for his suffering. Job ultimately acknowledges his ignorance in the face of the inscrutable divine, "seeing I am but dust and ashes. "God commends his stoic humility and restores him to wealth and health.”

“Opinions regarding the meaning of the Book of Job have varied throughout the ages. To some sages of the Talmud and Midrash, Job was one of the few truly God-fearing men of the Bible, while to others he was a blasphemer. According to one sage of the Talmud, Job served God out of love, while another thought his motivation was fear. Maimonides thought that Job's anguished questioning of God arose from an inadequate understanding of the divine.”

“Modern commentators are equally divided as to what the author of the Book of Job wanted to tell his readers. For in His reply to Job from the whirlwind, God majestically ignores the questions which most trouble the hero. To say that man is presumptuous is no real answer to the question of why innocence suffers. The book appears to make three main points: that there is no causal connection between earthly suffering and moral evil (that is, the good may suffer at least as much as the bad), that the vast beauty, power and complexity of Nature are a proof of an omnipotent order beyond



human understanding, and that the gulf between man's actual fate and what he thinks he deserves is a fact about which God prefers to remain silent.”

“Job's patience in his suffering has become proverbial and the phrase "the patience of Job" is used to refer to anyone with a great deal of patience. In the *aggadah*, most references to the Book of Job do not consider its hero to have been a real person. Job's sufferings are considered to be a test rather than a punishment, and he is frequently compared with Abraham, who was also tested.”

“In its original application in the Bible, "Satan" appears not as a proper name, but rather as a common noun denoting an adversary who opposes or obstructs. Its related verb also has the function of describing the actions of an antagonist in the most general sense. However, in the later books of the Bible (Zechariah and Job), "The Satan" can be found as the accepted name of a particular angel --- a prosecutor in the heavenly court. Thus it is "The Satan" who asks for and is given permission by God to test Job's piety by inflicting upon him a whole series of personal ordeals. He is, however, definitely subordinate to God and unable to act without divine permission.”

“One of the most serious challenges to religion is the problem of suffering. If God is all-powerful and good, as Judaism claims He is, how is it possible that He allows His creatures to suffer? This is not a new problem. The Bible is aware that suffering and pain are characteristic of human existence and many of the books of the Bible are concerned about the theological issues involved. The Book of Habakkuk, when it deals with one of the aspects of the problem, says that "the righteous man must live by his faith." This seems to mean that it is beyond the ability of human intelligence to understand the question and that man must have faith that God is doing the right thing . . .”

“The rabbis of the Talmud and the medieval Jewish philosophers were also troubled about the problem of suffering. Some thinkers suggested that the innocent suffer in this world so that their share in the world to come will be greater, but other philosophers rejected this idea. Another solution suggested was that suffering comes on a man in order to warn him to mend his ways and that "when a man sees that he is suffering, let him examine his deeds." The rabbis of the Talmud believed that it is a great religious virtue to bear one's suffering "with love," i.e., patiently and without becoming rebellious.”

“Whatever the solution to the theological problem of suffering, Judaism absolutely forbids inflicting suffering on other people and even on animals. Also, no man may ignore the suffering of others but must do everything in his power to help remedy the situation. This applies to physical suffering, to poverty and to psychological suffering. Furthermore, no man has the right to enjoy himself if the rest of the community is suffering.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In Judaism today, there is a definite trend away from an atonement of our sins by someone else. Obviously, the effort to steer away from Jesus who paid the ransom as the atoner has

amplified this. That is probably why the Book of Job in Jewish thought is viewed as is expressed above. The Latter-day Saint view is beautifully expressed as follows.

“When the prophets speak of an infinite atonement, they mean just that. Its effects cover all men, the earth itself and all forms of life thereon, and reach out into the endless expanses of eternity. "The word atonement," it is written in the Compendium, "signifies deliverance, through the offering of a **ransom**, from the penalty of a broken law. The sense is expressed in Job 33:24: 'Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a **ransom**.' As effected by Jesus Christ, it signifies the deliverance, through his death and resurrection, of the earth and everything pertaining to it, from the power which death has obtained over them through the transgression of Adam. Redemption from death, through the sufferings of Christ, is for all men, both the righteous and the wicked; for this earth, and for all things created upon it." (Compendium pp. 8-9.)” *(Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, Pg.64)*

**Summary:** *Jonah is sent to call Nineveh to repentance—He flees on a ship, is cast into the sea, and is swallowed by a great fish.*

*Jonah prays to the Lord, and the fish vomits him out on dry ground.*

*Jonah prophesies the downfall of Nineveh—The people repent and the city is saved.*

*Jonah is displeased with the Lord for his mercy upon the people—The Lord rebukes him.*

*The destruction of Israel is lamented—The Lord will gather the remnant of Israel.*

*In the last days, the temple shall be built, Israel shall gather to it, the Millennial era will commence, and the Lord will reign in Zion.*

*Messiah shall be born in Bethlehem—In the last days the remnant of Jacob shall triumph gloriously over the Gentiles.*

*In spite of all his goodness to them, the people have not served the Lord in spirit and in truth—They must do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before him.*

*Though Israel has rebelled, yet in the last days the Lord will have mercy on her—He will have compassion and pardon her iniquities.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The story of Jonah is his own poetic way of bearing a humble testimony that he was nothing, that he sank to the depths, and that he was to do the Lord's work instead of his own. His humility and confession may be mistaken as a "less than willing" prophet. Yet he is one of the greatest, and in fact, the most important prophet of his day.

While visiting in Israel and meeting with some of the local Saints in Jerusalem, Elder James E. Faust was asked, "Who is your favorite prophet?" Unhesitatingly, he said, "The living one."

God honored his prophets, assigning their names to events and covenants. Examples include: "The Abrahamic Covenant" that existed before Abraham and the "Law of Moses." Jonah received that honor as the only sign the Lord would give of his Messianism. A little further in this article you will see how Jesus referred to the sign of the prophet Jonah.

From Jewish sources the following comments are of interest:

"Jonah is known for the incident involving the whale, or large fish, but that episode is secondary to the lesson the Book comes to teach. Jonah learned through bitter experience that non-Jews are also God's creatures and one must not begrudge them God's love and forgiveness. Also to be learned is the fact that true repentance is accepted by God and earns His pardon for

almost any sin. Because of its theme of sin, repentance, and forgiveness, the Book of Jonah is read every Day of Atonement at the *Minhab* service.”

“In ancient literature there are several stories of people being rescued from inside fish (Heracles the Hesione, Perseus, and Andromeda); but only in that of Jonah was the rescue effected by prayer and not by force. The book is to be understood as a lesson in Divine forgiveness and mercy --- to Jonah as well as to the people of Nineveh --- and as a lesson in obedience to God's will. As a symbol of the effectiveness of repentance it is read as the *haftarah* at the afternoon service of the Day of Atonement.”

“Opinions as to the date of the Book of Jonah vary considerably. Some scholars date it as early as the eighth century B.C.E. and consider its hero to be Jonah the prophet who lived in the time of Jeroboam II. Others date it as late as the third century B.C.E.”

“The phenomenon of prophecy is founded on the basic belief that God makes His will known to chosen individuals in successive generations. A prophet is a charismatic individual endowed with the divine gift of both receiving and imparting the message of revelation. A prophet does not choose his profession but is chosen, often against his own will, as in the case of Jonah, to convey the word of God to the people regardless of whether they wish to hear it. The prophet, although conscious of being overwhelmed by the divine word and of being involved in an encounter with God, is still capable of reacting and responding, and may even engage God in dialogue.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

There are a few “sea and storm stories” in the scriptures. Their meanings and lessons for us, nowadays, have a common connection. Noah is saved by the Lord, Jonah is saved by the Lord, the Apostles on the Sea of Galilee are saved by the Lord. When “sinking,” remember, we are saved by the Lord.

“Though the Israelites were not really a seafaring nation, the Bible is full of references to the sea and ships, and in the Book of Jonah, one of the main parts of the story takes place at sea when the hero is thrown overboard in the hope of stopping a storm.”

“During the Middle Ages Jews became less involved in the actual owning and sailing of ships but remained active as sea merchants and brokers. Jews were known for producing nautical instruments and maps. Abraham Zacuto invented the astrolabe and drew up nautical tables that were invaluable to sailors. Christopher Columbus is thought by some to have been a Marrano (secret Jew) and his interpreter certainly was Jewish. In England a Marrano, Simon Fernandez, was chief pilot to Sir Walter Raleigh.” *(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

From the book, **ISRAEL REVEALED**, the following excerpts may be helpful to sense the location of Jaffa and the two powerful stories that connect in meaning and insight. Jonah learns that it is God’s will that Gentiles be saved. Peter learns the same lesson. Both

prophets sank to the depths in learning that it is God's work that "Jehovah Saves." It is a characteristic of Prophets to be so tested that the "sink to new heights."

\* \* \* \* \*

## JAFFA

**Ancient Seaport:** Jaffa (Joppa) is an ancient Old Testament caravan stop. In archaeological terms it is a *tel*, a mound of different civilizations layered one on each other after each subsequent destruction and rebuilding. This particular way station also became a seaport, possibly the oldest seaport in history. Jaffa is where the ancient prophet Jonah left for the west instead of going east to Ninevah as the Lord commanded him to do.

**Jonah:** As the Bible relates, a terrible storm arose, endangering the ship and crew. Jonah, being identified as the cause, was thrown overboard, but the Lord did not let him perish. Jonah spent three days and three nights inside the belly of a great fish.

*Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. JONAH 1:17 (see also chapters 1 & 2)*

In his own day Jonah did not know that we, twenty-nine centuries later, would be referring to his experience as a sign of the Messiah.

The entire account is so symbolic that it deserves a closer look. Instead of going north and east as the Lord instructed, Jonah went south and west. Instead of going up to Nineveh, he went down into the sea. All this seems to be a short-term defiance on Jonah's part, but the Lord Jehovah had a long-term lesson in mind. Jonah went down, personally, physically, and then the Lord brought him up. Jonah was dead (three days and three nights) and lived again. I suppose his account is one of the earliest "near death" accounts so popular today.

The popular expression about Jonah's experience is that "it's a whale of a story." Hold on! According to Jacques Cousteau, whales are rarely found in the Mediterranean. However, there exists a grouper fish that, according to experts, can grow large enough to swallow a man. There are modern tales that reveal such occurrences as well.

**God's True Name:** In reading Jonah's account, it becomes obvious that he learned a great lesson. His four chapters are an interesting study in contrasts and opposites. His own poetry and literary style are a testimony that has one purpose: It is to witness that the Lord saves. He says that clearly in chapter 2, verse 9, "Salvation is of the Lord." Since the word *Jehovah* is unspeakable in Hebrew (it means I AM—and "I am" isn't even conjugated in Hebrew), a

shortened version of Jehovah is found in “Jeho,” “Jah” or “Jahweh.” Names such as “Elijah” (my God is Jehovah), “Jeremiah” and “Hezekiah” all refer to “Yah.” The word salvation is rendered with the shortened sound “sha” or “shua,” such as in “Elisha” (my God saves). However, best of all is the Lord’s name “Jeho-shua.” This became “Joshua” and eventually that became “Jesus” in English. It means, “Jehovah saves,” or as Jonah put it, “Salvation is of the Lord.”

### MESSIANIC SIGN OF JONAH

The Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign that he was the Messiah—the Jehovah who saves. He informed them that a wicked and adulterous nation sought for signs. Jesus reminded the Pharisees that they already had the one and only sign of the Messiah they would get.

**Three Days and Three Nights:** Jonah was down in the sea for three days and three nights and then came alive again. Jesus prophesied that He would be three days and three nights in the earth and then come alive again in the resurrection.

*But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. MATTHEW 12:39-40*

As those people listened, they may have heard his words, but many did not see the real picture. At first Jonah may not have seen the entire picture either.

### TEACH THE GENTILES

**Peter’s Vision of the Sheet (Talith):** In New Testament times the city of Jaffa was some twenty feet below today’s city level. Simon Peter was staying here at the home of Simon the Tanner when he received a remarkable vision. It was the sixth hour of the day (the sixth hour is what in modern times we call noon). Simon Peter apparently was praying (religious Jews pray three times a day, covering their heads and using a special prayer cloth, a *talith*, over their shoulders). During his prayers Peter saw a sheet with knitted or knotted corners—maybe like the typical Jewish prayer shawl, a *talith* with its knotted corners—filled with all sorts of common or unclean foods. Today, this would be called unkosher. An angel commanded Peter to eat of those foods, contrary to Jewish dietary law. The vision was a conflict (or contrast) in symbolism: The talith used in the Temple as a holy garment, its 613 knots and strings symbolizing the laws given by Moses, was now filled with foods forbidden by the Law of Moses. I hasten to point out that visions really do contain pictures and sounds that convey information.

**Vision of Cornelius:** Now, connecting Peter’s vision with another experience creates an even clearer picture. On the previous day some thirty-five miles to the north at Caesarea, a Roman centurion named Cornelius received a vision at the “ninth hour” of the day. (Again, in modern times that is three o’clock in the afternoon). In the vision an angel told Cornelius to send for Peter so that he could teach Cornelius the truth. Incidentally, the time to travel the distance of thirty-five miles would take the better part of two days, or at least an overnight journey.

**Unkosher:** Cornelius’s invitation to Peter arrived just as Peter was contemplating the meaning of the unusual vision of “unkosher” foods he had just been commanded to eat. He lodged his Roman guests overnight, then departed with them to Caesarea—which took another overnight. Peter was soon to learn of the correlation of these two heavenly manifestations. When Peter arrived to visit in the house of the Roman Cornelius, again contrary to Jewish law and custom, he related that God had updated or changed the food laws of Israel (showing Israel’s singularity), and said,

*Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. ACTS 10:34-35*

Not just Israelites but all peoples were able to become children of the covenant. Somehow, the three nights and three days has a subtle reminder of Jehovah saving Jonah at Jaffa; and later from Jaffa comes the reminder that He saves all!

**Peter and Cornelius in a Chiasmus:** The scriptural report of the Peter/Cornelius events is written in a chiasmus: First we read of Cornelius’s vision, next we learn of Peter’s vision. But when Peter arrives in Caesarea, the vision of Cornelius is repeated. The center point is about the Savior: “Salvation is for all people.”

*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. ISAIAH 12:2*

\* \* \* \* \*

Micah is another prophet that writes little yet his writing bears an immense impact for us in these latter-days. Two governing headquarters of the Lord’s kingdom will exist. Two centers in the “Tops of the Mountains” should be considered. Presently, there are two dedicated centers in the two “Zions” in the two “Tops of the Mountains,” Jerusalem and Salt Lake City. The Lord will speak from two Zions.

“Micah directed his prophecy against the rich who lived in ill-gotten splendor at the expense of the poor. He warned them that God would forsake His

people and that the inevitable results of the corruption of Judah would follow: the ravaging of Judah by its enemies, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and exile. Micah stated God's demands simply: justice tempered with mercy. Micah's verses of consolation are beautiful in their vision of the glorious future of Zion: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem . . . And they the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid..." (Micah 4:5)." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)



# “I Will Betroth Thee unto Me in Righteousness”

*Hosea 1-3; 11; 13-14*

**Summary:** *Hosea and his family are a sign unto Israel—In the day of gathering, Israel shall become the sons of the living God.*

*Worshipping false gods brings severe judgments upon Israel—In the last days they shall be reconciled to God and become his people.*

*Israel shall seek the Lord, return to the Lord, and receive of his goodness in the latter days.*

*Ephraim's sins provoke the Lord—There is no Savior beside the Lord—He ransoms from the grave and redeems from death.*

*In the last days, Ephraim shall repent and return unto the Lord.*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

As with all prophets of God, the message is improving, changing and turning toward God (“to turn” is the word repentance in Hebrew). Various metaphors were used by various prophets and Hosea chooses the tender subject of marriage and moral fidelity to emphasize the nurturing and forgiving nature of our Father in Heaven.

“Hosea, is a prophet in the last years of the kingdom of Israel (up to 722 B.C.E.) and author of the Book of Hosea. (Hosea is) the first of the 12 minor prophetic books of the Bible. Most of Hosea's prophecies were oracles of doom --- the people of Israel had forsaken the Covenant, lost faith in God, and become corrupt and immoral. Because of these transgressions, God would punish the people. But Hosea describes the relationship of God and the people of Israel as essentially one of love, like that between a man and a woman, and prophecies that the divine punishment will be similar to that befitting an unfaithful wife, i.e., God will cast Israel out of its home and into exile. However, Hosea was the first prophet to introduce the theme of repentance, proclaiming that through repentance, Israel can return to its former glory. The love of God for Israel is eternal; thus, God will eventually restore His people to their land.”

“In the *aggadah*, great emphasis is placed on God's command to Hosea to marry a harlot and beget children of harlotry. God evidently wanted Hosea to experience the bitterness of being married to an unfaithful woman. This theme of Israel as the unfaithful wife appears frequently in the Prophets.”

“Jeremiah used the favorite image of the earlier prophet Hosea that the relationship between God and Israel is like that of husband and wife and that Israel, in deserting the true faith, had been like an unfaithful wife. He urged the people to acknowledge no other God than the God of Israel, and to submit to Him totally.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Hosea is to be understood as a motivator of choosing the right, which opens the gateway of hope.

“Petah Tikvah is a city seven miles east of Tel Aviv, was founded in the 1870s by a group of religious Jewish pioneers from Jerusalem, who decided to become farmers and establish a village. They called it Petah Tikvah ("Gateway of Hope") after the divine promise uttered by the prophet Hosea (2:17): "And I will give her... the valley of Achor for a gateway of hope. "It was the first Jewish village in the country, and later became known as "the mother of the moshavot," or cooperative smallholders' villages.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

“Hosea’s recurring reminder for repentance is repeated in Jewish Sabbath services that lead to the Day of Atonement. That day is a fasting day and the entire book of Jonah is read. Its symbolism of atonement is in the three nights and three days of Jonah’s experience and the Savior’s use of Jonah’s experience as a sign of His atonement for our sins.”

“Shabbat Shuvah is the Sabbath which occurs between Rosh Ha-Shanah and the Day of Atonement. The name is derived from the first word of the *Haftarah*, "Return (*shuvah*) O Israel unto the Lord" (Hosea 14:2) read on that Sabbath. The main feature of the day is the sermons of repentance delivered by the rabbis to prepare the congregants for the Day of Atonement.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

Hosea’s words are still full of hope even though he uses such strong metaphors of wickedness. He uses the good part of the life of King David in a prophesy of the latter-days also mentioned at other times by Jeremiah (30:9) and Ezekiel (34:24). The Hebrew use of the word return is the same word as repent.

“Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.” *(Hosea 3:5)*

**Summary:** *The Lord revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets—Because of Israel's rejection of prophets, and espousal of evil, the nation is overwhelmed by an adversary.*

*Amos relates how he was called of God to be a prophet—He prophesies the captivity of Israel.*

*Amos prophesies the downfall of Israel—There will be a famine of bearing the word of the Lord.*

*Israel shall be sifted among all nations—In the last days, they will be gathered again into their own land, and it shall become productive.*

*War and desolation precede the Second Coming—The sun and the moon shall be darkened—The Lord will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh—There will be dreams and visions.*

*All nations shall be at war—Multitudes stand in the valley of decision as the Second Coming draws near—The Lord will dwell in Zion.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Probably the most repeated verse of Amos is the Lord's instruction that he needs his prophets to reveal his word and will.

“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” (*Amos 3:7*)

Since the Biblical Hebrew has such a small vocabulary, it is fascinating to know that words with related meanings are placed in precise order for a rainbow of meanings. Secrets, counsel, advice, insight are all related in meaning!

“AMOS, the shepherd, was called from following his flock to become a prophet of Israel. His prophecies began two years before the great earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel, in the eighth century B.C.E.”

“The third of the twelve Minor Prophets, Amos preached a powerful message that sounds as relevant in the Western world of the twentieth century as it did in Erez Israel in Amos' own day.”

“The Book of Amos has three distinct parts. The first prophecy is a warning to Israel's neighbors -- Syria and others --- condemning their violence and aggression, especially against Israel. The exile and destruction foretold for the nations of the Near East were prophesied for Israel too, for similar sins against its own people.”

“The second section condemns the selfishness of the wealthy who regarded their affluence as a sign of God's favor. The idle rich oppressed and ignored the misery of the masses of poor people. Amos cried out against the careful observance of the Temple ritual when it ignored morality as an integral part of religion. Ritual alone does not please God, who demands that it go hand in hand with mercy and compassion.”

