

May 13-19, 2019

Matthew 19–20; Mark 10; Luke 18

“What Lack I Yet”

Summary: *Jesus teaches about marriage and divorce—Eternal life is for those who keep the commandments—The Twelve Apostles will judge the house of Israel.*

Jesus gives the parable of the laborers in the vineyard—He foretells His crucifixion and resurrection—He came to give His life as a ransom for many.

Jesus teaches the higher law of marriage—He blesses little children—Jesus counsels the rich young man, foretells His own death, and heals blind Bartimæus.

Jesus gives the parables of the unjust judge and the Pharisee and publican—He invites little children to come unto Him and teaches how to gain eternal life—He tells of His coming death and resurrection and gives sight to a blind man.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How is marriage viewed in the Bible by Jews of today?

“Marriage is not merely an agreement between two individuals which can be dissolved at will, it is a union of souls. The same God who prescribed a formula for the fusion of souls — the formula followed beneath the wedding canopy — also gave detailed instructions how these two souls can revert to a state of independence.”

(https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/557906/jewish/Divorce-Basics.htm#Jewish)

How long is the duration of a marriage?

Marriage is viewed without ending because there is no mention of “Until death do ye part.” The canopy mentioned is often a large “Talith,” a remnant reminder of clothing used in the ancient temple. Another Talith is used over the heads of the bride and the groom. In many Jewish families, the couple’s first intimacy is the marriage kiss, under the Talith. Even throughout the courtship, they have never touched. Another remarkable reminder of ancient temple worship is the practice of the couple to retain their Talith marriage canopy and the over-the-head Talith, because they will be ultimately buried in the “garments” they were married in.

What are intimacy aspects of marriage?

“Judaism believes that man must serve God with his soul and his body. A person's soul is that part of him that loves God and His goodness and wants to be like Him, and a person's body is the physical container of his soul on earth. Nearly all the *mitzvot* which God gave are to be performed with the body. Thus the physical actions of man are sanctified. This applies to all the physical aspects of life: even sex when it is practiced in the proper framework, marriage, is in

accordance with the will of God and is a *mitzvah*.” “The regulations concerning sexual relations between husband and wife (termed *tohorat ha-mishpahah*, literally, "family purity"), constitute another integral component of the laws of purity which still apply today. According to biblical law, a couple must abstain from sexual intercourse while the wife is a *niddah*, i.e., during her period of menstruation. The *halakhah* as it developed over the generations extended the biblical prohibition somewhat, and as it is presently codified, stipulates that sexual intercourse (as well as intimacies which may lead to it) is forbidden from the time the woman expects her menses until seven "clean" days (that is, days on which no blood whatsoever is seen) have elapsed. A minimum of five days is fixed for the menses themselves, so that the minimum period of separation is 12 days. In the evening of the seventh clean day, the woman immerses herself in a *mikveh* and normal marital relations are resumed until the next menses are expected.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How can holiness be reflected in human desire?

“Like other basic human desires, sex is regarded in a positive light in Jewish teaching, especially as it is the means of fulfilling the first biblical commandment: "Be fruitful and multiply." Judaism does not encourage the unbridled fulfillment of desire, however, but rather imposes restrictions which raise the act to the level of holiness.” “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.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How does modesty influence chastity?

“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.” “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. Adultery is defined as sexual relations between a married woman and any man other than her husband.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Latter-day Saint doctrine is more definitive in that any sexual contact or activity with any body, including your own body, that leads to improper sexual emotions is simply unwarranted. Obviously, the world's mass media culture generally disagrees with such a standard.

What are the Lord's instructions about disputes?

The scriptures give us a guideline regarding disagreements and disputes. Too often, disagreements turn onto disputes and they generally result in anger. The Lord gave us a simple instruction in resolving disputes. “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and thou rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly . . .” (Matthew 5:23-25) Personal reconciliation sometimes requires arbitration and the judgement of disengaged persons; therefore, a judicial system was established in Biblical times. “The Hebrew word for court is *bet din* (plural: *battei din*), which literally means

"house of judgment"; in rabbinic literature it is the term for a Jewish court of law. We find *battei din* which handle the legal problems of the Israelites from the times of Moses. The rule of the law is an important principle of Judaism. The Torah stresses that justice must not be meted out by the parties themselves but must be administered by impartial judges. Indeed, it was Moses who first organized courts on the advice of his father-in-law, Jethro. Upon Israel's entry into their land, they were obligated to establish courts in every town. According to the Talmud, towns with less than 120 inhabitants had to have courts consisting of three judges while larger towns had to have courts consisting of 23 judges. The court of three judges exercised jurisdiction over cases involving fines, divorce, conversion, and absolution from vows. The court of 23 judges exercised jurisdiction over cases including those involving capital punishment." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What does "Allow the Children" teach us?

