

Summary Handout

“Every Thing Shall Live Whither the River Cometh”

Lesson
44
Summary

Ezekiel 43; 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.

Ezekiel 44; 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.

Ezekiel 47; Waters issue from the house of the Lord and heal the Dead Sea—The Lord shows the borders of the land.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Doom to Consolation: “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 . . . 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.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Salt and Water: 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 . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

“Official” Salt: “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.*)

Another Great Salt Lake: Salt is plentiful in 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.

Too Much: 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*)

Happy Acclaim: 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: 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.

Dead Sea– the Most Imbalanced Water: 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. When I tour to the Dead Sea, I insist that everyone put their fingers in the water and touch their tongue. The grimaces! 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. (*Ezekiel 47:10*)

Clean Hands, Pure Heart: 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.

Knock, Then Open: 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.”

Light From the Ark: 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 six, 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.

Curtains of the Lord: 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*).

City of the Lord: 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*).

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