“The third section foretells disaster --- earthquake, pestilence, famine, and the ultimate calamity of exile, with Israel scattered among the nations unless they would return to God. The book closes with the promise of reconciliation --- that God will rebuild the fallen Tabernacle of David, and that his people will inherit all the land (9:12--15): "And I will turn the captivity of my people Israel and they shall build the waste cities and they shall inhabit them . . . and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.”

“Israel may not take for granted that God will never be angry with them, no matter what they do, just because they are the Chosen People. In fact, the prophet Amos pointed out that it is precisely because Israel is special and has a responsibility towards God that they are often punished for their sins more severely than other nations. However, it is unimaginable that God will ever reject His people completely. "And yet, for all that . . . I will not cast them away . . . to destroy them utterly and to break My covenant with them, for I am with them, the Lord their God" (Leviticus 26:4).”

“The doctrine of the End of Days (or eschatology as it is known) teaches that at a certain point in time God will drastically change the nature of the world and establish His kingdom over mankind. Originally, the Jewish conception of the End of Days was that after a time of suffering, the "Day of the Lord" would usher in an era of strength and glory for the people of Israel. But in the period before the Babylonian exile, the prophets warned that unless Israel repented its evil ways, the "Day of the Lord" would be one of punishment, not reward. Thus, Amos wrote: "Woe to you that desire the day of the Lord! . . . the day of the Lord shall be darkness, not light, gloomy, devoid of brightness" (5:18, 20). Prophets of this period, most notably Isaiah, predicted that a remnant of Israel would survive this day of destruction, and would form a new covenant with God. Isaiah introduced the theme of the eventual arrival of an ideal king of Judah, laying the foundations for the messianism which characterized later Jewish conceptions of the End of Days.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

There is a verse in the Book of Joel that bridges his day when the Lord was known to the end of days when he would not be known. The Lord has many names, one of them being “Wine” and another one, “New Wine.”

“Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine, for it is cut off from your mouth.” (*Joel 1:5*)

In the Meridian of times, the Apostle Luke seems to amplify this metaphor of the Lord being “New Wine.”

“No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.” (*Luke 5:39*)

It is generally considered that aging makes wine better, hence old wine is better than the new. At a festivity, the oldest, best wine is given first and then the more recent wine is used. When wine ran out at a marriage feast in Cana, Jesus was asked by his mother for assistance. It might be considered that he referred to one of his names (New Wine) by indicating that his time (fulfillment of New Wine) had not yet come.

“And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” (*John 2:3-4*)

He graciously, turned water into wine (very new) and it was better than the old. The prophetic metaphor of New Wine was fulfilled when Jesus, at the Last Supper, instituted a new meaning for the old ordinance of “wine and bread.” Jews still have a memory of that ritual as they pour, bless and sip wine followed by breaking, blessing and eating a piece of bread at the beginning of every Sabbath (Kiddush).

The prayers attendant to that custom anticipate a future redemption that would be greater than being redeemed from Egypt at the first Passover. The only time Jews will break, bless and eat a piece of bread first, followed by pouring, blessing and sipping wine last is when children at the traditional Passover meal (Seder) find the “hidden piece of bread” (Afikomen).

It was that piece of bread that Jesus was referring to as he blessed bread and wine, giving a new meaning to an old ordinance . . . hence, the New Wine.

“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” (*1 Corinthians 11:24-25*)

As minimal as some of the ancient prophet’s writings were, they still show the deep recognition and symbolism of the Savior’s mission. Short Biblical books are not a measure of the Prophet’s visions and understandings.

# The Glory of Zion Will Be a Defense

Lesson  
36

*Isaiah 1-6*

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**Summary:** *Israel is apostate, rebellious, and corrupt; a very small remnant only is faithful—Their sacrifices and feasts are rejected—They are called upon to repent and work righteousness—Zion shall be redeemed in the day of restoration.*

*Isaiah sees the latter-day temple, gathering of Israel, and Millennial judgment and peace—The proud and wicked shall be brought low at the Second Coming—Compare 2 Nephi 12.*

*Judah and Jerusalem shall be punished for their disobedience—The Lord pleads for and judges his people—The daughters of Zion cursed and tormented for their worldliness—Compare 2 Nephi 13.*

*Zion and her daughters shall be redeemed and cleansed in the Millennial day—Compare 2 Nephi 14.*

*The Lord's vineyard (Israel) shall become desolate and his people be scattered—Woes shall come upon them in their apostate and scattered state—The Lord shall lift an ensign and gather Israel—Compare 2 Nephi 15.*

*Isaiah sees the Lord—His sins are forgiven—He is called to prophesy—He prophesies of the rejection by the Jews of Christ's teachings—A remnant shall return—Compare 2 Nephi 16.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

As a reminder, the preface to these lesson supplements included the first two verses of the Book of Mormon. Therein the Prophet Nephi gave us the key to understanding the scriptures. We need the “learning of the Jews” along with the “knowledge of the mysteries of God.” In this case, the “mysteries” are simply the subtle, God given instructions known by the gift of the Holy Ghost. The imagery of Isaiah can best be understood by knowing his political, cultural and geographic environment. He testifies of the Messiah through everything around him. After all, he is in all things.

“He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which, it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things.  
*(Doctrine and Covenants 88:6-13)*

The following statements about Isaiah come from Jewish sources:

“Of all Israel's prophets since Moses, none sorrowed for his people like Isaiah ben Amoz. As a loving father reprimands his disobedient children, Isaiah warned them of their sins and the punishment that would inevitably follow, while he dreamed dreams of hope, peace, sanctity and justice that would someday come to Israel.”

“Isaiah was born in Jerusalem (c. eighth century B.C.E.), and he soon became familiar with its street life and inhabitants. He watched crowds of Jews swarm into the Holy Temple to sacrifice their fattened sheep, goats and bulls. Yet at the same time, some openly disobeyed many of God's commandments. They had become hypocritical. Judges dispensed their verdicts according to the bribes they received; men set their hearts on horses and chariots and put their trust in military power; women dressed in gaudy clothing and haughtily paraded through the streets; the wealthy evicted the poor from their tiny plots of land and taxed them heavily; some people, influenced by foreign customs, bowed down to stone and wooden images and sought the advice of soothsayers and witches.”

“In 740 B.C.E., moved and disturbed by what he had witnessed, Isaiah began his long mission of rebuking, comforting and restoring his people to their destined role of being "a light unto the nations." His advice was often ridiculed and ignored, but he nevertheless continued.”

“The 12 tribes of Israel had split into two factions after King Solomon's death. Two hundred years later, the kingdom of Israel was about to be destroyed by Assyria, and the kingdom of Judah was facing serious decline. Isaiah's first crisis came when the rulers of Syria and Israel tried to force Ahaz, king of Judah, to join them in an alliance against Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria. Isaiah counseled the king to be confident and calm, but Ahaz paid no attention to him and sent urgent tributes to Assyria. By appealing to Tiglath-Pileser for help, the king had invited disaster at the hands of his rescuer.”

“After the death of Ahaz, Judah was ruled by his son Hezekiah. Although he brought a temporary revival of the worship of God to Judah, he was convinced by his advisers to rebel against Judah's oppressors. In 701 B.C.E., Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, captured Judah's fortified cities and proceeded to surround Jerusalem. Isaiah told Hezekiah that God had sent Sennacherib as a rod to punish Israel but promised that "he shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields nor cast a hank against it" (37:33). A sudden plague overtook the Assyrian army and they returned hastily to their own land. Isaiah's words had been fulfilled and the Holy City was saved.”

“Only part of the biblical Book of Isaiah consists of his statesmanlike advice and shrewd political insight. Much of the rest is devoted to the inner state of the Jewish nation and is written in beautiful poetry and descriptive prose. In stark contrast to the disasters and violence of his time, Isaiah describes a glorious age, the coming of "the day of the Lord." After the evil are punished, "it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people" (11:11). With the

coming of the Messiah, Jews will come home to Jerusalem, the everlasting city. "He that scattered Israel will gather him as a shepherd his flock" (31:9). They will love God more than themselves. "The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (2:11). The whole world will be inspired by Israel's example, and there will be peace, when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (2:4)."

"Assyria and Babylon have long since turned to dust, and their stone idols have been forgotten by Israel. Yet man still worships material things, technology, the produce of his own hands. He fights wars more terrible than ever and hungers for power. Isaiah insists that man will be complete only when he tries to change himself morally, when he learns "to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (1:17). Thus, almost 3,000 years after he lived, the teachings of Isaiah, watchdog of the nation's conscience, still have great meaning and value for mankind." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

With great meaning for mankind nowadays, modern prophets keep repeating Isaiah's teaching to stand in Holy Places. Consider the following aspects of Jewish life and how they compare to the life of a Latter-day Saint: Daily, religious Jews pray for holiness, in Hebrew, Kedushah.

". . . holiness, the additions to the third benediction of the *Amidah* chanted by the *hazzan* and the congregation during those *services* (*Shabarit, Musaf, Minhab* and *Ne'ilab*, but not *Ma'ariv*) in which the *Amidah* is recited both silently and aloud. The most important part of the *Kedushah* is the recitation of three biblical verses: Isaiah 6:3 ("Holy, Holy, Holy" (*kadosh*) is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory") plus Ezekiel 3:12 and Psalms 146:10. The words which introduce each biblical verse vary according to the service and according to the liturgical tradition of the congregation."

"Foremost among the Jewish holy places is the Western Wall, the only visible remaining part of the destroyed Temple of antiquity. Prayer services are held at the Wall daily from sunrise to sunset, and thousands of people come there for prayer or meditation. Other Jewish holy places in Israel include the graves of biblical figures, famous rabbis and pious men. Visiting holy graves has long been a Jewish tradition, and some graves have become the focus of pilgrimages."

"Christian holy places are centered around the life of Jesus, his birthplace in Bethlehem (the Church of the Nativity), his crucifixion in Jerusalem (the Church of the Holy Sepulcher), and places where he traveled and preached in Nazareth and the Galilee, such as Capernaum and the Mount of Beatitudes." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Through recent studies and spiritual insights, identification of places where sacred events occurred have been more accurately defined. Being in those places and reading the accounts that happened there have a profound and enriching effect on visitors.



“The Islamic religion's holy sites are mainly in Jerusalem in a group of buildings known in Arabic as Haram al-Sharif, erected after the Arab conquest of Jerusalem on the platform of the Temple Mount. Here are located the two famous mosques, the Dome of the Rock, and the al-Aqsa Mosque, both built before 700 C.E.”

“Other religions also have holy places in the Land of Israel. The Samaritans revere Mount Gerizim, where they believe the Akedah took place and the Temple site should be. The Druze consider the grave of Jethro (Moses' father-in-law) to be holy, and his grave (called Nabi Shu'ayb) is the focus of Druze pilgrimages. The Baha'i temple in Haifa represents still another religion in Israel, and is the burial spot of the Bahai leader Mirza Ali Muhammad.”

“The history of the Holy Land has been marked by numerous "holy wars" fought by different religions struggling for control of their holy places. The wars between Christians and Muslims during the Crusades are outstanding examples. In 1949, a United States resolution called for the internationalization of Jerusalem; however, this resolution was accepted by neither party to the Arab-Israel dispute. At the end of the Israel War of Independence, most of the holy places in Erez Israel were held by Jordan, and access was denied to Jews. Following the Six-Day War of June 1967 and the reunification of Jerusalem, all of the holy sites in the Land of Israel came under Israeli administration, and freedom of access was guaranteed to all religions. The Israel government resolved to safeguard all sacred sites, and gave the head of each religious community management of its own holy places.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

There is a strong feeling among the religious (and not so religious) that we are in the “last days.” Jews have a history of being “chosen,” yet many ask as Tevia (Fiddler on the Roof) did, “Could you maybe choose someone else?”

“Being the Chosen People means receiving God's love and protection, but it also means accepting responsibilities. The prophet Isaiah says that Israel, God's servant, has been chosen for the task of spreading salvation. Israel must convince the other nations of the world that there is only one God, and must spread the true religion, and through it, happiness.”

“. . . prophets also spoke of the horrors of battle and prayed for peace. Isaiah in particular longed for the time when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

“Isaiah realized that war is not just a series of victories and defeats, of weapons and strategy. It is a very human experience involving bloodshed, suffering, and destruction.”

“True *shalom* between nations does not mean simply a temporary break in the fighting, but a settlement that both sides see as just and which removes the need for war (see Isaiah 2:4--6). Judaism is not basically pacifist in its outlook; it does not hold that resolving not to fight will bring peace. But it

does teach that in the Messianic age, all men will seek justice and war will become unnecessary.”

“The doctrine of the End of Days (or eschatology as it is known) teaches that at a certain point in time God will drastically change the nature of the world and establish His kingdom over mankind. Originally, the Jewish conception of the End of Days was that after a time of suffering, the "Day of the Lord" would usher in an era of strength and glory for the people of Israel. But in the period before the Babylonian exile, the prophets warned that unless Israel repented its evil ways, the "Day of the Lord" would be one of punishment, not reward. Thus, Amos wrote: "Woe to you that desire the day of the Lord! . . . the day of the Lord shall be darkness, not light, gloomy, devoid of brightness" (5:18, 20). Prophets of this period, most notably Isaiah, predicted that a remnant of Israel would survive this day of destruction, and would form a new covenant with God. Isaiah introduced the theme of the eventual arrival of an ideal king of Judah, laying the foundations for the messianism which characterized later Jewish conceptions of the End of Days.”

“The suffering of the Jewish people in the period surrounding the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E. produced a great deal of apocalyptic literature with its own conception of the End of Days. The apocalyptic belief held that the end of the physical world was imminent, and that this would be followed by the advent of the Messiah and the establishment of the kingdom of God. Believers in apocalypse turned their attention from the sufferings of the real world in which they lived to the promise of an approaching Divine world, in which the wicked would be punished and the righteous rewarded. The recently-discovered scrolls of the Dead Sea Sects provide one of the best examples of this literature. The rabbis of the Talmud did not view this belief in apocalypse favorably, which accounts for the exclusion of the apocalyptic books from the canon of the Bible.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Twenty centuries later, the gathering of Israel is taking place. There are approximately thirteen to thirteen and a half million Jews in the world. Just sixty years ago, there were approximately one hundred thousand Jews in what is known as the Land of Israel. By now, close to six million Jews reside in Israel. Close to a million of them are Russian-speaking Jews who immigrated within the last ten years.

“Wandering from place to place, has been one of the major components of Jewish history, for since the time of the Patriarchs the "wandering Jew" has suffered from a lack of territory, government, and defense. Major Jewish migrations in search of favorable living conditions and in flight from harassment, persecution and expulsion, include the Exodus from Egypt, the Babylonian exile, Jewish settlement outside Erez Israel during the Second Temple period, the dispersion under the Roman and Near Eastern empires after the destruction of the Second Temple. The scattering of Jews throughout the Christian and Islamic states, culminating in the expulsion from the Iberian peninsula in 1492 and their settlement in the New World since the early stages of the European colonization, a process that greatly accelerated in the latter half of the 19th century. Throughout the period of the Diaspora, small

numbers of Jews made their way back to Ere Israel, the land promised them in a covenant with their God.”

“The ten tribes, which once inhabited the northern kingdom of Israel, were exiled in 722 B.C.E. and subsequently disappeared.”

“The Jewish nation originally consisted of twelve tribes: ten inhabited the north and were called the Kingdom of Israel, and two (Judah and Benjamin), in the south, were called the Kingdom of Judah. After the Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.E., its inhabitants were exiled to "Halah and Habor by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (II Kings 17:6 and 18:11). They were never seen again, and only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which were exiled to Babylon in 586 B.C.E., eventually succeeded in returning to their homeland.”

“Although the ten tribes disappeared, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel promised that the time would come when they would be reunited with the remainder of the Jewish nation. This promise kept alive the hope that the ten tribes still existed and would be found.”

“Many legends were created to explain how the tribes disappeared, where they went and where they are now. Their inability to rejoin their brethren was attributed to the fact that they were exiled beyond the legendary river Sambatyon, whose mysterious powers kept them from crossing.”

“Numerous attempts have been made by travelers and explorers to discover the ten tribes, or to identify them with different people. Almost every nation, including the Japanese, Persians, the Falashas of Ethiopia, Red Indians, and the British, have been suggested as descendants of the lost tribes.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

In Tel Aviv, the Diaspora Museum displays the supposed travels and dispersion of the tribes of Israel. The museum curators also identify “Mormons” as those claiming to be part of the lost tribes, identifying themselves for the most part as “Ephraimites.”

Observance of Jewish tradition and laws is expressed as the code of ethics of Jewish life.

“The ethical life is basic to Jewish religious observance: "Love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:18). Love of God is incomplete without love of man. This precept underlies the rules of conduct which the Torah prescribes to eliminate the harm to individuals or to society caused by man's inhumanity to man. The Jewish ideal is a high and noble one and not easy to achieve. Even the great figures in the Bible -- Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Aaron --- were imperfect human beings with human failings. Judaism does not require perfection but does demand that man should be aware of his limitations and his weaknesses, and should strive at all times to overcome them.”

“In Jewish law, since animals are part of creation, man must bear responsibility for them. Thus the Torah demands that compassion and kindness be shown toward animals, both in routine dealings and in ritual

matters. Thus the dietary laws which remain to this day a distinctive feature of religious observance specify clearly which animals may be eaten and how they are to be prepared for food.”

“Although animal slaughter is permitted to provide food for man it must be done humanely. The Jewish method of slaughter, which is painless and instantaneous, is (known by the rules of) *shebitah*.”

“Whatever the reasons for the commandments, it is clear that a person who observes them carefully will constantly be aware of the presence of God in his life. Indeed, the benediction with which the observance of most commandments is to be prefaced explicitly points to its being in conformity with God's will. Judaism insists on belief, faith and good deeds (which are also called *mitzvot*); but by themselves they are not enough. The actual observance of the *mitzvot*, notwithstanding the fact that it may occasionally cause inconvenience, is a prime doctrine of Judaism.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The prime factor of religious observance for the Jews is keeping the Sabbath day holy. They feel that Sabbath observance identifies them over all other peoples.

“The Hebrew name for the Sabbath is Shabbat, which derives from a root meaning to cease or desist. It gets this name because the Bible tells us that on the seventh day of Creation, God "*shavat mi-kol melakhto*" --- He "ceased" or "desisted" from all His work (i.e., of Creation). It is from this that the supreme importance of the Sabbath derives; observance of the Sabbath is an act of testimony to the fact that God created the world.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Observance for religious Jews includes personal improvement and improving life around them.

“The yearning for the Messiah underlies the . . . teaching that the mystical task of the Jewish people is to correct the imperfection in the world --- the existence of evil and impurity. This can be done through devout prayer and strict observance of the precepts of the Torah. Only then will the Messiah come.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In Judaism there is a daily prayer (Amidah) asking for forgiveness.

“Mercy and forgiveness, says the Talmud, are distinguishing characteristics of Abraham and his seed, and these characteristics motivated God to choose Israel as His people.”

“Fasting is an act of repentance or of supplication seeking divine forgiveness or the prevention of disaster. Public fasts also commemorate catastrophic events in Jewish history.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Wearing white clothing, specifically robes and the Talith (prayer garment) denotes the desire to be pure and spotless from the sins of generations around them.

“In Ashkenazi tradition it is not just the bride who wears white on her wedding day. The groom, too, stands under the canopy wearing his white *kitel*, or robe, over his wedding finery. The day of their marriage is a solemn one for the bride and groom. They pray that their past sins will be forgiven and they can start their life together afresh. The white of their clothing symbolizes the purity and the forgiveness of sin for which they are hoping. For this reason a similar garment is used to clothe the dead for burial. The *kitel* therefore also serves to remind the wearer of how brief life is, and of the necessity for atonement.”

“The exercise of mercy is an obligation for all Jews. By this it is meant that they must act with compassion and forgiveness towards all mankind, and perform deeds of charity and kindness. This quality is an essential characteristic of God who is known as *Rahum* ("Merciful") and, in accordance with the tradition which sets as man's goal the imitation of God: "As He is merciful, so be you merciful." Just as God is bound by His covenant of mercy with His people, so is the Jew bound by specific commandments to act mercifully to the oppressed, the alien, the orphan, the widow, and indeed, every living creature.”