Upon a closer look, we can also see the familiar nature of Jesus' personality. He must have made many friends here; after all, thousands followed Him. It is conceivable that the very first ones to gather around Him when He came out or arrived to speak were the little children. He might have had special names or nicknames for them, for he called Simon Bar Jonah, *Peter*, a name denoting rock. (Maybe Simon's physique was like a rock. Later the rock would sink, and Jesus, the Rock of Salvation, would save him.) Many parents also brought their children for blessings. The disciples attempted to turn them away so they would not disturb the Master; he responded, "Suffer [allow] little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14)

What insights can you see in "Touching His Garment?"

As mentioned in a previous lesson supplement, On the way to bless the twelve-year-old girl who was ill. Her father, the leader of the synagogue, was interrupted as Jesus noted that in the press, a woman had touched His garment. Jesus said, "Who touched my Clothes?" (Mark 5:21-30) Recalling that religious Jews today wear a garment of wool called a *Talith*. The name seems to be derived from the Hebrew word for lamb, *taleh*. The hem or the strings of the *talith* are customarily touched during Jewish religious services. (The four sets of strings are knotted so that the sum of knots and strings equals 613—the number of laws and covenants including the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.) Modern Jews touch the strings and knots of the *talith* garment to remind and commit themselves to keeping the laws and thereby being blessed of God. The woman who touched the garment of Jesus (probably the *talith*) was healed. When He questioned who had touched Him, the woman fell at His feet and confessed, probably because it was totally against Jewish custom for a woman bleeding (ritually unclean) to touch anyone. Jesus assured her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." (Mark 5:31-34)

"What must I do to inherit Eternal Life?"

As a discipline and behavioral structure, the early Saints gave everything to the Lord. By consecrating their resources to the Kingdom of God, they were learning stewardship instead of ownership. "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:32-35) Stewardship is an eternal principle also given before Jesus' time. "For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." (Exodus 32:29) "And

behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.”
(DC 42:30)

How does the principle of stewardship affect your life?

As mentioned in a previous lesson, in Jesus' day, two men asked what they should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus gave each one an answer that applied to him because each had to learn a principle he needed most. The rich young man was told to keep the commandments and when he answered that he observed them all, he was told to sell what he had and give to the poor. On the other hand, a lawyer was asked a question and when he answered correctly Jesus told him to follow his own answer. In other words, "Do it." The answer includes more than a lesson on riches, wealth or worldly aspects. It is a lesson in stewardship, humility, and a fervent purpose of service to others guided by mercy, piety, wisdom, humility, gentility, and understanding. "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" (Deuteronomy 1:13). They were charged to "hear the causes between your brethren and judge righteously between a man and his brother and the stranger," not to be partial in judgment but to "hear the small and the great alike, fear no man, for judgment is God's" (Deuteronomy 1:16--17)."

What is greater than the "Law?"

"Ritual alone does not please God, who demands that it go hand in hand with mercy and compassion." "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. But 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 (Zechariah 7:9) put it: "...execute the judgment and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother."
(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

So, when does the Law of Consecration begin?

The law of consecration, in a celestial sense, is a stewardship of doing without being instructed to do so. Those that have to ask, "What must I do to inherit life?" must grasp the opportunity to reach higher so that the spirit can dictate the answer, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," now.

How did little children have an effect on the king?

In 1994, an event occurred in Israel. It bears reprinting, befitting this lesson, because it deals with Israel's neighbors, the Jordanians, its recently deceased visionary King Hussein, and little children. The background to the news story included an expected festivity as a new bridge, named the Hussein Bridge, was opened across the Jordan River, connecting Israel and Jordan. The king was coming to visit Israel, this time officially and publicly. The media waited for the two previous enemies to meet half-way across the bridge. They were surprised however, that the Israeli officials did not arrive on schedule. Instead, Israeli children with bunches of flowers ran toward the Jordanian king. Unarmed, unaccompanied, they surrounded the king and gave him the flowers. The king wept. The media didn't understand. Even in a land and among a people that don't know their King of Kings, they know how to greet a king. They sent their little ones. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." **(Matthew 18:10)**