“One of the most important theological doctrines of both the Bible and the Talmud is that if a sinner repents his bad deeds, God will forgive him. Repentance consists of several stages --- firstly the sinner must reflect on his actions and realize that he has indeed done the wrong thing. He must then make up his mind never to do it again, and confess his sin. This confession is not made to any other human being but is made by the sinner directly to God. On this basis the two confessions *Ashamnu* and *Al-Het* were introduced into the prayers for the Day of Atonement which is a special occasion for repentance and forgiveness. However, even when a sinner has done all these things, his repentance is still not final until he has been exposed to the same temptation and withstood it. Of course he should not deliberately put himself on that spot again.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

As to the “worldliness” around them, religious Jews have traditionally dressed in distinctive, modest clothing. There are signs in the religious neighborhoods in Israel asking every passerby to be modestly clothed. Those with shorts or skimpy clothes may get a dishpan of soapy water thrown at them from balconies above. Beware!

“Our first fashion record is the Bible, which describes common, priestly, and royal dress . . . The Talmud stresses that "a man's dignity is seen in his costume." A scholar must be spotless and neat . . . From ancient times Jewish women were known for their modesty. Their hair was always covered, their dresses plain and white. Fine clothing was worn on Sabbath and holidays, simple clothing on weekdays.”

“A walk through the streets of almost any city today in Israel, reveals a colorful mixture of old and new --- a challenge to the amateur detective, who can amuse himself by deducing the origin of each passing stranger according to his dress. The clues are not far to seek. Many elderly North African men still wear their traditional long simple gowns; many Indian women still wear their loose fitting colorful silk pantaloons, capes and shawls and many

Ethiopian women and men don bright regal-like African attire on special occasions.”

“On Sabbath and holidays, the *shtreimel* covers many venerable heads. It is usually accompanied by traditional garb --- a silk gold-and-black striped gown, a broad white belt, white socks, and black buckled shoes. With practice, the eager observer learns to identify the members of each hasidic sect by its distinctive garb and headgear. Indeed, the *kippa* alone can indicate its wearer's origins: Georgian migrants wear four-sided floral-embroidered *kippot*; certain groups in Me'ah She'arim wear pointed white ones; the graduates of certain long-established yeshivot always wear black cotton ones; while the students of the more modern Zionist-oriented yeshivot favor a *kippah serugab* (crocheted kipa) in bright colors.”

“In contrast to all these, is the native Israeli who gives away his identity by his brand-new Levis, his designer shirt, and his portable cellular telephone. In the early years of the state, Israelis did not pay too much attention to fashion. In fact, it was very rare that a man wore a tie and jacket or a woman wore a dress and high heels. All that has changed. In the 1990s, there is a better chance of feeling underdressed rather than overdressed. Israelis, both young and old, have generally shunned the traditional casual wear of their parents for a more trendy, upbeat and metropolitan look. Tel Aviv's trendy Sheinkin Street is Israel's answer to Greenwich Village and is home to Israel's latest fashion trends and tastes.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

As discussed in the first few lesson supplements, the explainable concept of God and Satan have basically disappeared in modern Judaism. That, of course, would be Satan's main goal. Yet the concepts of good and evil are still basic to Jewish life.

“Basic to Judaism is the firm belief that all of life is good. The Bible proclaims: "And God saw all that He had made and found it very good" (Genesis 1:31). Yet how can we fit catastrophe, pain, moral evil and sin into God's design of Creation? The earlier books of the Bible deal very little with the problem of the existence of evil. In the later books, however, questions concerning the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous become familiar. The question appears in Jeremiah, in Isaiah, Job and Psalms, and various answers have been given by talmudists and philosophers.”

“The rabbis of the Talmud taught that as good derives from God who is merciful and loving, so does evil. This also removes any idea of separate gods. The rabbis say that just as a man blesses God for the good bestowed upon him, so must he bless Him for evil. To the vexing problem of the seemingly unjust distribution of good and evil the replies are varied. One answer is that it is beyond the understanding of man's mind. Another opinion states that the righteous, suffering in this world, might be receiving punishments for the sins of their ancestors, while the wicked may be prospering because of *zechut avot*, the merit of pious ancestors. The most widespread explanation is that the righteous receive their punishment for any small transgression so they can then enjoy their full reward in the world to come. The wicked are rewarded in this world for the slightest good deed but

in the next world they will reap the full measure of punishment they deserve. The sufferings of the righteous are also a sort of test, "afflictions of love" which develop in them patience and complete faith. The Book of Job and other biblical sources support this view. Evil initiated by man himself is considered the product of his evil inclination, the *yezer ha-ra*, a distinct part of man's nature. Yet, it is within man's power to restrain and redirect his evil inclination with the guidance of Torah and its teachings, the only proven antidote. This self-control enables man to serve God with both his good and evil inclinations, helping him to live a good life, and to grow in holiness." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The teaching that God's hand is always outstretched is reflected in basic Israelite virtue:

"Hospitality is considered by Judaism to be one of the most important virtues that a person can develop. This has been true since the time of ancient Israel, when hospitality was not merely a question of good manners, but a moral institution which grew out of the harsh desert and nomadic existence of the people of Israel. The biblical customs of welcoming the weary traveler and receiving the stranger in one's midst developed into an important Jewish virtue. Isaiah states that one of the duties of the pious is to "deal thy bread to the hungry" and to "bring the poor that are cast out to thy house."

"The Bible is full of examples of hospitality. Abraham, for example, broke off a conversation with God Himself in order to receive guests (the three angels), and though weak in health, ran out to meet them, personally washed their feet, served them food, and made them feel welcomed and honored. Rebekah, Abraham's future daughter-in-law, showed hospitality not only to his servant but to his thirsty camels as well, thus proving herself worthy of marrying Isaac. Jethro was angry that his daughters had not invited Moses to their home, and the prophet Elijah was a permanent guest in the home of the Shunammite woman. Job, like Abraham, had open doors on all four sides of his house so that strangers might have easy access. Breaches of hospitality, on the other hand, were considered punishable offenses."

"In Talmudic literature, hospitality is a great *mitzvah*, and is even more important, according to some rabbis, than prayer. The guest should be shown his room on arrival, so that he will enjoy his meal and not have to worry about where he will sleep later. The host is forbidden to make his guest uncomfortable by appearing miserable or sad, or by watching him too closely when he eats. The guest too, has responsibilities, including showing gratitude to his host, and complying with his host's wishes. Guests must not accept hospitality if they think that doing so will impoverish the host."

"Rabbi Levi Isaac of Berdichev always served his guests personally and made up their beds for them. When asked why he did not leave these duties to his servants, he replied: "Hospitality is an excellent deed when performed without pay. The servant would do it for pay, and the intrinsic kindness of the good deed would be lost." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Summary:** *Jerusalem shall be attacked and scourged—Her people shall be carried captive—Messiah shall hold the key of the house of David, inherit glory, and be fastened as a nail in a sure place.*

*Men shall transgress the law and break the everlasting covenant—At the Second Coming they shall be burned, the earth shall reel, and the sun be ashamed—Then shall be the Lord reign in Zion and in Jerusalem.*

*In mount Zion the Lord shall prepare a gospel feast of fat things—He shall swallow up death in victory—It shall be said: Lo, this is our God.*

*Trust in the Lord forever—Jehovah shall die and be resurrected—All men shall rise in the resurrection.*

*Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim!—Revelation comes line upon line, and precept upon precept—Christ, the sure foundation, is promised.*

*Nephites shall speak as a voice from the dust—The apostasy, restoration of the gospel, and coming forth of Book of Mormon are foretold—Compare 2 Nephi 27.*

*Israel scattered for rejecting her seers and prophets—She shall be gathered and blessed temporally and spiritually—The Lord shall come in a day of apostasy to judge and destroy the wicked.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Isaiah uses simple symbolisms and metaphors as he reports history in the making as prophecy of the future. The knowledge of his surroundings and history removes the complications many people usually associate with his wonderful literature.

A reflection of some of his meanings can still be seen in Jewish thought in this day and age. Here are some Jewish reflections on words that are, in most cases, subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) names of the Lord. As an example in the following quotes, “mercy” is underlined for emphasis.

“A recurrent theme in (Isaiah’s) writings is the coming of God in His fierce anger to punish Israel and the nations. Yet the divine wrath is but an instrument with which to humble the arrogant and punish the evildoers. Once this anger has accomplished its purpose, God will show His graciousness and mercy to the holy seed that will remain when the work of destructive purification has been fulfilled.”

“The Hebrew word for justice is *zedek*, and indicative of Judaism's attitude is the fact that another form of the same root *zedakab*, means "charity." For justice must be tempered with mercy and indeed the main attribute of God is His integration of justice and mercy. Yet another Hebrew word derived from the same root is *zaddik*, which means "righteous." The righteous man is one who is both just and merciful.”



“The exercise of mercy is an obligation for all Jews. By this it is meant that they must act with compassion and forgiveness towards all mankind, and perform deeds of charity and kindness. This quality is an essential characteristic of God who is known as *Rahum* (“Merciful”) and, in accordance with the tradition which sets as man's goal the imitation of God: “As He is merciful, so be you merciful.” Just as God is bound by His covenant of mercy with His people, so is the Jew bound by specific commandments to act mercifully to the oppressed, the alien, the orphan, the widow, and indeed, every living creature.”

“The stress placed upon this quality is evident both in the many charitable institutions existing in Jewish communal life, and in the daily prayers which implore God to deal compassionately even with the undeserving man. Human beings are frail, imperfect creatures constantly open to error, and so they are totally dependent on God's mercy.”

“. . . God, as depicted by the rabbis, embodies a combination of justice and mercy, of strict judgment and lenient compassion. This combination of justice and mercy in God is represented by the two names of God --- Elohim and YHWH. The former stands for justice and the latter for mercy. Though they may seem contradictory, one actually complements the other and, when there is a conflict between the two, God usually favors mercy.”

“Judaism demands of its judges this same balance, and the principle of mercy thus assumes extreme importance in the administration of Jewish law. The prophet Zechariah (7:9) put it: “. . . execute the judgment and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother.”

“Mercy and forgiveness, says the Talmud, are distinguishing characteristics of Abraham and his seed, and these characteristics motivated God to choose Israel as His people.”

“Throughout the numerous persecutions and oppressions which the Jews suffered, the Jewish attitude toward Christianity was molded. The Jews viewed Christianity as the contradiction between the high ideals it preached (love, mercy and “turning the other cheek”) and the violent anti-Semitism and discrimination it practiced.”

“The prophets cried out against hypocrisy and social injustice, “What does the Lord require of thee: only to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God” (Micah 6:8). This is one of many passages which sum up the ethical principles which are at the heart of Jewish religion and which have influenced later religions.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

There were items named “mercy” that had powerful lessons to the ancient Child-rem of Israel. The Mercy Gate (also known as the Gate of Forgiveness and the Gate Beautiful) was to remind Israel that as the goat or lamb “escaped” with the sins of the people to die on its own outside the temple, God, in His mercy, forgives, and that is beautiful! The mercy seat in the temple was a reminder of God’s mercy as well.

On the words strength and refuge, which are more of the Lord's names, consider the cities of refuge which were assigned to give the accused protection until their trials could occur and proper justice and mercy be carried out:

“. . . were places where a person who accidentally killed someone could flee to be safe from the vengeance of the dead man's relatives. It is natural that if a man was slain, his relatives would be eager to avenge his blood by killing the murderer, and in their anger might not stop to consider that the murder might have been accidental. Therefore, the Torah designated six cities (which belonged to the Levites) to be places of asylum and safety for the manslayer.”

“In addition to these six, the remaining 42 Levitical cities were later also designated as places where a manslayer could seek refuge. But in these cities, he would have to specifically request protection.”

“The Torah specifies that the cities of refuge should be located so that from anywhere in the land of Israel a person fleeing could reach a city of refuge with ease. Accordingly, the six cities of refuge were spaced as follows: three on the east bank of the Jordan and three on the west bank; for each group of three, a city in the north, middle and south of the country. In order to further facilitate the escape of a fleeing murderer, road signs had to be put up at all crossroads to show the way to the cities of refuge. Moreover, all roads leading to such cities had to be straight and level, and always kept in good repair.”

*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

The concept and name “feast” is another reference to the Savior. Isaiah's central purpose was to teach the identity, characteristics and personality of the Savior.

“A feast held in connection with religious acts is called *se'udab shel mitzvah* and is the duty of every Jew. Whether to celebrate a joyous family occasion such as a wedding, or to honor a holiday by eating festive meals, a *se'udab shel mitzvah* must be eaten in the spirit of pleasure and enjoyment, blessing and thanksgiving, being particularly careful to avoid overeating.”

“The Talmud describes in detail the various modes of conduct to be observed at meals. For example persons should engage in a discussion of Torah during the meal so that they will be "as though they had eaten at the table of God." Furthermore, the table is regarded as a substitute for the altar in the Temple, and therefore, it must be treated with reverence. Before any meal, the hands must be washed pronouncing the appropriate blessing over the washing, after which bread is eaten. The meal is concluded with the Grace after Meals.”

“When a meal is eaten for the purpose of honoring a festival or rejoicing in the fulfillment of a commandment, it is considered more than an ordinary meal; it is a *se'udab shel mitzvah*. Psalm 126, *shir ha- ma'alot*, is recited before Grace after Meals, and in the Grace itself, there is usually an additional paragraph appropriate to the occasion. Such festive meals include the following:

1) The meals eaten on the Sabbath and festivals, Kiddush over wine is recited before two of the meals of the Sabbath or holiday (evening and morning) and the third meal which is required on the Sabbath and which is known as *se'udab shelishit*, is often accompanied by a short sermon of Torah. All these meals are characterized by the singing of hymns (*zemirot*), the presence of two loaves of bread (*ballot*), and the eating of fish or meat which are considered festive dishes. In addition, each holiday has its own traditional dishes which are served at its festive meals.

2) A *melaveh malkah*, a festive meal held after the departure of the Sabbath,

3) the Passover seder,

4) the Purim dinner,

5) the meal before the fast of the Day of Atonement (*se'udab mafseket*),

6) the *siyyum*, a feast made on the completion of the study of a Talmudic tractate. Such a feast is usually held on the morning of the eve of Passover so that the firstborn can participate (and thereby be exempt from fasting on that day), and

7) the banquet of the *bevra kaddisha* (the burial brotherhood) held on the Seventh of Adar.”

“Joyous family occasions also have various *se'udot shel mitzvah* connected with them:

1) the circumcision feast,

2) the meal at the ceremony of the redemption of the firstborn (*pidyon ha-ben*),

3) the festive meal celebrating a bar mitzvah,

4) the betrothal and wedding feasts, and

5) the meal on the occasion of dedicating a new home (*se'udat hanukkat ha-bayit*).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The word “tears” has many messianic implications. The salt water used for dipping the lettuce and/or parsley at the Passover Seder feast is to remind us of the tears of the Israelites when in bondage. Those tears were to be turned to tears of joy because they were “delivered.” Hasidic Jewish scholars teach that tears of joy are commendable.

The understanding of the term “resurrection” is quite lost by most Christians and Jews. In previous discussions we have pointed out that for Jews, the concept of God has diminished since the days of Biblical writings that constantly referred to God in anthropomorphic terminology. Likewise, the concept of life after death in a resurrected state has largely disappeared and when used, it refers mostly to the righteous in a distant future. Resurrection is one of the Lord’s names.

“. . . the righteous of all generations will be reunited at the time of the resurrection of the dead during the messianic period. This concept of

community and shared fate is referred to often in the Talmud with the terms *kelal Yisrael* and *keneset Yisrael*.”

“They (Essenes) believed in reward and punishment; in immortality of the soul; but not in physical resurrection.”

“Some rabbis believed in resurrection. That is that at a certain point in time God will bring everybody back to life and then the world will be a perfect place and physical life will go on indefinitely. This doctrine poses some obvious difficulties: the body actually decomposes after burial so how can it be reconstituted; furthermore what about overpopulation of the world? Those who believe in resurrection claim that anyway the whole process will be miraculous and the miracle will solve all the problems. Other rabbis however denied physical resurrection entirely and understood the afterlife to be a completely spiritual experience.”

“The argument about resurrection lasted well into the Middle Ages, and was one of the reasons for the sharp attacks against Maimonides. Many believed that he denied the doctrine and his views started a controversy that lasted for hundreds of years. In modern times most Jewish theologians do not subscribe to the doctrine of physical resurrection and movements such as Reform Judaism do not consider it to be a necessary belief for the Jew.”

“The whole subject of an afterlife is not explicitly stated in the Bible and many scholars are of the opinion that belief in an afterlife was adopted by Jews during the Babylonian exile after the destruction of the First Temple when they came into contact with eastern religions such as Zoroastrianism.”

“Traditional believers claim that there are "hints" to future life in the Torah, such as the verse "Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song" (Exodus 15:1). The Hebrew word for "sang" is in the future tense and the sages took this to mean that Moses and the Israelites will sing in the future, that is, in the world to come.”

“The Savior being our foundation,” refers to him as being the Rock, the Stone, the Chief Corner Stone. Stones were used as symbols of him.

“Precious stones are mentioned in various contexts in the Bible, the most comprehensive list appearing in the description of the *boshen*, the breastpiece worn by the high priest. The breast piece was set with 12 precious stones, representing the Tribes of Israel, and although it is difficult to determine the modern names of the stones, it is likely that jasper, sapphire, and amethyst were among them. The stones were arranged in four rows of three, and the third stone of the second row was called *yabalom*, which means diamond in modern Hebrew. Scholars, however, doubt that diamonds were known in biblical times.”

“In Talmudic time, precious stones were used as ornaments by both men and women. The Talmud and Midrash attach magical, medical and psychological influences to precious stones, and throughout rabbinical literature, precious

stones are used along with gold and silver as symbols of wealth.”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Even the commandments of God were written on stone to be our foundation, our guide, our measuring device.

“In biblical times weights were for the most part made of stone, hence the Bible refers to weights generally as "stones" (*even*).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In Jesus’ day, he chose Simon the son of Jonah to be the lead Apostle and named him “The Rock,” Peter. Remember, Peter sank in the waters of Galilee in order to learn that Jesus was The Rock of Salvation.”

“. . . And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him . . . wherefore didst thou doubt?” (*Matthew 14:29-31*)

Isaiah and other prophets wrote about the Lord who “directs our paths.” The idea is repeated in Jewish teachings.

“Solomon, the Gaon of Vilna . . . emphasized the study of Torah as the supreme duty of the Jew and the safest path to follow in the search for the truth.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The lesson of letting God direct our paths is sometimes taught in opposite terminology, such as various verses in the Book of Proverbs.

“My son, if sinners entice thee consent thou not . . . restrain thy foot from their path for their feet run to evil . . . Forget not my teaching, but let thy heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace will they add to thee.”

The following is a partial list of symbolisms and/or names of the Lord. Each name has one or more prophet’s testimony, historical and prophetic, of the Savior and his mission.

### **Names and Symbols of The Lord**

1. ADVOCATE	25. CLOTH, NEW	48. HIDING PLACE	70. MASTER
2. ALMIGHTY	CLOTH	49. HIGH TOWER	71. MEDIATOR
3. ANCHOR	26. CORNER STONE	50. HOLY ONE	72. MERCIFUL
4. ASHES	27. COUNSELOR	51. I AM	73. MERCY
5. AXE	28. COVER, COVERT	52. IMMANUEL	74. MESSENGER
6. BANNER	29. CRAFTSMAN	53. JEHOVAH	75. MESSIAH
7. BEAUTIFUL	30. CREATOR	54. JOY	76. MIGHTY
8. BEGGAR	31. DIVINE SON	55. JUDGE	77. MORNING STAR
9. BEGOTTEN	32. DOOR	56. KEY	78. NEW WINE
10. BELOVED	33. EXEMPLAR	57. KING	79. ONLY BEGOTTEN
11. BLOOD	34. FATHER	58. KING OF	80. PRINCE
12. BODY	35. FIRSTBORN	RIGHTEOUSNESS	81. RABBI
13. BOUGH	36. FORGIVENESS	59. LAMB	82. REDEEMER
14. BRANCH	37. FOUNDATION	60. LAW GIVER	83. REFUGE
15. BREAD OF LIFE	38. FOUNTAIN	61. LAW	84. RESURRECTION
16. BREAD	39. GLORY	62. LAWYER	85. RIVER
17. BRIDE	40. GOD	63. LEAST	86. ROCK
18. BRIDEGROOM	41. GOOD SHEPHERD	64. LIFTER	87. ROD
19. BRIGHT STAR	42. GOODNESS	65. LIGHT	88. SALVATION
20. BRIGHTNESS	43. GRACIOUS	66. LIVING WATER	89. SAVIOR
21. BUCKLER	44. GREAT	67. LORD	90. SERVANT
22. CAPTAIN	45. GREATEST	68. LORD OF HOSTS	91. SHADE, SHADOW
23. CHILD	46. HEAD	69. LORD OF THE	92. SHIELD
24. CHRIST	47. HELP	SABBATH	93. SHEPHERD

One of the fascinating things in Judaism is the repetitive keeping of customs even long after their meanings have faded. For example, when visiting the Western (Wailing) Wall, you are seeing reminders of ancient temple worship.

Men are on one side, women on the other. Head covering is used and robes (Talith) are placed on one shoulder and then another while certain words are recited. There is a sash (or "girdle") tied with the bow on one side. Levites wear aprons. Some Jews still remove their shoes when approaching the Wall. Small pieces of paper are placed between the cracks of the old temple wall stones with names written on them, names of people who require special prayers and blessings. There is a minimum of ten who form a prayer circle (Minyan) so that prayers, readings of the scriptures and instructions can be done. Someone is always at hand to assist the person reading or reciting to read with correct intonations and to follow proper clothing and recitation procedures.

Some practices have ceased, even though they were still in use just a hundred years ago. One of those practices is reflected in the thousands of old nails slightly protruding out of the cracks in the wall. An old Rabbi described them as the "sure nails" pounded into the wall to fasten their sins so that people could leave their burdens and get on with life.

Isaiah speaks clearly about this in five powerful verses in his twenty-second chapter. The term "house of David" honors him who purchased "Temple Square" and gathered the materials to build the "House of the Lord." The sealing powers of the Lord are referred to as "he shall open" and "he shall shut." The Lord will be nailed surely (there is written and archaeological evidence that the Romans nailed in the hands and in the wrists to make the crucifixion stronger). The "Glorious throne of His Father's House" means the Lord was willing to take the sins of all mankind upon Himself.

We are blessed in that we can "fasten our sins" upon him. Apparently, in ancient times these sins were symbolically collected, small sins in cups, larger ones in flagons, so that they could be disposed of. Sometimes this was done by placing them on a lamb or goat and letting it escape out the Gate of Mercy (as previously mentioned, also know as the Gate of Forgiveness and the Gate Beautiful) to die on its own.

"And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it." (*Isaiah 22:21-25*)

**Summary:** *Isaiah speaks Messianically—Prepare ye the way of the Lord—He shall feed his flock, like a shepherd—Israel’s God is incomparably great.*

*To Israel the Lord says: Ye are my servants; I will preserve you—Idols are nothing—One shall bring good tidings to Jerusalem.*

*Isaiah speaks Messianically—The Lord shall bring his law and his judgment, be a light to the Gentiles, and free the prisoners—Praise ye the Lord.*

*To Israel the Lord says: I am thy God; I will gather thy seed; beside me there is no Savior; ye are my witnesses.*

*The Lord’s Spirit shall be poured out on the seed of Israel—Idols of wood are as fuel for a fire—The Lord shall gather, bless, and redeem Israel, and rebuild Jerusalem.*

*Cyrus shall free the captives of Israel from Babylon—Come unto Jehovah (Christ) and be saved—To him every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear.*

*Idols are not to be compared with the Lord—He alone is God and shall save Israel.*

*Babylon and Chaldea shall be destroyed for their iniquities—None shall save them. Isa. 48 The Lord reveals his purposes to Israel—They have been chosen in the furnace of affliction and are to go forth from Babylon—Compare 1 Nephi 20.*

*Messiah shall be a light to the Gentiles and shall free the prisoners—Israel shall be gathered with power in the last days—Kings shall be their nursing fathers—Compare 1 Nephi 21.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The other day at the Western (Wailing) Wall, I was reading Isaiah to the gathered guests around me. It was a festive “Bar Mitzvah” day, there was a pleasant spirit as I let the scriptures speak for themselves, offering pauses and voice inflections that allowed key words to explain themselves. A young man, an Orthodox Jew who was observing and listening to us, began to say that Isaiah could not be understood in English, that we were interpreting it incorrectly. Even though we were not reading about a “virgin birth,” he said that there are different meanings for “virgin.” I thought, what made him refer to the virgin when we were reading something completely different? Was the spirit telling him something that the conscious mind did not want to accept? My guests smiled as they noticed his objection to our sensing the Savior’s qualities - just letting Isaiah speak. I gently responded to him in Hebrew. It says the same in Hebrew!

Remember, there are two things necessary to understand the scriptures - the learning of the Jews and the Holy Spirit that reveals the subtleties. This lesson chapter deals with so many qualities of the Lord that it would be impractical to comment on each one. One beautiful attribute is his being, his body that he gave for us. Could Isaiah have been suggesting that everything around us can remind us of him, even “body language” refers to him? The Lord was called from the womb, a perfect body with attributes as eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, neck, heart, shoulder, hands, arms, belly, leg, knee, and foot.



“Lift up your eyes on high,” *Isaiab 40:26*; “To open the blind eyes,” *Isaiab 42:7*;  
 “Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears . . .”  
*Isaiab 43:8*; Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but  
 he heareth not.” *Isaiab 42:20*; “. . . thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow  
 brass;” *Isaiab 48:4*; “. . . for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” *Isaiab*  
*40:5*; “. . . the hand of the LORD hath done this. . .” *Isaiab 41:20*; “Hear, ye  
 deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.” *Isaiab 42:18*; “. . .for he hath shut  
 their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.”  
*Isaiab 44:18*; “. . .Thou hast heard, see all this . . .” *Isaiab 48:6*; “Kings shall see.  
 . .” *Isaiab 49:7*; “And they shall be made perfect notwithstanding their  
blindness,” *JST Isaiab 42:20*; “. . . formed me from the womb . . . glorious in the  
eyes of the LORD,” *Isaiab 49:5*; “Lift up thine eyes round about,” *Isaiab 49:18*;  
 “. . . say again in thine ears,” *Isaiab 49:20*; “. . . for the mouth of the LORD  
 hath spoken it.” *Isaiab 40:5*; “. . . the word is gone out of my mouth . . . every  
knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” *Isaiab 45:23*; “I have declared the  
 former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I  
 showed them . . . and they came to pass.” *Isaiab 48:3*; “. . . my mouth like a  
 sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me,” *Isaiab 49:2*; “. . .  
 their tongue faileth . . .” *Isaiab 41:17*; “. . . yet he laid it not to heart.” *Isaiab*  
*42:25*; “. . . considereth in his heart . . .” *Isaiab 44:19*; “. . . a deceived heart . . .  
 my right hand . . .” *Isaiab 44:20*; thou didst not lay these things to thy heart,”  
*Isaiab 47:7*; “Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these,  
 seeing I have lost my children,” *Isaiab 49:21*; “. . . He hath no hands . . .”  
*Isaiab 45:9*; “. . . and concerning the work of my hands . . .” *Isaiab 45:11*; “. . .  
 my hands, have stretched out the heavens . . .” *Isaiab 45:12*; “I have graven  
 thee upon the palms of my hands . . .” *Isaiab 49:16*; “. . . make bare the leg, un-  
 cover the thigh . . .” *Isaiab 47:2*; “. . . the Lord GOD will come with strong  
hand, and his arm shall rule for him;” *Isaiab 40:10*; “. . . he shall gather the  
 lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom . . .” *Isaiab 40:11*; “. . . his  
arm shall be on the Chaldeans . . .” *Isaiab 48:14*; “. . . with the strength of his  
arms . . .” *Isaiab 44:12*; “I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my  
 standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy  
 daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.” *Isaiab 49:22*; “. . . with his  
feet.” *Isaiab 41:3*; “And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy  
 nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth,  
 and lick up the dust of thy feet,” *Isaiab 49:23*; “. . . called him to his foot,”  
*Isaiab 41:2*;

This constant use of body language can be seen as a metaphor of the “Body of Christ.”

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”  
*1 Corinthians 12:27*

**Summary:** *Isaiah speaks Messianically—Messiah shall have the tongue of the learned—He shall give his back to the smiters—He shall not be confounded.*

*In the last days, the Lord shall comfort Zion and gather Israel—The redeemed shall come to Zion amid great joy.*

*In the last days, Zion shall return and Israel be redeemed—Messiah shall deal prudently and be exalted.*

*Isaiah speaks Messianically—Messiah's humiliation and sufferings set forth—He makes his soul an offering for sin and makes intercession for transgressors—Compare Mosiah 14.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The lesson title invokes a unique geographical consideration. In this case, geography lends its testimony of the Lord. In ancient times, the word of the Lord came from the “tops of the mountains,” Jerusalem, where the tribe of Judah and the prophets of Israel lived. These mountains create a backbone of the country of Israel. In fact, the land of Israel has mountains from its northern to its southern borders. It is a mountain range that is “everlasting.”

In latter times, the word of the Lord comes from the “tops of the mountains,” Salt Lake City, where the prophets and leadership of the Lord’s kingdom and the tribe of Joseph are presently situated. The Ute Indians used the word Utah to denote the tops of the mountains. It is also the only other range of mountains that extends from the northern to the southern borders of the land. It is also the “land of everlasting hills.”

Judah and Utah even sound linguistically similar. There is an Arab village close to Hebron that is called Yatta. An old synagogue of the first century was found there with characteristics of Levitical use. Some even suggest it to be the wilderness area of Judah where John the Baptist (a Levite) might have lived.

The blessings of the “everlasting hills” have affected, are affecting and will continue to affect all the world.

“The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.” (*Genesis 49:26*)

“And the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall tremble at their presence.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 133:31*)

“Everlasting is also used to signify the eternal, lasting, and enduring nature of some particular thing. For instance: the “everlasting covenant” (D. & C.

1:15), "the everlasting gospel" (D. & C. 36:5), "songs of everlasting joy" (D. & C. 45:71), "an everlasting inheritance" (D. & C 57:5), "the everlasting hills." (D. & C. 133:31.) (*Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, Pg.243*)

Isaiah, who knew the mountains of Judah, also knew the Lord and combined the majesty of both in teaching us about the Savior.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (*Isaiah 52:7*)

Looking at the sacred event that redeemed us from the sins of life, bruises of experience, captivity of conscience, blindness of bigotry, hurt of hearts broken, poverty of stinginess and the imprisonment of self pity, we are drawn to the Mount of Olives. Two thousand years ago, He sank below all things, experiencing deeper depths than we would ever reach so that we would never have to. Bleeding from every pore of His body, he was stained for us. How beautiful upon the Mount of Olives are the feet of Him who brings good tidings. Good tidings are the “good news,” the gospel of joy. Isaiah wrote the words of the Savior’s testimony, seven hundred years before the Savior would speak them.

“The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;” (*Isaiah 61:1*)

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,” (*Luke 4:18*)

Although the principle of “one atoning for our sins” in Judaism has diminished over the years, one day every year is set aside as the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.

“The tenth of the Hebrew month of Tishrei is Yom Kippur, a day of fasting and prayer for all Israel, a day which has been significant to Jews throughout the ages. The Day of Atonement is the last of the Ten Days of Penitence which begin with Rosh Ha-Shanah, and is the climax of the repentance and soul-searching incumbent on every Jew during this period.”

“The essence of the day and the reasons for its special prayers and ceremony are expressed in the Torah: "For on this day will atonements be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord." The Torah commands that on the tenth of Tishrei every Jew must "afflict his soul," which is understood to mean that eating, drinking, wearing shoes made of leather, washing, anointing the body and marital relations are forbidden. All these laws take effect at sunset on the ninth of Tishrei and last until nightfall of the tenth. As important as the *mitzvah* of fasting on Yom Kippur is the *mitzvah* of eating on the day before the fast. So important is Yom Kippur that it is the only fast day which may be observed on the Sabbath and is never postponed until the next day. Moreover, the Torah describes the holiness of Yom Kippur by calling it the "Sabbath of Sabbaths."

“In the times of the Temple in Jerusalem, the ritual performed by the high priest was the central feature of the Day of Atonement. The high priest, representative of the people, carried out the special service known as *avodah*. He took two identical goats and cast lots to see which would be sacrificed and which would be sent to (the wilderness) *Azazel*. After sacrificing one of them, he sprinkled its blood on the altar and then confessed the sins of the people while placing his hands on the head of the live goat. Then the goat was sent into the wilderness (to die on its own) . . . this ceremony represented the purification of the entire people, for the goat sent to *Azazel* was a symbolic way of showing that the people were cleansed of their sins. After the destruction of the Second Temple (70 C.E.) when this ritual could no longer be carried out, the day of Yom Kippur itself was assumed to atone for Israel's sins. However, the sages emphasized that Yom Kippur alone is not enough; each man must repent for his wrongdoings in order for the Day of Atonement to have its purifying effect. Accordingly, the theme of the prayers of Yom Kippur revolves around the confessing of sins and the resolve to mend one's ways both between man and man, and man and God.”

“Perhaps the most beloved ritual of the Day of Atonement, *Kol Nidrei* is . . . chanted before sunset as the . . . worshipers are wrapped in *tallitot* and some even robed in white gowns (*kitels*).”

“The next morning people rise early to go to the synagogue where they spend most of the day in prayer and confession.”

“The Torah and *haftarah* readings of the day also contain the themes of the Day of Atonement. The morning service contains the Torah reading . . . (and) the Book of Jonah which tells the story of how the whole town of Nineveh repented after they were warned by the prophet and were forgiven for their sins.”

“The prayers of Yom Kippur are concluded with the service known as *Ne'ilat She'arim* . . . the closing of the Temple gates which was done at sunset, on the Day of Atonement . . . associated with the symbolic closing of the heavenly gates. The divine judgment . . . is now finally sealed and all those who have truly repented have been forgiven and accepted by God. Throughout this service the Ark of the Law remains open, and the worshipers remain standing. The service begins at twilight and is concluded at nightfall when . . . declarations of faith are recited aloud and a single blast of the *shofar* is blown to announce the end of the Day of Atonement. The congregants respond "Next year in Jerusalem," and return home to break their fast, confident that their sins have been forgiven.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Since 1967, when Jerusalem became open for Jews, the congregant's response is “Next year in Jerusalem-rebuilt.” This is an expression of rebuilding the temple in the mountains of Judah.

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach

us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” (*Isaiah 2:3*)

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.” (*Malachi 3:1*)

“I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God; wherefore, gird up your loins and I will suddenly come to my temple. Even so. Amen.” (*Doctrine and Covenants 36:8*)

How beautiful upon the mountains of Judah and Joseph are the feet of Him who brought salvation to all of us! How beautiful are the garments of them that are worthy to bow at His feet. Jews use garments to remind them of ancient temple rituals. The garment is called a ‘Tallit’ and it has four sets of Zizit (strings), with knots that are reminders of the binding covenants.

“According to the Bible, God commanded the Jews to wear fringes on the corners of their garments as a reminder of the Lord's commandments: "And it shall be unto you for a fringe that ye may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord" (Numbers 15:39). This fringe is called *zizit*.”

“The *tallit* is usually white and made either of wool, cotton, or silk . . . Although the ordinary *tallit* is worn only in the synagogue, strictly observant Jews wear the *tallit katan* (small *tallit*) under their upper garments the whole day.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In many Jewish weddings, a special white garment is worn called the Kitel.

“In Ashkenazi tradition it is not just the bride who wears white on her wedding day. The groom, too, stands under the canopy wearing his white *kitel*, or robe, over his wedding finery. The day of their marriage is a solemn one for the bride and groom. They pray that their past sins will be forgiven and they can start their life together afresh. The white of their clothing symbolizes the purity and the forgiveness of sin for which they are hoping. For this reason a similar garment is used to clothe the dead for burial. The *kitel* therefore also serves to remind the wearer of how brief life is, and of the necessity for atonement.”

“The *kitel* is traditionally worn on those important occasions when the Jew is concerned with such thoughts. It is worn during prayer services on Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur; at the seder on Passover eve; by the *hazzan* on the eighth day of Sukkot when the prayer for rain is recited and the first day of Passover during the prayer for dew.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

On the subject of repentance, one of the most important theological doctrines of both the Bible and the Talmud is that if a sinner repents his bad deeds, God will forgive him.

“Repentance consists of several stages --- firstly the sinner must reflect on his actions and realize that he has indeed done the wrong thing. He must then make up his mind never to do it again, and confess his sin. This confession is not made to any other human being but is made by the sinner directly to God. On this basis the two confessions *Ashamnu* and *Al-Het* were introduced into the prayers for the Day of Atonement which is a special occasion for repentance and forgiveness. However, even when a sinner has done all these things, his repentance is still not final until he has been exposed to the same temptation and withstood it. Of course he should not deliberately put himself on that spot again.”

“Repentance in Hebrew is known as *teshuvah*, which literally means "return," and signifies a return to God. A person who repents his sins is known as a *ba'al teshuvah*. Many rabbis of the Talmud believed that the real *ba'al teshuvah* is greater even than a person who has never sinned and they furthermore said that when a person repents out of love of God (and not just out of fear of divine punishment), all the sins he had committed are considered to be *mitzvot*. This is perhaps the most comforting doctrine that Judaism has given to the world.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Here is one more thought on the subject of sacrifice.

“The Hebrew term for sacrifice, *korban*, is from a root meaning "to draw near," and originally denoted that which was brought near, or offered, to God. It is also possible that the term signified "that which brings man near to God" and, indeed, a late aggadic source interprets sacrifices in this sense.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Where would be a better place than going to the mountain of the Lord's house and drawing near to Him? How beautiful!

# “Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent”

Lesson  
40

*Isaiah 54-56; 63-65*

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**Summary:** *In the last days, Zion and her stakes shall be established, and Israel shall be gathered in mercy and tenderness—They shall triumph—Compare 3 Nephi 22.*

*Come and drink: Salvation is free—The Lord will make an everlasting covenant with Israel—Seek the Lord while he is near.*

*All who keep the commandments shall be exalted—The sons of strangers will join Israel—The Lord will gather others to the house of Israel.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

An image of heavenly living may be in the pattern of living in the “City of our Lord” with our Lord. The imagery of dwelling places such as tents with their poles (stakes) and curtains may represent the organized facilities and order of heaven.

“The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” (*Ether 13:5*)

“And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come--after it should be destroyed it should be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord; wherefore, it could not be a new Jerusalem for it had been in a time of old; but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built unto the house of Israel.” (*Ether 13:5*)

It seems that the “camp” of Israel was organized in a “City of the Lord” which was likened to the “House of the Lord.” The families were on the outside; the priests (Levites) were next. They surrounded the holiest place (the Ark) where the Lord’s prophet communed with God. It may be likened to the terms telestial, terrestrial and celestial.

“. . . it seems, the ancient Israelites were commanded to build a sanctuary so that God may dwell amongst them (Exodus 25:8). The Tabernacle became the place to which sacrifices were brought in times of joy and in times of sadness. It became the place to which Moses retired when he wanted to communicate with God. When the Children of Israel camped in the desert, the Tabernacle was erected at the very center of the camp; when they moved, the Tabernacle was taken apart, and was moved with them. Physically and spiritually it was the central object for the Children of Israel and it was through the Tabernacle that they felt their connection with God.”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

“The tabernacle, sometimes called the temple, was a very ornate though portable building, which the children of Israel carried with them in the wilderness. It was to this temple that Hannah went to pray and where Samuel ministered. It was the duty of the Levites to take care of this building and keep it in order. They took it apart, carried it and all that pertained to it from place to place as they journeyed in the wilderness, and then set it up again when a new camp was made.” (*Doctrines of Salvation, Joseph Fielding Smith, Vol.3, Pg.112*)

Even in the Book of Mormon, such an organized camp could be imagined as a special holy convocation was being held.

“And it came to pass that when they came up to the temple, they pitched their tents round about, every man according to his family, consisting of his wife, and his sons, and his daughters, and their sons, and their daughters, from the eldest down to the youngest, every family being separate one from another. And they pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple, that thereby they might remain in their tents and hear the words which king Benjamin should speak unto them;” (*Mosiah 2:5-6*)

It is easy to imagine that ancient Israel lived this way as a preparatory exercise of living with God.

“Balaam's eyes opened . . . , he stood on a lofty summit overlooking the camp of the People of Israel in the plain below . . . Balaam blessed the nation, predicting its victory over Edom and Moab . . . 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*)

Is it possible that the areas of responsibility and assigned living were “staked” out, that there were stakes, poles or standards that identified the living areas?

"The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying "The Israelites shall camp each with his standard under the banners of their ancestral house" (Numbers 2:2). The standards borne by the 12 tribes served the same purpose as heraldic devices. Their colors and emblems were: Reuben red; emblem mandrakes. Simeon green; emblem the town of Shechem. Levi white, black and red; emblem the Urim and Thummim (Deuteronomy 33:9). Judah azure; emblem a lion. Issachar black; emblem a strong-boned ass or sun and moon. Zebulun white; emblem a ship. Dan sapphire; emblem a tent or a lion. Naphtali rose; emblem a hind. Asher aquamarine; emblem an olive-tree. Ephraim and Manasseh black, embroidered with a picture of Egypt; emblem: Ephraim, a bullock and Manasseh, a wild ox. Benjamin 12 colors; emblem a wolf.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In the ancient days, the inner two courtyards were draped or had curtains draped between the stakes or poles and cords so that the sacredness and dignity of the priestly area and the Lord’s habitation were maintained.



“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.” (*Isaiah 33:20*)

“The Bible uses a variety of Hebrew terms when speaking of the place where God and Israel communed:

- a) *Mishkan* -- "Dwelling" (God's dwelling place among the people of Israel).
- b) *Mishkan ha-Edut* -- "The dwelling place of the Testimony" (the place where the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments were kept).
- c) *Ohel Mo'ed* -- "Tent of Meeting" (where God reveals Himself to Israel). It should be noted that the words *Mishkan* and *Ohel* are synonyms. In the Bible they are both used to denote the Tabernacle.
- d) *Mikdash* -- "Sanctuary" or the "Holy Place"; and especially *Kodesh ha-Kodashim*, the most holy place within the Tabernacle.

Some traditional commentators and many critical scholars believe that these terms may refer to more than one place;” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In the latter-days, an organizational unit called “Stakes of Zion” may have the same purpose in reminding us to live in dignity and sacredness and commune with God as a community.

“Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 101:21*)

Jewish tradition tells us that Abraham’s life and dwelling were also the personification of hospitality; his tent was open on all four sides. He himself waited on guests, and taught them after meals to bring them to the faith in God.

When Jews marry, since they do not have a temple, a ‘Huppah’ is used. It is a remnant of the ancient temple garments, a Tallit, supported by four poles or stakes!

“Today, the term *huppah* refers to the decorative canopy under which the wedding ceremony is performed. Originally, however, it referred to the actual bridal chamber, the tent or room of the groom to which the bride was brought in festive procession for the marital union . . . the Talmud relates that there was an ancient custom to make staves of the *huppah* from a cedar and a pine tree planted specifically for this purpose at the birth of a male and female child respectively. In medieval France, it was customary for the groom to cover the bride's head with his *tallit* as a symbol of sheltering her; and in modern-day Israel, for weddings of soldiers on active duty, it is not unusual to see a *huppah* constructed of a *tallit* supported by four rifles held by friends of the bride and groom . . . among Orthodox Jews, the preferred custom is to erect the *huppah* outside, or at least in a spot open to the sky, underneath the stars, because of God's assurance to Abraham that He would make his descendants "as

numerous as the stars of the heavens" (Genesis 22:17).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Obviously the descendants of Abraham are scattered throughout the world. Isaiah spoke numerous times of the scattering as well as the gathering or return of the covenant descendants. That gathering has physical as well as spiritual meanings. Just as we were sent from God to experience life and exercise our God given attributes, so do we have the opportunity to return to Him.

Isaiah also taught disciplines that would draw us nearer to God and thereby make more sure our return. Fasting and prayers draw us nearer to Him. The most religious Jews have the regular practice of fasting at the beginning of every biblical month (never on a Sabbath except Yom Kippur).

“The purpose of the fast days in the Jewish calendar, such as Tish'ah Be'Av and the Day of Atonement is mainly educational and spiritual. Tish'ah Be'Av strengthens the Jews' identification with the Jewish People by remembering the catastrophe of the destruction of the Temples. The fast of Yom Kippur comes to remind us how we have used our bodies to disobey God's will and to hurt our fellow man. Both the prophets and the rabbis stressed that mere fasting without repentance for our bad deeds is valueless.”

“The tenth of the Hebrew month of Tishrei is Yom Kippur, a day of fasting and prayer for all Israel, a day which has been significant to Jews throughout the ages. The Day of Atonement is the last of the Ten Days of Penitence which begin with Rosh Ha-Shanah, and is the climax of the repentance and soul-searching incumbent on every Jew during this period.”

“Fasting is an act of repentance or of supplication seeking divine forgiveness or the prevention of disaster. Public fasts also commemorate catastrophic events in Jewish history . . . on fast days one neither eats nor drinks. On major fasts, other prohibitions are washing, wearing leather shoes, using ointments or perfumes, and other physical pleasures. There are special prayers and the Torah is read in the synagogue. Yom Kippur and Tishah be-Av are observed from sunset to sunset. All other fasts are from sunrise to sunset . . . When a natural or human disaster threatens or strikes a whole community, a public fast is proclaimed. In biblical times, fasting served to beseech the Almighty to end a famine or to lighten the oppression of foreign rulers.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Anciently, sacrifices in the Temple were rituals that taught the principle of atonement. The blood of the first-born, unblemished animal became a symbol of the blood of the “First Born Lamb of God.” It may be that to emphasize the principle of bringing Him into our lives, the Children of Israel were instructed to refrain from eating any blood.

“The absolute prohibition to consume blood is one of the few laws in the Bible that is commanded not only to Jews but to all men (Genesis 9:4). It is thus a more universal law than the Ten Commandments. The reason given for the prohibition is that "the blood is the life; and thou shalt not eat the life with the flesh." (Deuteronomy 12:23, and elsewhere) . . . The dietary laws,

the laws of *kashrut*, command us to drain and remove all the blood from cattle, beasts and fowl.”

“In the dietary laws, too, salt is important. Before meat can be cooked, the blood must be removed, which is done by sprinkling coarse salt on it and leaving it for an hour. Salt has the property of attracting liquids and when, at the end of the hour, the meat is thoroughly washed, it is blood-free and ready for cooking.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In that sense, even the color of blood (red) has stayed symbolic for Jews.

“. . . there are Ashkenazim who attempt to protect their toddlers from harm by tying a red ribbon around their wrists.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Anciently, the sacrifice of a rare, red calf, mentioned in the Book of Numbers 19:1-9, was for purification from sin.

“(The) Red Heifer - the animal whose ashes were used in the ritual purification ceremony, cleansing those made impure by contact with a human corpse or grave. In biblical times, the heifer was first slaughtered outside the Israelite camp and then burned. Its ashes were kept in a pure place and, when needed, were mixed with clear spring water . . . (for) . . . the ritually impure person . . .”

“The Bible is very specific about the kind of cow to be used. It had to be in perfect physical condition -- "a red heifer, faultless, containing no blemish and which has never been yoked." The rabbis interpreted "faultless" to mean perfect in color also, ruling that even two non-red hairs in its hide were enough to disqualify it. Obviously such an animal was very rare and apparently the ceremony was performed only a very few times in all of ancient Jewish history.”

“Perhaps the strangest feature of the law of the red heifer is that, although the impure were cleansed by its ashes, all those who helped to perform the ceremony were rendered unclean by it and had themselves to be purified afterwards. Thus the red heifer was an agent of both purity and impurity. This paradox has puzzled the rabbis and the law remains one of the few in the Torah for which no rational explanation can be found.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Someday, when the sacred teachings given in latter-day restored temples (the Lord’s Houses) can be given to all of God’s children, we will be able to enlarge the place of the Lord’s House and live in “The City of the Lord” - a millennial expectation!

There is a tiny, yet prolific flower in Israel that we have come to know to be the “Lilly of the field.” It is a deeply red anemone. Its springtime decoration of Israel is a reminder of His springtime redemption for all people.



### **Lilies of Red**

The season bursts forth in radiance,  
painting the landscape in shades of green.  
Flowers add their rythmn in cadence,  
splashing color to brighten the scene.

Most precious are the lilies of red.  
They spin not, they toil not, yet in their way,  
they teach of the color of Him who bled,  
on Gethsemane's most fateful day.

His glory is to lighten our load.  
He heals us with joy and harmony.  
A landscape of love for young and old,  
His radiance opened eternity.

Lilies of red, they testified  
of Him who bled and died,  
Lilies of red, witness they give  
He died so we could live.  
He lives, he's risen from the dead  
praise God for Lilies of red.

**Daniel Rona, 1996**

# “I Have Made Thee This Day . . . an Iron Pillar”

*Jeremiah 1-2; 15; 20; 26; 36-38*

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**Summary:** *Jeremiah foreordained to be a prophet unto the nations—He is called, as a mortal, to declare the word of the Lord.*

*The Jews forsook the Lord, the fountain of living waters—They changed their gods, worshiped idols, and rejected the prophets.*

*The Jews shall suffer death and the sword and famine and captivity—They shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth—Jerusalem shall be destroyed.*

*Jeremiah is smitten and put in the stocks—He prophesies that all Judah shall be taken captive by Babylon.*

*Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of the people—For this he is arraigned and tried and then acquitted.*

*Baruch writes the prophecies of Jeremiah and reads them in the house of the Lord—Jeboiakim the king burns the book, and judgment comes upon him—Jeremiah dictates the prophecies again and adds many more.*

*Jeremiah prophesies that Egypt shall not save Judah from Babylon—He is cast into a dungeon—Zedekiah transfers him to the court of the prison.*

*The princes cast Jeremiah into a miry dungeon—He is freed by Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, and put in the court of the prison—He counsels Zedekiah concerning the war.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

There are numerous metaphors used in the scriptures that denote materials that were made into vessels. Iron and clay are most notable.

“Isaiah describes the smith's technique of working iron with the help of charcoal to produce a metal suitable for making vessels.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Jeremiah's life showed how the Lord “formed” him to make him a vessel to represent the Lord.

“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (*Jeremiah 1:5*)

The concept of a pre-existence has long since disappeared from Judaism, yet inference of life before birth can be seen in Dead Sea Scroll writings and in the discussions of Jewish sages earlier than Maimonides eight hundred years ago. It seems that since his compilation of Jewish thought and the code of laws the concept of a pre-existence has been rejected or at least it has disappeared from Jewish thought.

Another powerful metaphor of “rejection” or “refusal” can be seen in an old quarry just north of Jerusalem's old city wall, between what today is known as the Damascus Gate and

Herod's Gate. That quarry was used to provide the stone for the temple buildings during Solomon's time. In those days, the builders would carefully observe the cutting and quarrying procedures. Limestone that easily crumbled was rejected as too soft. Limestone that was very brittle was rejected as too hard. It was the judgment of the builders that accepted or refused the stone which was to build the temple.

Jeremiah knew this quarry - and he knew what the Psalms taught:

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” (*Psalms 118:22*)

Later, in Herod's time, the same quarry was used for his reconstruction of the temple buildings. One can see the cavities left as giant blocks were skillfully carved. Many of those blocks can still be seen in the Western (Wailing) Wall. However, one can also see that at the northern most limits of the quarry the rock became very crumbly. There are gaping holes in the quarry walls where cavities or caves were. Since the integrity of the rock failed - it had too many cracks and was too soft or crumbly - further work in the quarry was “refused.” One of the gaping holes even became a prison, a sort of pit, where escape was impossible. Nowadays, that pit is called Jeremiah's grotto. It may be where the prophet was lowered, sinking into mire, because he prophesied against the governmental system. Can you imagine the newspaper headline, “Jeremiah jailed – What do prophets know about politics anyway?”

Close by the grotto, in the rock wall that was “refused” for further quarrying, are the remains of a cistern that existed before Jeremiah's time. The side of the cistern closest to the quarry collapsed as builders who carved came too close. The other sides of it are cracked and unable to hold water. This may have been the very image that Jeremiah saw and used as he prophesied Israel's future:

“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (*Jeremiah 2:13*)

Each week as I go the Garden Tomb with my guests and view the “Place of a Skull,” we review how the Jewish priests “refused” to accept the Messiahship of the Lord. We look at the caves still gaping like eyes of a skull. We see the cistern that can hold no water. Close by we view an empty tomb and realize that neither the politics of two thousand years ago nor any governmental system could keep it closed.

Jeremiah knew that the “Fountain of Living Waters” would come forth. He knew that the “Rock of Salvation” would be forsaken and he also knew that there would be some, shaped and molded by the potter's hand, that would be vessels that would hold the “Living Waters.”

Jeremiah's adversities became the teaching metaphors that would help shape and mold those who truly listened to the prophet's voice. He allowed himself to be shaped and molded by the Lord. The image of clay in the potter's hand is still visible just inside Jerusalem's old city wall just beyond the Damascus Gate. An Arab shop sells pots, and the shopkeeper is Mr. Fahoury (Mr. “Potter” in Arabic) from Hebron (in his Hebron factory, he still posts the picture of Don Lind, the Mormon Astronaut who visited him years ago). Many times I have seen Mr. Fahoury's son form a clay pot on the potter's wheel. He would then make a spout,

fill the pot and then pour the water out. We would cheer; he would then crush the clay and start over again.

Jeremiah must have felt crushed, yet he patiently and courageously continued to testify of the Lord. The grotto in the quarry, where he may have been imprisoned, is both where the Rock and the Water was rejected by some. Yet for others the same place becomes a strengthening witness of the Fountain of Living Waters and the Rock of Salvation.



*Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31*

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**Summary:** *Utter ruin of the Jews foreseen—Israel rejected and scattered for serving false gods— Fishers and hunters shall gather them again, and they shall serve the Lord—Gospel to be restored for last time.*

*The remnants of Israel shall be gathered in the last days—King Messiah (the Branch) shall reign in righteousness—False prophets who teach lies shall be cursed.*

*Jeremiah tells Jews in Babylon to prepare for seventy years of captivity—Those remaining in Jerusalem shall yet be scattered—Shemaiah prophesies falsely and is cursed.*

*In the last days, Israel shall be gathered—Ephraim has the birthright as the firstborn—The Lord will make a new covenant with them, to be inscribed in the heart—Then shall they all know the Lord.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The first Passover was Israel’s great deliverance from Egypt. The Children of Israel may have wanted a powerful zealot “deliverer” to rise out of their ranks and redeem them from slavery. Instead, a soft-spoken once Egyptian prince became their leader. It turned out that he really was “one of them,” Moses, a Levite, who escaped an annihilation order being saved by an Egyptian princess. Ultimately, both the people and the Levite Moses were supposed to learn that the Children of Israel were really to be led by the Lord and his prophet.

The entire massive exodus exercise was to be Israel’s greatest lesson in recognizing the Lord’s hand in their deliverance. Yet, when the Israelites complained about many things including the lack of water, they turned to Moses to fulfill their needs.

“And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.” *(Numbers 20:5)*

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?” *(Numbers 20:6-10)*

Moses dramatically fulfilled their need! Yet, both he and the children of Israel became “blind sided” by the obvious outward appearance of this miracle. Moses and Aaron were saying “we” will fetch you water. The Israelites became very busy drinking and watering their flocks. They forgot or were unable to recognize the “Rock of Salvation” and the

“Fountain of Living Waters.” Subsequently, every one of them, (with the exception of Joshua and Caleb), were also unable to enter the promised land.

Could it be that they set a pattern into motion wherein they preferred to follow Moses the man rather than Jehovah the Lord? Were they saying, “Moses, let God talk to you, and you’ll talk to us?” Again, unable to recognize that with higher responsibilities (statutes) they would receive higher rewards (judgments), they chose a lesser way, resulting in many written commandments, rules and regulations.

“And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it.” (*Deuteronomy 5:24-33*)

Instead of relying on the “Rock of Salvation,” the pattern of self-sufficiency became the millstone of Israel - each time they forgot the Lord, they were on their own. They turned down the higher statutes (commandments) and lost the highest judgments (rewards) God wanted to give them.

“Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; And I polluted them in their own gifts . . . that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.” (*Ezekiel 20:25-26*)

The children of Israel wandered first for forty years and later wandered and became scattered and desolate throughout the world.

“Wandering from place to place, has been one of the major components of Jewish history, for since the time of the Patriarchs the "wandering Jew" has suffered from a lack of territory, government, and defense. Major Jewish migrations in search of favorable living conditions and in flight from harassment, persecution and expulsion, include the Exodus from Egypt, the Babylonian exile, Jewish settlement outside Erez Israel during the Second Temple period, the dispersion under the Roman and Near Eastern empires after the destruction of the Second Temple. The scattering of Jews throughout the Christian and Islamic states, culminating in the expulsion

from the Iberian peninsula in 1492 and their settlement in the New World since the early stages of the European colonization, a process that greatly accelerated in the latter half of the 19th century. Throughout the period of the Diaspora, small numbers of Jews made their way back to Erez Israel, the land promised them in covenant with their God.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv plots the far-flung dispersion of Jews throughout the world. It includes references to many people claiming to be of the House of Israel (including Mormons). The museum is also chronicling the gathering of Israel as more than five million have made their way back to the land of their inheritance.

There must be a gathering going on because when I was born in 1941, there were a few hundred thousand Jews in what was to become the land of Israel. Alone, in the last ten years, almost a million Jews have gathered. Most of them were from the north, Russian-speaking Jews. There were months when over twenty thousand Russian immigrants were landing in Israel. Mobile homes were hastily bought and built to accommodate them. Many of those mobile homes were built under the direction of a Latter-day Saint, Fred Huckvale of California (Joseph was blessing Judah!).

During that peak arrival period, the brethren in a Jerusalem Branch priesthood meeting were discussing Jeremiah’s prophecy:

“Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.” (*Jeremiah 16:14-15*)

This exodus from the Diaspora, when viewed in its complete scope, will be greater than the exodus from Egypt. The State of Israel has special emissaries assigned throughout the world to assist the Jews in gathering to Israel. This is a frustrating thing to some religious Jews. They feel that the State of Israel should be established by the Lord through a Messiah. They have strong traditions (mentioned in previous lessons) of a latter-day “Messiah ben Joseph, a Joseph, son of Joseph, who would receive the keys of the gathering of Israel and restore Temple worship.”

A parallel gathering is taking place since the keys of the gathering of Israel were restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. during Passover week in 1846. Special emissaries are also assigned throughout the world to find and assist the “Blood of Israel” to gather to the Lord. The scope of this gathering is the greatest gathering the world has ever known.

Calculating for a moment, we see that just before Prophet and President David O. McKay was leading the Lord’s work there was one Mormon for every 100,000 persons on the earth. Now, Prophet and President Gordon B. Hinckley is leading the Lord’s work with one Mormon for every 600 persons on the earth! These eye-opening statistics are fruits of the Lord’s work.

On one hand, the Jews, without knowing the Lord, are making an exodus from the far-flung reaches of the world and are being gathered home. On the other hand, throughout the world, Latter-day Saints are making an exodus from not knowing the Lord and are being

gathered to an eternal home. They are striving to follow the modern prophets who, like the ancient prophets, wanted them to know the Lord. Their response is in being worthy to know the law in their hearts, without having to be told by many commandments, rules and regulations.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (*Jeremiah 31:31-33*)

“The time has at last arrived when the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has set his hand again the second time to recover the remnants of his people . . . and with them to bring in the fulness of the Gentiles, and establish that covenant with them, which was promised when their sins should be taken away. See Isaiah 6: Romans 6:25, 26 and 27, and also Jeremiah 31: 31, 32 and 33. This covenant has never (before) been established with the house of Israel, nor with the house of Judah . . .” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section One 1830-34 Pg.14*)

That covenant is made with the Holy One, who in mortality was saved from an annihilation order by fleeing to Egypt. In an eternal scope, He has become our great deliverer. We are in the midst of the “Last Passover,” a greater deliverance and the restoration of the highest statutes and judgments. The first Passover, led by a prophet, gave us the “Lesser Laws,” written in stone. The last Passover, again led by a prophet, is giving us the “Higher Law,” written in our hearts. The old and new laws are again like a chiasmus, with the Savior’s ministry and subsequent atonement as the center, the turning point, linking the lesser and higher laws. The following poem illustrates the point.

## SERMONS ON THE MOUNTS

The law was given, the standard set. But, best was not accepted yet.  
We compromised with Heaven's voice, Just ten commandments was our choice.  
Tooth for tooth and eye for eye, retribution was the cry.

- |               |     |                                       |
|---------------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| <b>LESSER</b> | 1.  | No other God -                        |
| <b>LAW</b>    | 2.  | Or image graven -                     |
|               | 3.  | Not in vain, the name of Heaven -     |
|               | 4.  | Remember Sabbath,                     |
|               | 5.  | Father, Mother -                      |
|               | 6.  | Thou shalt not kill -                 |
|               | 7.  | Nor defile another -                  |
|               | 8.  | Do not steal -                        |
|               | 9.  | Or false word belabor -               |
|               | 10. | Do not covet the wealth of neighbor - |

But then was promised a covenant new;  
inwardly, God would speak to you.  
With sins forgiven and God revealed, a higher law on us was sealed.

- |               |     |   |
|---------------|-----|---|
| <b>HIGHER</b> | 10. | Bless your neighbor -                     |
| <b>LAW</b>    | 9.  | Share a kindly word -                     |
|               | 8.  | Give to others -                          |
|               | 7.  | And clean thoughts preferred -            |
|               | 6.  | No need for anger to hide your smile -    |
|               | 5.  | Parents, children, walk the second mile - |
|               | 4.  | Use the Sabbath, blessings to bestow -    |
|               | 3.  | The name of God in your good deeds show - |
|               | 2.  | Your life will God's true image mirror,   |
|               | 1.  | As you and He become much nearer.         |

The secret of God's law is known - when action by intent is shown.  
In Heaven's highest throne to stay,  
Use thought and reason to guide the way.  
The highest law is now defined - in thought, in spirit and in the mind.

*Daniel Rona, 1985*

*Ezekiel 18; 34; 37*

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**Summary:** *Men shall be punished for their own sins—Sinners shall die, and the righteous shall save their souls—A righteous man who sins shall be damned, and a sinner who repents shall be saved.*

*The Lord reproves those shepherds who do not feed the flock—In the last days, the Lord will gather the lost sheep of Israel—The Messiah shall be their Shepherd—The Lord will make his gospel covenant with them.*

*Israel shall inherit the land in the resurrection—The stick of Judah (Bible) and the stick of Joseph (Book of Mormon) become one in the Lord's hand—Israel shall be gathered and cleansed—The Messiah shall reign over them—They shall receive the everlasting gospel covenant.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Each week that I sit at the Mount of Beatitudes with visiting guests, I relate the account of a shepherd who daily used to lead his flock out of the once nearby farm house. He would lead the sheep out in the morning and back again at the close of day. Once, as we were seated on several large rocks and as we were about to read the simple scriptural account, the shepherd began bringing his flock back to the farm house. As he approached us, he stopped and let the flock disperse as they nibbled the green blades of grass around us.

We heard an occasional ringing of bells. There were about a dozen older sheep, kept from the previous year's flock that were the "lead sheep" and they were fastened with bells. After about ten minutes of the flock spreading out and milling around us, I noticed that almost everyone had tears in their eyes. We were in the midst of experiencing a Biblical metaphor. The shepherd began speaking. I looked around, wondering whom he was addressing when the older lead sheep immediately responded by running toward the shepherd, their bells ringing. This seemed to alert the rest of the flock because a moment later, they began to file behind the lead sheep who were following the shepherd.

With a smile, the shepherd boy walked away probably unaware that he was performing a pattern we were about to read. He walked a few paces and then picked up a stone. Knowingly, he looked back to see a few sheep just over the crest of the hill who remained instead of following. Skillfully, he threw the stone in their direction, catching their attention. They looked up and immediately began to run to catch up with the rest of the flock. There went the shepherd, his lead sheep and the flock. We began to read the account of Jesus (the Shepherd) leaving the multitudes (the flock), going to the mount, and teaching just the disciples (the lead sheep) lessons that they would then teach the multitudes.

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying," (*Matthew 5:1-2*)

In ancient times, when the Temple was functioning, the High Priest would signal his readiness for another sacrifice by burning the fire and throwing incense in it. (This would offset the odor of parts of the animal that needed to be consumed by the fire.) The plume of smoke would signal the twelve lead priests to ready themselves. When they were ready, they rang bells that alerted the multitude to gather close to participate in the sacrifice. The imagery is obvious, the shepherd, the lead sheep and the flock.

Another image that this particular lesson emphasizes is in Ezekiel 37. Latter-day Saints usually start at verse fifteen that begins reference to the "two sticks." However, an even greater meaning comes by combining the account of "dry bones" (verses 1-14) with the "sticks." Three elements are identified in Ezekiel's first vision in this chapter, bones, flesh/skin and the breath. The bones are brought back together, they are covered with flesh and skin and then the breath of life brings them alive. The imagery is likened to the gathering of Israel, recognizing "I AM" who opens graves and then it leads into the "two sticks" vision. The second vision is a double emphasis of the first.

The Hebrew word for breath, wind and spirit are the same (Ruach). The Hebrew word for sticks or wood is "ETZ." The word for bones, "ETZEMOT" could be considered the plural of "ETZ," or in other words, the sticks of the body. It is likely that Ezekiel wants you to consider the ancient body of true religion as having died, leaving a skeleton - the "sticks" of the body. Judaism with its "Old Testament," is what is left, the stick of Judah the skeleton of true religion. The old covenant was true and yet it died. In latter-days the skeleton is clothed with a new body, the Book of Mormon, and breath (the Spirit of the Lord) is given so that the true religion is resurrected. The body is alive again, never to die. The covenant is restored anew, never to die again, "The New and Everlasting Covenant!"

"The gospel is the new and everlasting covenant by means of which God, on his own terms, offers salvation to man. Baptism is the formally appointed means and ordinance which the Lord has provided so that man can signify his personal acceptance of all of the terms and conditions of the eternal gospel covenant. Thus in baptism, which as part of the gospel is itself a new and an everlasting covenant (D. & C. 22), man covenants to abide by all of the laws and requirements of the whole gospel." *(Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, Pg.69)*

# “Every Thing Shall Live Whither the River Cometh”

Lesson  
44

*Ezekiel 43-44; 47*

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**Summary:** *The glory of God fills the temple—His throne is there and he promises to dwell in the midst of Israel forever—Ezekiel sees the altar and sets forth the ordinances thereof.*

*The glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord—No strangers may enter the sanctuary—Services of the priests in the temple are set forth.*

*Waters issue from the house of the Lord and heal the Dead Sea—The Lord shows the borders of the land.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Although there are some insights of Ezekiel’s prophecies in the previous chapter, let’s now look what Jewish sources say about him:

“Ezekiel was the only prophet to prophesy outside the Land of Israel. Ezekiel saw the entire history of Israel as one continuous breach of the Covenant, for which the destruction of the Temple was the just and predicted punishment. From the prophet's call until the start of Jerusalem's siege the prophecies are condemnatory. During the siege years and briefly thereafter the prophecies condemn Israel's neighbors who were involved in Judah's revolt but failed to support her. However, although the Book of Ezekiel starts on a note of doom, it continues with consolation, and the news of Jerusalem's fall is followed by consolatory prophecies of its restoration. Ezekiel is transported in a vision to the future Jerusalem and describes the future Temple in detail. He also gives a blueprint for the reorganization of the priesthood and the allocation of the Land of Israel to the respective tribes. Among the most striking prophecies in the Bible is Ezekiel's vision in Babylonia, of the valley of dry bones which become miraculously reconstructed and come to life. Such a message must have been of great encouragement to the depressed exiles of Judah.”

“Ezekiel the prophet foretold in fiery language the fall of Jerusalem, and predicted its ultimate restoration. The passion and force of his prophecies, as well as their substance, make him one of the most significant of the biblical prophets.”

“Ezekiel wrote from Babylon in the period 593--571 B.C.E. (because he was a priest he had been exiled by Nebuchadnezzar along with other Jerusalem leaders in 597 B.C.E.) but the subject of his prophecies was Jerusalem. Most of the Book of Ezekiel is couched in the form of a first-person report, by the prophet, of God's communications to him or the visions he was shown, and the Book is divided clearly into two parts. The first 24 chapters were written before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E., and predicted that calamity. During this time Ezekiel was locked in gloomy unsociability, communicating



only with God, and pondering the imminent destruction. As Ezekiel saw it, the entire history of Israel was one continuous breach of the covenant with God, for which the fall of Jerusalem was the just and promised punishment. Ezekiel also felt that this punishment alone would not cause the people of Israel to repent, and thus he predicted exile as well.”

“When a fugitive arrived in Babylon in 586 B.C.E. bringing news of the final fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel was jolted out of his recluse-like existence, and he began to address himself to the people of Israel. This second part of the Book of Ezekiel is meant to console the people and predicts that God will ultimately restore and glorify Israel, and give its people a new moral and spiritual nature to insure future faithfulness. Ezekiel predicts doom for foreign nations and the revival of the "dry bones" of Israel. Ezekiel's visions and the angelic actors in them inaugurated a literary category that flourished in post-exilic prophecy and apocalyptic literature.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Ezekiel gives us the imagery of water and salt as he envisions living water coming from the Latter-day Temple to cover the waters of the Dead Sea. Both salt and water are necessary for life.

In Judaism, salt is used to prepare meat so there is no blood left in it. All sacrifices had to be prepared with salt. In praying before a meal, bread is broken and salt is poured with the thoughts that even if we only had bread and salt we would be grateful.

“Because salt is one of the most basic commodities and essential for human life, it is often used in the Bible as meaning food generally. Cleansing and hygienic powers are also attributed to salt . . .”

“In the dietary laws, too, salt is important. Before meat can be cooked, the blood must be removed, which is done by sprinkling coarse salt on it and leaving it for an hour. Salt has the property of attracting liquids and when, at the end of the hour, the meat is thoroughly washed, it is blood-free and ready for cooking.”

“Salt is plentiful in Erez Israel and indeed the Dead Sea is known in Hebrew as the Salt Sea. (Sea and lake are the same words in ancient Hebrew, *yam* - so, Mormons, take note, there is another “Salt Lake!) It is in that region of the country that Lot's wife was transformed into a pillar of salt when, in defiance of the angel's instructions, she looked back on the destruction of Sodom.”

“Bread with salt was regarded as the poor man's food but sufficient for the humble student of the Torah, and it has remained a custom to sprinkle a little salt on bread partaken at the beginning of meals. In Jerusalem it is the custom to greet official guests of the City Council with bread and salt as they enter the city's limits.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Yet, an overabundance of anything can lead to an imbalance and thereby cancel out the proper value. Too much salt is actually harmful. Laughter is very healthy, and yet we are instructed to curb loud laughter. Shouting for joy has a quality of happiness and dignity.

“And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance . . .” (*Doctrine & Covenants 59:15*)

“Remember the great and last promise which I have made unto you; cast away your idle thoughts and your excess of laughter far from you.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 88:69*)

“And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.” (*Matthew 21:9*)

The word Hosanna comes from two Hebrew words. The first part “Ho” is a derived, shortened version of the unmentionable name of the Lord, “Jehovah.” The second part refers to salvation. In other words, “Hosanna” is a happy acclaim of “The Lord who saves” or “Salvation is of the Lord!” Hosanna is a praise much like Hallelujah, which literally means “Praise the Lord.” Hallel is praise and Ya is another form of Jehovah.

“Praise the Lord with timbrels and dance” we are told in one of the Psalms. The founder of the Hasidic movement, Israel ben Eliezer Ba'al Shem Tov, taught his followers that the “dances of a Jew before his Creator are prayers,” and with the rise of Hasidism in Eastern Europe in the 18th century, dancing assumed great importance for the Jewish masses.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Another name for the Lord is Water or Living Water. The name for heaven in Hebrew is “Shamayim.” It means, “from the waters!” Water comes from heaven and so does the Lord. There are many images of water used in the scriptures that can be connected to Him. For example, water coming from the temple to heal the Dead Sea is a metaphor of the Lord coming from his abode, heaven (the temple, after all, is His house - a part of heaven on earth), to heal all the imbalances of the world.

The most imbalanced water in the world is the Dead Sea. It is 27% salt and minerals. The oceans as well as the Mediterranean are approximately 3.5% to 3.8% salt. The salinity of the Great Salt Lake got to about 22% in its time and is now diluted to about 10%. The Great Salt Lake averages between five and fifteen feet deep. The Dead Sea reaches a depth of thirteen hundred feet.

Every week when I go to the Dead Sea, I insist that everyone put their fingers in the water and touch their tongue. The grimaces are once in a lifetime! That is the appropriate time to read Ezekiel’s prophecy of water coming out of the temple and healing the Dead Sea! It will still be given to salt, but there will be all manners of fish in it like the waters of the Great Sea (the Mediterranean) - salty but with new health.

“And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.” (*Ezekiel 47:10*)

The call to go to the temple includes the phrase, “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.” (*Psalms 24-1-3*) Since the Jews feel they don’t have a temple, they have used the meal table as a substitute “altar.” It is appropriate to wash hands before every prayer at the

beginning and ending of each meal. That is why kosher hotels have a basin and naturally flowing water at the entrances of each dining room. There are large cups in public restrooms and other public fountains (like the Western Wall) so a Jew can fill the cup and then let the water flow naturally over his hands before he prays.

The Lord's house is where his glory and honor dwells (*Psalms 26:8*). The ark holding the torah scroll is a reminder of the ark in the temple that held the tablets -- the word of the Lord. Once, as I was leading my guests to the Western (Wailing) Wall, I observed a young Bar Mitzvah lad anxious to open the ark to retrieve the scroll so he could get on with his presentation to the congregation. His grandfather stopped him and said, "Inside represents the essence and the presence of the Lord. Be polite; first you knock, then pull the curtain aside and then you take the scroll."

As David wrote the Psalm indicating that the Lord is his light (*Psalms 27:1*), he must have known that the ark contained a special menorah, a light with seven candles or wicks. That symbol is now the official seal of the State of Israel. It is a chiasmus; the first and the last candles or lights are connected at the base. Likewise, the second and sixth, and third and fifth are connected and the center light is the main light. Could that have represented the Lord? After all, he should be the center of our attention.

The center of the Lord's house was curtained because of its sacredness, a courtyard where we could converse with the Lord. As mentioned previously, the Children of Israel lived in a "camp" that was divided into three sections; the people, the Levites and the Lord. We long for the time when we can return to "dwell in thy courts" (*Psalms 65:4*), and be "shielded," safe from the imbalance of the world around us (*Psalms 84*).

Also mentioned previously is the expectation that the entire city of Jerusalem will become the "City of the Lord." May our feet "stand within thy gates" (*Psalms 122, 134*).

# “If I Perish, I Perish”

Lesson

# 45

*Daniel 1; 3; 6; Esther 3-5; 7-8*

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**Summary:** *Daniel and certain Hebrews are trained in the court of Nebuchadnezzar—They eat plain food and drink no wine—God gives them knowledge and wisdom beyond all others.*

*Nebuchadnezzar creates a golden image and commands all men to worship it—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refuse and are cast into the fiery furnace—The Son of God preserves them, and they come forth unharmed.*

*Darius makes Daniel the first of his presidents—Daniel worships the Lord in defiance of a decree of Darius—He is cast into the den of lions—His faith saves him, and Darius decrees that all peoples are to revere the God of Daniel.*

*Mordecai, the Jew, refuses to do obeisance to Haman—Haman arranges a decree to kill all the Jews in the kingdom.*

*Mordecai and the Jews mourn and fast because of the king's decree—Esther, at the peril of her life, goes in unto the king.*

*The king receives Esther—She invites him and Haman to a banquet—Haman plans to have Mordecai hanged.*

*Esther reveals Haman's plot to destroy the Jews—He is hanged on his own gallows.*

*Mordecai honored and placed over the house of Haman—Abasuerus reverses the decree calling for the destruction of the Jews.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The Lord gave the Children of Israel a law of health. It could be called a “Word of Wisdom.” The Jews call it the correct, proper or fit way of living, the *Kashrut*, or being kosher. The word kosher is also used as meaning correct. The *Kashrut* has been modified throughout the ages, yet some basics still remain as was given at Mount Sinai.

In this modern age, there are some Jews who will not eat meat because there are no sacrifices and the meat cannot be prepared in the correct way. Others will only eat meat that is kosher, that is, slaughtered in the way sacrifices were done and only eating the parts of the animal as prescribed in the Law of Moses. It may be very enlightening to know the modern explanation of *Kashrut*, so it is included for your reference:

“The dietary laws affect a Jew every day of his life and aim to insure that the holiness of the Jewish nation will be preserved through the consumption of food which is fit and proper.”

“Fruits and Vegetables: From the point of view of the dietary laws, all fruits and vegetables are permitted. However, there are certain limitations on the drinking of wine, and in Erez Israel there are restrictions applying to agricultural produce, such as the laws of tithes and Sabbatical years. However, the main concern of the dietary laws is which animals, birds and fish are fit to be eaten and how they must be prepared for consumption.”

“Animals: The Bible classifies those animals permitted to be eaten as *tabor* ("pure") and those prohibited as *tamei* ("unclean"). Animals which are permissible must have two characteristics: they must chew the cud and have cloven hooves. Among these are cattle, sheep, goats and deer. Animals which have only one of the required characteristics are prohibited; for example, the camel and rabbit which chew their cud but do not have cloven hooves, and the pig which has cloven hooves but does not chew the cud. Altogether the Bible enumerates 42 unclean animals which are forbidden.”

“Birds: On the basis of the unclean birds mentioned in the Bible, the rabbis of the Talmud compiled a list of 24 birds which are forbidden, among them birds of prey such as the vulture, raven, eagle and hawk. Although the Bible does say which birds are not clean, it does not list the clean birds. The Mishnah, however, states their characteristics: they must have a crop, a gizzard which can be easily peeled off and an extra claw. Among these clean birds are domestic fowl, pigeon and dove. Eggs from unclean birds are regarded as unclean and even the eggs of permitted birds are forbidden if they have been fertilized (usually indicated by the presence of a blood spot).”

“Fish: A fish is considered "clean" if it has fins and scales, which usually indicate a fish found in freshwater areas. Those without fins and scales usually live in the muddy, swampy areas and are considered unclean. In the category of unclean fish which are forbidden are shellfish such as lobster, clams, shrimp and oysters.”

“Insects: Nearly all insects are considered unclean and may not be eaten. Some species of locusts are permitted as the Talmud gives a detailed description of them. Nowadays, however not enough is known about them and they are all forbidden. It is therefore important to carefully clean and examine vegetables where insects are apt to hide (such as cabbage, cauliflower and romaine lettuce) in order to be sure that the insects will not be eaten with the vegetable. Although the bee is a forbidden insect, its honey is permitted to be eaten.”

“Slaughtering: Dietary laws are more than mere enumerations of which animals, birds and fish may be eaten. Vital to the observance of kashrut are the laws regarding *shebitab* or ritual slaughter. The many complex and minute regulations about how an animal or bird may be slaughtered make it necessary that a carefully trained and licensed *shobet* perform the slaughter. It is his duty to carry out a careful examination of the animal after it has been slaughtered to make certain that there is no defect in any of its organs. Any defect that would have led to the animal's death within a year makes the animal considered a *terefab*. It is absolutely prohibited for consumption. An animal which has died a natural death or was killed by any other means than *shebitab* is called a *nevelab* and is forbidden to be eaten. None of the laws of *shebitab* apply to fish.”

“Forbidden Portions: After an animal has been ritually slaughtered there are certain unclean portions which must be removed before the animal may be prepared for eating. The sciatic nerve and the fatty portions (*belev*) attached

to the stomach and intestines of the animal are among these parts which are forbidden to be eaten.”

“Koshering: After the *shebitah* and the removal of forbidden parts, the animal or bird must go through the process of "koshering." Based on the prohibition of eating blood, the purpose of koshering meat is to drain the meat and draw out the blood before it is cooked. This is accomplished by either soaking and salting the meat, or by broiling it over an open flame. If the salting-soaking process is used, the meat is soaked in clean cold water for 30 minutes, and then drained on a special grooved slanted board so that the blood may flow down. The meat is then sprinkled with salt (preferably coarse salt) which must be left on for one hour, and then it is rinsed in cold water two or three times. All the utensils for the procedure must be kept separately and used exclusively for the purpose of koshering. Such a procedure is not considered effective enough to kosher the liver which is full of blood. Therefore, liver may only be koshered over an open flame.”

“Milk and Meat: The koshering process completed, the meat is now ready to be cooked. Here too, there are important dietary laws governing the preparation of meat. The Torah commands: "Thou shalt not cook a kid goat in its mother's milk," a command from which three distinct prohibitions are learned: cooking meat and milk together, eating meat and milk together, and deriving any benefit from their mixture. (Milk includes all dairy products such as butter, cheese and cream). In order to insure that these prohibitions would be properly observed, the rabbis ordained that separate cooking utensils, dishes and cutlery be used for dairy and meat respectively. These must be washed separately and stored separately. According to the Talmud, one may not eat milk after meat in the same meal. From this prohibition, various customs about the waiting interval between meat and milk arose in different Jewish communities. The Eastern European Jews observe an interval of six hours between meat and milk, while Western Europeans wait three hours, and the Sephardim and the Dutch one hour. The necessity of a waiting interval between meat and milk is explained by the fact that meat takes longer to digest and has a tendency to become lodged between the teeth. However, owing to the fact that milk products are digested quickly, it is permissible to eat meat directly after dairy, provided the mouth is rinsed thoroughly first. After hard cheese, though, it is customary to wait a longer period, since hard cheese takes longer to digest. Imitation "milk" derived from coconuts and soybeans may be used with meat. Fruit, vegetables, eggs and fish are all "neutral" (*parve*) foods which may be eaten with milk or meat dishes. However, the rabbis prohibited eating fish and meat together on the grounds that such a combination is unhealthy.”

“Mixtures: If meat becomes mixed with dairy or if a forbidden food becomes mixed with a permitted food the ruling is as follows: If the quantity of the forbidden food is 1/60 or more of the mixture, it has "contaminated" the permitted food and the whole mixture is therefore forbidden. If the quantity of forbidden food is less than 1/60, the mixture is permitted provided that the forbidden food was not added intentionally for the purpose of affecting the taste. Many packaged foods sold on the market today contain such

forbidden mixtures and therefore are not *kasber*. Among these are cookies, cakes and bread which contain animal fats. In accordance with the prohibition of forbidden mixtures, the precaution that the milk of an unclean animal should not become mixed with the milk of a clean animal gave rise to the Jewish custom of drinking *halav Yisrael*, milk obtained and bottled under the supervision of a Jew. This ensures that no forbidden substances will be added to the milk. However, in modern times, since state laws prohibit such mixtures and since "unclean" milk is more expensive than "clean" milk and would probably not be mixed, many authorities permit the use of milk which has not been supervised by Jews. Nevertheless, the very pious still observe the custom of using *halav Yisrael*.”

“Throughout the ages Jews have endangered their lives and even died as martyrs to faithfully observe the dietary laws. During the period of the Greek rule of Erez Israel (second century B.C.E.) many Jews chose to die rather than eat the unclean foods which the Greeks forced upon them. In peril of their lives, Jews carried out the laws of ritual slaughter during the Crusades. The Marranos of the Inquisition, the Cantonists of Czarist Russia, and the inmates of Nazi concentration camps all remained steadfastly faithful to the laws of *Kashrut*, despite all threats.”

“Attempts have been made to explain the dietary laws in various ways. Many thinkers (including Maimonides) have seen the dietary laws as hygienic precautions and have attempted to prove that all forbidden foods are unwholesome. Others have attempted to give the philosophical reasons for *Kashrut*. One such explanation is that *Kashrut* hallows the common act of eating and preserves the holiness of the soul through the cleanliness of the foods which the body consumes. However, the observance of *Kashrut* is not dependent on any explanation since the Torah commands the dietary laws without giving a reason. Therefore, a halakhic Midrash states "Let not a man say, 'I do not like the flesh of swine.' On the contrary, he should say, 'I like it but must not eat it since the Torah has forbidden it.'" (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

It is clear that the biblical account of Daniel shows his humble dedication to the Lord's principles of proper living. His unswerving obedience to the "Word of Wisdom" is an example for many people today who are committed to keeping their health code.

“The trials and triumphs of Daniel are described in the Book of Daniel which is part of the third division of the Hebrew Bible, the Hagiographa. Although the Christian view lists Daniel among the prophets, the Talmud does not consider him a prophet, but rather one of the wisest men of the world.”

“Although it is traditionally believed that the Book of Daniel was written by Daniel himself, there are theories which ascribe the authorship of the book to four different authors, in an attempt to explain the wide span of years which the text covers. The majority of the book is written in Aramaic, which was the accepted language among the Jews during that era.”

“Jewish settlements spread throughout the Persian empire. Jews rose to high positions and their communities were rich and powerful. The biblical books of Daniel and Esther give a vivid picture of Jewish life in Persia, and there are many references in the Prophets to Persian power.”

“Jewish history is replete with examples of those willing to die for their faith from Shadrach, Meshach and Abednigo, who in the Book of Daniel refused to worship an idol and thus endangered their lives, up to the present generation of Soviet Jews who suffer indescribable hardships rather than give up their Jewishness. Under Antiochus Epiphanes, Hellenizers applied violent methods toward the Jews. The Fourth Book of Maccabees is almost entirely a sermon on the meaning and glory of self-sacrifice. Whereas in Christian and Muslim thought martyrdom is chiefly regarded as the act of individuals warranting canonization as saints, in Judaism it remains a task for each and every Jew to fulfill if the appropriate moment should come.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

In Jerusalem, at the Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem, a modern art wall sculpture by Holocaust survivor Naphtali Bezem expresses the Jewish idea of martyrdom. As the Jews are shown being led into annihilation chambers, a broken fish represents their spirits. Yet, the fish has wings, as if to say their suffering leads them to heaven. This is a concept also stated in the Book of Mormon.

“And when Amulek saw the pains of the women and children who were consuming in the fire, he also was pained; and he said unto Alma: How can we witness this awful scene? Therefore let us stretch forth our hands, and exercise the power of God which is in us, and save them from the flames. But Alma said unto him: The Spirit constraineth me that I must not stretch forth mine hand; for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory; and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day.” *(Alma 14:10-11)*

One of the happiest festivities in Jewish life is Purim, the celebration of Esther’s victory in standing up as a Jewish woman and protecting her people. The holiday of Purim, meaning "lots," was so called because lots were cast by Haman to decide on a day for killing the Jews.

“Purim, one of the minor festivals in the Jewish calendar, commemorating the deliverance of the Jews of the Persian empire from extermination, some time during the fifth century B.C.E. The story of Purim is told in the biblical Book of Esther. Haman, chief minister of the Persian King Ahasuerus, plotted to destroy all the Jews of the empire, because of a personal grudge against the Jew Mordecai. After gaining the king's consent, he fixed the date for their destruction by lot (*pur* in Persian and Hebrew) for the 13th of Adar. Esther, the King's Jewish wife and stepdaughter of Mordecai, courageously interceded with Ahasuerus, and as a result the king authorized the Jews of his realm to defend themselves from attack on the appointed day. They succeeded in routing their enemies, and the following day the Jews celebrated their



victory, calling the day Purim, in allusion to the lots that Haman had drawn. Ever since that day has been marked with festivities and rejoicing. In Shushan, the capital of the Persian empire, fighting continued for a second day and the victory was celebrated on the 15th of Adar. As a result, the tradition subsequently arose that ancient walled cities (such as Jerusalem) observe Purim on the Shushan anniversary. In addition, in memory of the three-day fast undertaken by Queen Esther in preparation for her intercession with the king, the day before --- Adar 13th --- is observed as a fast day.”

“The book of Esther offers no exact dating for the events described. Some authorities have identified Ahasuerus with King Xeres I (485 --465 B.C.E.) but many biblical scholars question the historical truth of the story, pointing to marked similarities between it and ancient Babylonian folk tales. However, the festival had unquestionably long been established by the second century C.E., and has throughout subsequent history been celebrated not only as a commemoration of the specific events recorded in the book of Esther, but also of all the major and minor deliverances from disaster experienced by various Jewish communities throughout the world.”

“Many laws and customs, as well as a rich folklore, are associated with Purim. The most important ceremony is the reading of the Book of Esther from a specially prepared and handwritten parchment scroll called a *megillah*. The regulations for the reading, as for the celebration of Purim in general, are discussed in the talmudic tractate *Megillah*. Both men and women are obliged to hear the *megillah*, which is read both on the evening of the 13th of Adar and on the morning of Purim day itself. Before the reading, three special blessings are pronounced. During the course of the reading it has become customary to make a din through the sounding of noisemaking objects called *gragers* in Yiddish, each time the name of Haman is mentioned. This symbolically represents the fulfilment of the biblical commandment to "blot out the memory of Amalek" from whom Haman was traditionally descended. Other customs, made obligatory by Jewish law, include the sending of gifts to friends, usually two kinds of foods (*mishloach manot*), and the giving of alms to the poor (*matanot le-eyyonim*). An important feature of the Purim celebration is the banquet held during the afternoon of Purim day. This was the one time of the year when great levity and even drunkenness was tolerated by the rabbis. During the Middle Ages the custom developed for groups of young people to go from house to house staging little plays either on the Purim story or on contemporary communal events. This type of playlet was known as a Purim *Shpil*. Another widespread feature of the Purim celebrations was "dressing up." Children -- and grownups too -- dress themselves up either as the characters of the Purim story or as well-known figures. Often the fancy dress chosen represents an idea or a chapter in Jewish history. This aspect of Purim is still very popular, especially in the State of Israel.”

“Through the ages, Purim has come to take on the atmosphere of an "upside-down day" when nothing is really what it seems to be.”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

# “A Kingdom Which Shall Never Be Destroyed”

*Daniel 2*

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**Summary:** *Nebuchadnezzar's dream is revealed to Daniel—The king saw a great image; a stone cut from the mountain without hands destroyed the image; and the stone grew and filled the whole earth—The stone is the latter-day kingdom of God.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

One significant historical fact that recurs is the constant takeover of the little land of Israel. Our archaeology shows close to thirty major different levels of conquering and habitation. The conqueror's quest was to secure the “Crossroads of the East.” It reached from the north, sometimes governed by Assyrians, Babylonians and others and extended south to Egypt and the gateway to Africa. Babylon (today's Iraq), was one of the major conquerors.

“From more than two thousand years before the start of the Common Era, the Babylonian Empire went through many changes of rulers and dynasties. In 612 B.C.E. Nebuchadnezzar became the ruler of Babylonia and shortly afterwards, in 586 B.C.E., conquered Judea, destroying the Temple and exiling the Jews to Babylonia. These exiles formed a large Jewish community who yearned for their homeland; as we read in Psalm 137: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and cried, remembering Zion . . . How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

“Babylon, the capital city of ancient Babylonia, is called by Isaiah "the glory of kingdoms." Over the years the city was destroyed, rebuilt, then destroyed and rebuilt once again. When the Neo-Babylonian Empire was built at the expense of the Assyrian Empire, Babylon was made the capital of the new Empire, and underwent a vast program of public building and fortification. In excavations of Babylon, two palaces of King Nebuchadnezzar have been uncovered. One of them is assumed to be the location of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, considered in ancient times to have been amongst the Seven Wonders of the World.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In 586 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar captured the city of Jerusalem, and on the biblical date of Tish'ah be-Av (the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av) he had the temple destroyed, carried off a large part of the population into captivity and put Zedekiah and other Judean notables to death.

“Daniel and the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were eyewitnesses to all these events and the biblical books bearing their names testify to the political and spiritual crises which confronted Judea during this period. According to the Book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar suffered greatly for destroying the Temple. He was beset by dreams which he could not understand. One of them, a vision of a magnificent tree cut down in its prime was interpreted by Daniel

for the king as a personal warning of many years of madness that were about to come upon him, during which time he would eat grass and live like an animal.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Prayer, alone as well as by those who accompanied him, was able to lead Daniel through the confusing dreams of Nebuchadnezzar. The children of Israel have always thought and spoken in illustrative imagery. The Old Testament only has about 8,900 different words, (English has about 850,000 yet the illustrative capacity of the prophets is expressed through the images that are given. Hence, Daniel was able to interpret the king’s dreams using “the learning of the Jews” as well as being “Highly favored of the Lord.” (*See 1 Nephi 1:1-2*)

“Dreams have fascinated people through the ages. The Biblical view was that dreams are divine communication --- events transpiring on a supernatural plane. Thus, dreams were regarded as omens, which could be interpreted only by visionaries or prophets, who were in touch with this "divine dimension." In the Bible, "dreamer," "prophet," and "magician" are related terms. Joseph was one such interpreter; he explained Pharaoh's dreams of the fat and thin cows as symbolizing seven years of plenty followed by seven years of hunger (Genesis 41). God's promise to Abraham about the inheritance of the land of Israel came in a dream (Genesis 15) and Samuel's first prophecies were stimulated by God's calling to him in a dream (Samuel 1:3).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

One of the often-used images in dreams, visions and general instruction was of stone. Here are some examples:

Altars and Temple:

“And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.” (*Genesis 28:18*)

“And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth” (*Genesis 28:22*)

“And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.” (*Genesis 31:45*)

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” (*Isaiah 28:16*)

. . . made without hands . . .

“And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.” (*Exodus 20:25*)

“And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.” (*1 Kings 6:7*)

The Lord:

“But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel . . .” (*Genesis 49:24*)

“Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God.” (*Leviticus 26:1*)

“And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.” (*Deuteronomy 4:28*)

. . . his steadfastness . . .

“His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.” (*Job 41:24*)

. . . the “Chief Cornerstone” is rejected . . .

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” (*Psalms 118:22*)

“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (*Matthew 21:42*)

“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,” (*1 Peter 2:4-7*)

The word of the Lord:

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.” (*Exodus 24:12*)

The defender of Israel:

“And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.” (*1 Samuel 17:49*)

The Prophets and Apostles - with the Lord:

“And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.” (*John 1:42*)

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;” (*Ephesians 2:20*)

Stones or rocks are still placed on Jewish graves as reminders of the stone built temple and an innate desire to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Apparently, it was and will be made with stone - and the Rock of Salvation will come to that temple! Gold and silver represent the wealthy nation of Babylon and the term “gold and silver” is a commodity as well as a metaphor for wealth. When used properly it is pleasing and used considerably in the temple construction. When misused, it represents a snare and detriment to a Godly life.

“Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.” (*Exodus 20:23*)

“And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;” (*Genesis 41:42*)

“Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?” (*Genesis 44:8*)

“And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more.” (*Numbers 22:18*)

“The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God.” (*Deuteronomy 7:25*)

“But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living . . . It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.” (*Job 28: 12-15*)

“Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.” (*Psalms 119:127*)

“How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!” (*Proverbs 16:16*)

“They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumbling block of their iniquity.” (*Ezekiel 7:19*)

“Awake, O kings of the earth! Come ye, O, come ye, with your gold and your silver, to the help of my people, to the house of the daughters of Zion.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 124:11*)

“Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand; and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 128:24*)

Another metaphor used to denote hardness and obstinacy is brass and iron, yet in proper use they have a value of strength.

“For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.” (*Psalms 107:16*)

“I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.” (*Isaiah 45:2*)

“Because I knew that thou [art] obstinate, and thy neck [is] an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;” (*Isaiah 48:4*)

“Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.” (*Micah 4:13*)

Clay usually indicates the formation and shaping of God's people, even as a creative metaphor in that we are “formed out of clay.” (*Job 33:6*) In this sense, some suggest, the European nations were “formed” or “shaped” out of other ancient nations.

“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” (*Isaiah 64:8*)

“And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.” (*Jeremiah 18:4*)

“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.” (*Jeremiah 18:6*)

Analyzing the various metaphors we can see that beyond the riches and apparent beauty of man's creations, what is more solid, prevailing and will continue to exist into eternity is the “Rock” or “Stone,” the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords!



**Summary:** *King Cyrus of Persia lets the Jews go back to Jerusalem to build the temple—Cyrus returns vessels of house of the Lord taken by Nebuchadnezzar.*

*Children of the captivity who returned to Jerusalem and to Judah are listed—Children of priests whose genealogy is lost are denied the priesthood—Faithful people contribute to building of the temple.*

*Altar rebuilt—Regular sacrifices reinstated—Foundations of temple laid amid great rejoicing.*

*Samaritans offer help, then hinder the work—Building of temple and of walls of Jerusalem ceases.*

*Haggai and Zechariah prophesy—Zerubbabel renews building of temple—Samaritans challenge the Jews’ right to continue their building work.*

*Darius renews decree of Cyrus to build the temple—It is finished and dedicated, and sacrifices and feasts commence again.*

*Ezra goes up to Jerusalem—Artaxerxes provides for beautifying the temple and sustains the Jews in their worship.*

*Those who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem are listed—Levites are called to accompany them—Ezra and the people fast and pray for and gain guidance and protection in going to Jerusalem.*

*Nehemiah mourns and fasts and prays for the Jews in Jerusalem.*

*Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem—Sanballat and others oppose Nehemiah in rebuilding walls and gates of Jerusalem.*

*Their enemies seek to prevent Jews from rebuilding walls of Jerusalem—Nehemiah arms the laborers and keeps the work going forward.*

*Sanballat engages in intrigue against Nehemiah and the building of the wall—Jews finish construction of the wall.*

*Ezra reads and interprets the law of Moses to the people—They keep the feast of tabernacles.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Some background information on Cyrus shows the respect and honor he has in Jewish History. There are some interesting parallels of his proclamation with that of the proclamation given by the Foreign Minister of England, Sir Arthur James, Earl of Balfour. His declaration called for the return of the Jews to their homeland in 1917.

“Cyrus, king of Persia from 559 to 529 B.C.E., holds a special place in the history of Israel.”

“The Jews, having been denied the right to return to their home in Erez Israel, anxiously and hopefully watched the steady advance of the Persian conqueror. Cyrus seized control of Media and then, in 539 B.C.E. conquered Nebuchadnezzar's huge Babylonian empire.”



“Cyrus was a humane conqueror. In keeping with his general policy of benevolence toward his subject peoples, he not only granted permission to the Jews to return to their homeland, but he restored to the exiles the sacred vessels belonging to the Temple, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken and placed as trophies of victory in the temple of Bel. With the return of a large group of the exiles, a new chapter in the history of Israel began --- the period of the Second Temple.”

“The small community of Jews who had remained in Israel throughout the exile period was bolstered by the influx of a large number of the exiled who were now able to return and, under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, began to rebuild the Temple, repair Jerusalem, and revive a sense of religious and national consciousness.”

“The Talmud teaches that the ingathering of the exiled kingdoms will be part of the coming of the Messiah. The great exile to Babylonia in the sixth century B.C.E. was ended by Cyrus the Great of Persia. However, the rabbis did not consider his proclamation and the return at that time to be the Ingathering of the Exiles since it was incomplete. The day of the ingathering, the rabbis write, will be "as great as the day on which heaven and earth were created." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The subject of the ingathering of the Jews rippled through Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. Schemes were hatched to “get the Jews out” of Europe - maybe they should gather to Uganda!

“In 1903 the Zionist movement was shaken by the introduction of the Uganda Scheme, which proposed that the Jews settle in the East African Protectorate of Uganda rather than the disputed territory of Palestine. Weizmann was among the opponents of this plan, unwilling to agree to Zionism without Zion. By a quirk of fate this adamant stand gained him an introduction to British leader Arthur James Balfour, who was later to play an important role in the establishment of the Jewish state. Balfour had been puzzled by the Zionist rejection of the Uganda plan and asked Weizmann to explain this step. Weizmann then asked Balfour whether, if he were offered Paris he would abandon London. Balfour answered, "No, London is the capital of my country." Weizmann replied, "Jerusalem was the capital of our country when London was a marsh.”

Subsequently, the Balfour Declaration, calling for the ingathering of the Jews, brought exhilaration to Jews and others who cherished the biblical prophecies of the gathering of the children of Israel.

“Lord Balfour, who was a British statesman, first began to take an interest in the Jewish question in 1902--1903, when Theodor Herzl spoke with Joseph Chamberlain, the British colonial secretary and with Lord Lansdowne, the foreign secretary, about a homeland for the Jews. Lord Balfour was prime minister at that time.”

“He listened sympathetically to both Theodor Herzl and Chaim Weizmann. The latter met Balfour in 1906, and spoke to him about the need to build a Jewish homeland on the soil of what was then Palestine. Lord Balfour's interest in Zionism grew more intense during World War I, when he became foreign secretary.”

“The meetings with Weizmann eventually led to the Balfour Declaration, which he signed in 1917. This was England's declaration of approval that "a national home for the Jewish people" be built in Palestine. In 1925 Balfour accepted an invitation to open the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. He made the then difficult journey to Jerusalem at the age of 77, in the company of his niece and her husband, who served as Balfour's private secretary. Another niece, Blanche Dugdale, worked closely with Chaim Weizmann.”

“News of Balfour's letter brought joy to Jewish communities throughout the world. Copies of the Declaration were showered from airplanes over Jewish townships in Germany, Austria and Poland, and on the shores of the Black Sea. 200,000 Jews rallied at Odessa, Russia, bearing banners inscribed "Land and Freedom in Erez Israel!" (Their enthusiasm was soon silenced when the Communists came to power in the same year.) The Declaration was compared to the Persian King Cyrus' permission to the exiled Jewish captives in the sixth century B.C.E. to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple.”

“Zerubbabel, leader of a group of Jews returning from Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C.E. to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Zerubbabel (whose name means "scion of Babylon") was a descendant of exiled King Jehoiachin of Judah. He and Joshua, son of Jehozadak the high priest, brought the first group of Jews back to the Holy Land and began the formidable task of reconstructing the Temple. Despite the harassment of neighboring peoples and the depressing barrenness and desolation of Jerusalem, they managed to set up the altar, reinstitute the sacrificial service and celebrate the Feast of Sukkot. In the second year of their return they began laying the foundations of the Temple, but their efforts were soon forced to a halt. Distrustful of the non-Jewish tribes, Zerubbabel refused their offer of help and, in retaliation, these neighboring groups blocked all further construction attempts.”

“For years the site remained untouched until finally the prophets Haggai and Zechariah began exhorting the Jews to complete the unfinished task. Once more Zerubbabel and Joshua took up the challenge and this time the Temple was erected.”

“Zerubbabel is fondly remembered by the Jews for his accomplishment. The Second Temple is often referred to as the Temple of Zerubbabel and in the Hanukkah hymn *Ma'oz Zur*, lauding Israel's past redeemers, the "end of Babylon" is associated with Zerubbabel.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The building of the temple, as well as the city walls, was met with resistance by some inside and outside the Israel community. The Samaritans, who were denied the right to assist in the temple construction and later worked against it, still claim to be part of Israel, however.

“Samaritans (are) a small religious sect residing in Israel whose members consider themselves to be direct descendants of the Israelite tribes.”

“According to Samaritan history, they broke away from the Israelites in the 11th century B.C.E., refusing to accept a change in the location of the religious capital. To this day the Samaritans maintain that Mount Gerizim near Shechem (Nablus, north of Jerusalem) is the place chosen by God as the center of Israelite worship and not Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. They have therefore continued to live around Shechem and to make pilgrimages to Mount Gerizim.”

“The Samaritans refused to accept any of the Jewish religious writings which followed their split with the Israelites. Their religion is therefore based mainly on the Five Books of Moses. Neither the Mishnah nor the Talmud is regarded as valid. But Samaritans adhere strictly to the laws of the Pentateuch and have maintained biblical traditions and rituals for thousands of years. Thus, while the Jews ceased to offer sacrifices after the destruction of the Second Temple, the Samaritans still celebrate the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb on Mount Gerizim each Passover, and all Samaritan families share in the ritual slaughter and feasting. The Samaritans also make pilgrimages to Mount Gerizim on the three pilgrim festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot, and continue to observe Rosh Ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur and Simhat Torah. They do not celebrate Purim or Hanukkah, however, because these festivals are not mentioned in the Pentateuch and were instituted only after the split between the Samaritans and the Jews.”

“As they use a different calendar system, the Jews and Samaritans rarely celebrate their holidays at the same time. Yet there is a distinct similarity between the two groups. The Samaritans also observe the Sabbath on Saturday and also maintain *kasbrut* laws. They even have a bar mitzvah ceremony, but instead of on the boy's 13th birthday, they celebrate upon the completion of his basic religious studies, which can take place any time between the ages of six and ten.”

“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 govern-

ment, their population has grown to about 500 persons.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

There is an amazing parallel today of “enemies of the Jews preventing them from building the wall” (or settling their ancient country) nowadays with the ancient days. Even Orthodox Jews maintain that the State of Israel is not legitimate because the Messiah did not restore it!

A similar matter of dissent and subsequent success is 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. Let it be known, however, missionary activity is deemed highly insensitive and frankly, antisemitic.

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. President Howard W. Hunter also signed a statement to the same effect with the statement added, “. . . so long as such activity is prohibited by the government of 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*)

Israeli government leaders kept their commitment to allow the building. This 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.

Likewise, latter-day attempts at undermining the existence of Israel, such as calling for the elimination of Jerusalem as its’ capital or calling for the annihilation of Jews, will be met with the same response as in older times.

“And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God . . .” *Nehemiah 4:8-9*

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.” (*Psalms 122:6*)

# “The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord”

*Zechariah 10-14; Malachi*

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**Summary:** *Judah and Joseph shall be sown among the people in far countries—The Lord will hiss for them and gather them and redeem them.*

*Zechariah speaks Messianically: Messiah shall be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver—It shall be cast to the potter in the house of the Lord.*

*In the final great war, all nations shall be engaged at Jerusalem but the Lord shall defend his people—Then the Jews shall look upon Jesus whom they crucified, and there shall be great mourning.*

*The Jews shall gain forgiveness at the Second Coming—They shall ask Jesus: What are these wounds in thine hands?—The remnant, tried and refined, shall be his people.*

*At his Second Coming the Lord shall fight for Israel—His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives—He shall be King over all the earth—Plagues shall destroy the wicked.*

*The Jews despise the Lord by offering polluted bread upon the altar and by sacrificing animals with blemishes—The Lord’s name shall be great among the Gentiles.*

*The priests are reproved for not keeping their covenants and teaching the people—The Jews are condemned for dealing treacherously one with another, and with the wife of the covenant.*

*The Lord’s messenger shall prepare the way for the Second Coming—Christ shall sit in judgment—Israel commanded to pay tithes and offerings—They keep a book of remembrance.*

*At the Second Coming the proud and wicked shall be burned as stubble—Elijah shall return before that great and dreadful day.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

The title seems foreboding, yet only for those who are unprepared for his coming! Preparations are being made that include beautiful and sacred “Houses of the Lord” throughout the world. There will be two specific temples, each in a “City of the Lord” (it seems there will be two cities, Jerusalem and Zion).

“And he shall utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people;” (*Doctrine & Covenants 133:21*)

His people must also be prepared as they make covenants and then shift their paradigms in consecrating everything to the building of His kingdom. The “dress rehearsal” of today’s preparation and building was before his “first” coming. Therefore, the accounts of the children of Israel returning to their sacred city and rebuilding the temple is valuable for us today.

“Zechariah was a prophet whose oracles are recorded in the 11th book of the Twelve Minor Prophets in the Bible. He apparently lived in the sixth century B.C.E., shortly after the destruction of the First Temple, and may

have been among the first groups of Jews to return to Erez Israel from the Babylonian Exile. Zechariah believed that the destruction and Exile were God's way of punishing the Jews for their sins, but he urged them to repent and rebuild the Temple with God's blessing.”

“The Book of Zechariah is divided into two parts. The first eight chapters are historical in nature. They make mention of the Babylonian Exile and of contemporary figures. The second half of the book, however, makes no mention of time or place and is not as easily understood as the first. Some scholars therefore feel that the book was written by more than one person.”

“Both sections have one stylistic point in common: they are filled with symbolic visions, explained by an angel who speaks to Zechariah and acts as an intermediary between the prophet and God. Many of these visions concern the rebuilding of Jerusalem. For example, in the first part of the book the prophet sees four horns (like those of a ram butting against a wall), which represent the nations that destroyed Jerusalem. Zechariah then observes four craftsmen who go to cut the horns down, symbolizing the restoration of the city. The second section of the book describes the divine punishment of Israel's neighbors and the future victory of the Jews over their enemies. Jerusalem will be besieged by many nations, he predicts, but these will be struck with confusion and madness, and the "chiefs of Judah" will devour them.”

“Zechariah believed that the ceremonies and rituals performed in the service of God were meaningless unless accompanied by the striving for righteousness, truth and peace. He saw Jerusalem as the chosen city, protected by God.”

“The prophet Zechariah gives a happy description of old age when he speaks of the days to come. "There shall yet be old men and women in the public squares of Jerusalem," alongside "boys and girls playing in its public squares" (8:4).”

“The rabbis regarded Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi as the last of the prophets, the "divine spirit" having ceased in Israel with their deaths.”

“Zechariah continued in the same task as Haggai; he too encouraged the Jews to rebuild the Temple. Zechariah reminded Israel that before God returned to the Temple the people must return to God through righteousness, justice, and mercy: "Return to Me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you." The nation's future security would be guaranteed, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts" (4:6), and Israel would flourish once again. Zechariah prophesied of the Golden Age of the Messiah when God's Kingdom would be established on earth.”  
*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

The greatest return to Israel was from Egypt and every year two holidays are memorials of that deliverance as well as expectations of an even greater deliverance in the future. These

holidays are celebrated on the first full moon after the first day of spring (Passover) and fall (Sukkot).

“This holiday (Sukkot) was also the occasion for the consecration of the Temple built by Solomon and every seventh year on Sukkot, the Torah was read by the king before the assembled people. In his vision of the end of days, the prophet Zechariah foretells that all the nations of the world will assemble for the festival of Sukkot in Jerusalem to worship God.”

*(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)*

On both holidays, special arrangements are made in anticipation of expected guests who will come unexpectedly. They include Moses and Elijah! The prophet Malachi speaks of Elijah's anticipated return and the work needed to prepare the people. The pattern is familiar today.

“The ecstasy of rebuilding the holy Temple passed and the Jews fell into disreputable ways once again. Inter-marriage was common, as was divorce, and morals were weak. Malachi was faced with the task of awakening the people from their religious lethargy and bringing them back to God.”

“He denounced their neglect of the Temple service and compared this unfavorably with the non-Jews who brought abundant offerings to God. Malachi announced the coming of the Day of Judgment which would remove the sinners from the nation and thus clear the way for the Messianic Age: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the land with utter destruction.”

“The Sabbath before Passover is known as Shabbat ha-Gadol. Tradition connects it with the tenth of Nisan, the day on which the Israelites in Egypt set aside the lamb which they were to slaughter on the first Passover (Exodus 12:3). On Shabbat ha-Gadol, a special *haftarah*, taken 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. It is also customary on this Shabbat for the rabbi to devote his sermon to the laws of Passover.”

“Naturally, not all Jews accepted the new role of the sages and their methods of interpreting the Torah. Had not the last of the prophets, Malachi, written: "For the priests' lips preserve knowledge, and one should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts?"; was it not then the priests and the wealthy landowners who were entitled to interpret the Torah? And was not the Temple rather than the synagogue the true center of Jewish life? Before long there had developed a political/religious party, representing the priestly class, which opposed the sages. This party took the name *Zedukim* (Sadducees) probably because a priest named Zadok was selected by both David (II Samuel 8:17) and Solomon (I Kings 1:34) to control the affairs of the Temple and because Zadok's descendants constituted the Temple hierarchy down to the second century B.C.E. The Sadducees refused to accept a precept as binding unless it was based directly on the Torah. They denied the validity of the Oral Law as developed by the Pharisees. The Sadducees also rejected the Pharisaic belief in the immortality of the soul and

the resurrection of the body (claiming that there is no basis for these beliefs in the Torah). They also disagreed with the Pharisees in regard to the question of free will. Whereas the latter group claimed that human freedom was somewhat limited by fate, the Sadducees . . ." take away fate entirely, and suppose that God is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil; and they say that to act what is good, or what is evil, is at man's own choice . . ." as the ancient historian, Josephus put it." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

As previously mentioned in another lesson supplement, 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.

At one Passover I asked my youngest son at the appropriate time to open the door for Elijah. He refused. 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!

"A trouble-maker" is what King Ahab called Elijah. The Bible calls him Elijah the Tishbite, and many people have called him the first of the great prophets of Israel. Elijah was not a professional prophet, but a simple shepherd who felt himself called upon by God to help the Jewish people turn away from evil. He answered this call by setting out on a life-long prophetic mission."

"In his campaign against idol worship, Elijah confronted the priests of Baal who were gathered in front of all the nation at Mount Carmel to pray for rain at a time of drought. Elijah challenged the priests; whoever could bring down the sacred fire on the sacrifice, his would be acknowledged as the true God. The priests prayed, danced, whipped themselves, to no avail. Elijah calmly called upon God to answer his prayer, and fire consumed the altar. The people fell on their faces crying "The Lord is God," and Elijah then ordered them to kill the priests of Baal."

"Jezebel was furious at the slaying of her priests and Elijah was forced to flee for his life. In despair, he eventually came to Mount Horeb, and there, in the very place where God had appeared to Moses, He revealed Himself to Elijah in a still small voice, telling him to continue his work."

"Elijah always felt he was fighting a losing battle, yet he never lost faith, hope or energy. Nobody knows exactly how he died: it is said that Elijah ascended to Heaven in a chariot of fire, and will return to Israel at the end of days. Many stories are told of Elijah appearing disguised, in various times and places, to help the poor and hopeless."

"A special chair is set aside for Elijah at circumcisions, as he is called the protector of children, and the upholder of the covenant between God and



Israel, and Elijah is supposed to visit every Jewish home on Passover, so a special cup of wine is set aside for him. And, says the Midrash, when the time is right, it will be Elijah who will herald the coming of the Messiah.”  
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The legendary status of Elijah as an emissary for the coming Messiah (to some - as a newborn laid in a stone manger filled with straw) is shown in the story of Rabbi Akiva. In the second century C.E., young Rabbi Akiva worked as a shepherd for one of the wealthiest men of Jerusalem, Kalba Savua, who had a beautiful daughter, Rachel.

“Akiva and Rachel fell in love, but her father opposed the marriage because Akiva was unlearned and illiterate. He promised to learn, but Kalba Savua was stubborn in his opposition. He refused to see the young couple or to give Rachel any dowry when she left home to marry Akiva. Instead of beds, they had straw to sleep on. Akiva told Rachel: "I wish I could afford to give you a Jerusalem of Gold." (This was a gold design of the city which was popular as an ornament.) According to a legend, Elijah then appeared to them as a poor man begging for a bit of straw on which he could lay his newborn infant. Akiva told Rachel, "See, we are not really so poor --- that man doesn't even have straw!"

“Rabbinic literature often mentions the appearance of the prophet Elijah, who did not die but ascended to the heavens in a fiery chariot.”

“Countless medieval folktales recount how Elijah appeared to human beings in order to assist or punish them.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Elijah has come in modern times so the coming of the Messiah is close at hand. When he comes, there will be a number of momentous appearances.

“For behold, he shall stand upon the mount of Olivet, and upon the mighty ocean, even the great deep, and upon the islands of the sea, and upon the land of Zion.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 133:20*)

There will be questions as he appears to those who have waited so long for him. The questions indicate a lack of even knowing who he is:

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?”

(He will answer them.)

“I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

(They will continue to question.)

“Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?” (*Isaiah 63:1-2*)

The old English word “winefat” is from the Hebrew word for a “wine press” or “vineyard.” It is from that word we get “Gethsemane,” where the Savior bled from every pore. His stained clothing is reflected in his return to the Mount of Olives in red. The fact that they are asking indicates that they have not been instructed. They just don’t know the account of the Gethsemane suffering and of the crucifixion.

“And then shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet? Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.”

(Following their instruction and learning - - things that we may be so familiar with . . .)

“. . . then shall they weep because of their iniquities; then shall they lament because they persecuted their king.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 45:51-53*)

It will be a Godly sorrow and better yet, from the captivity of all their sorrow and persecution they have endured, they will be set free. They will hear him, their king whom they did not know, say -- as Isaiah prophesied . . .

“The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;” (*Isaiah 61:1*)

There will be those who will not abide his presence, those who said they knew him, yet continued in their secret sins even though he has already atoned for them. Their self-serving, selfish lives result in an ungodly sorrow, lamenting because they knowingly persecuted their king.

In preparation for a total commitment to serve him by serving each other, the Law of Tithing was given.

“Tithes (Hebrew: *terumot*, "heave offerings," and *ma'aserot*, "tithes"). During Temple times Israelites would set aside a portion of their agricultural products as tithes which were given to the priests, Levites, and alternately to the poor or were to be taken to Jerusalem and eaten there.”

“The tithes served the purpose of supporting the priest and Levite who did not have any ancestral holdings of land and were occupied with the Temple service and other ritual duties, of supporting the poor, and of strengthening the position of Jerusalem in the consciousness of all the people of Israel. Basing themselves on the close similarity in sound between the words *te aser* (give tithes) and *tit'asher* (become rich), Rabbi Johanan said: "Give tithes so that you will become rich," and Rabbi Akiva added that, "tithes are a fence which guards one's riches." After the exile from Erez Israel, pious people became accustomed to give one-tenth of their earnings to charity, although this "tithe" is of comparatively modern origin.”

“It is still customary among Orthodox Jews to set aside tithes from all produce of the Land of Israel, and the produce marketed by Tnuva, the large agricultural collective, is tithed at source before it is sold. The *terumah* part is either destroyed or used as fodder for animals owned by priests; because they are ritually unclean, the *kobanim* themselves cannot eat it. The other tithes are distributed to the poor and needy.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The tithes were used to take care of the Jerusalem Temple, the House of the Lord. After it was destroyed, a memory of the last temple was perpetuated and 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.*)

Now that Jerusalem has been restored and it is once again the capital of “a distinct nation,” Jewish prayers at every meal and at every synagogue service have been modified to say, “Next year in Jerusalem, rebuilt!” Orson Hyde prophesied about Jerusalem, its temple and its leadership:

“ . . . Now, O Lord! Thy servant has been obedient to the heavenly vision which Thou gavest him in his native land; and under the shadow of Thine outstretched arm, he has safely arrived in this place to dedicate and consecrate this land unto Thee, for the gathering together of Judah's scattered remnants, according to the predictions of the holy Prophets--for the building up of Jerusalem again after it has been trodden down by the Gentiles so long, and for rearing a Temple in honor of Thy name . . .”

“ . . . Thou, O Lord, did once move the heart of Cyrus to show favor unto Jerusalem and her children. Do Thou now also be pleased to inspire the hearts of kings and the powers of the earth to look with a friendly eye towards this place, and with a desire to see Thy righteous purposes executed in relation thereto. Let them know that it is Thy good pleasure to restore the kingdom unto Israel, raise up Jerusalem as its capital, and constitute her people a distinct nation and government, with David Thy servant, even a descendant from the loins of ancient David to be their king . . .”

“ . . . Let that nation or that people who shall take an active part in behalf of Abraham's children, and in the raising up of Jerusalem, find favor in Thy sight. Let not their enemies prevail against them, neither let pestilence or famine overcome them, but let the glory of Israel overshadow them, and the

power of the Highest protect them; while that nation or kingdom that will not serve Thee in this glorious work must perish, according to Thy word --Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” (*History of the Church, vol. 4, pp. 456-57.*)

The Lord will return to a Jerusalem that will have the House of the Lord. The entire city will become the City of The Lord.

“And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come--after it should be destroyed it should be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord; wherefore, it could not be a new Jerusalem for it had been in a time of old; but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built unto the house of Israel.” (*Ether 13:5*)

The Lord will also come to a Zion that will have a House of the Lord. Apparently it will become a City of the Lord as well.

“That you may come up unto the crown prepared for you, and be made rulers over many kingdoms, saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Zion, who hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman;” (*Doctrine & Covenants 78:15*)

“ . . . Adam-ondi-Ahman means the place or land of God where Adam dwelt . . . Apparently the area included was a large one; at least, the revelations speak of the land, the valley, and the mountains of Adam-ondi-Ahman. They tell us that Christ himself "established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman" (D. & C. 78:15-16), and that it included the place now known as Spring Hill, Daviess County, Missouri. (D. & C. 116.) Far West, Missouri, also appears to be included in the land of Adam-ondi-Ahman. On April 17, 1838, the Lord commanded his saints to assemble at Far West, which place, he said, was holy ground; and there they were to build a city. (D. & C. 115)” (*Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, Page 20*)

May we be prepared for his coming. May we learn from our forefathers and benefit from their mistakes. May we ever praise God for sending his Son to pay for all mistakes. May we live with him, in his house, in his city, in his glory.



