

November 11-17, 2019

Hebrews 7–13

“An High Priest of Good Things to Come”

Summary: *The Melchizedek Priesthood brings exaltation and administers the gospel—It is received with an oath and covenant—The superiority of the Melchizedek Priesthood over the Aaronic Priesthood is explained—Salvation comes through the intercession of Christ.*

Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin—God promised to make a new covenant with Israel.

The Mosaic ordinances prefigured Christ’s ministry—Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant.

We are sanctified by the shedding of the blood of Christ—The superiority of His sacrifice is explained—Those who fall from grace through willful sin are damned—The just will live by faith.

By faith we understand the word and work of God—The faith of the ancients was centered in Christ—By faith, men subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and worked miracles.

Whom the Lord loves He chastens—God is the Father of spirits—To see God, follow peace and holiness—Exalted Saints belong to the Church of the Firstborn.

Marriage is honorable—Christ is the same everlastingly—Paul explains how the Saints are to offer acceptable sacrifices.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What are Jews anticipating with the expectation of a 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. Latter-day scripture refers to the Lord, and to the Lord’s servant (possibly a latter-day David), and to another latter-day servant (Joseph Smith). These servants are of dual descendancy. These ideas are seen in the answers given to questions Isaiah

stated: “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 and Covenants 113:1-6)

As stated, 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)

What are some additional insights to Ezekiel's prophecies?

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.)** “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)** Again, David's righteous life is the model. The sinful part of his life is considered something he must work out with God.

What do Jews anticipate of a Latter-day David?

As discussed, 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**)

What about David's repentance?

"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.**) 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 *Minhah* service." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

Where is this Latter-day David to be found?

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 vekayam."

What are some echoes of priestly functions by worshipping Jews?

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. "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.

What echoes of true religion are in Jewish Marriages?

"Halakhic requirements of the marriage ceremony include: the *huppah* (canopy –

representing the Temple); the giving of the ring by the groom to the bride in the presence of two valid witnesses; (representing eternity) the *ketubbah* (marriage contract); *yihud*, a brief period of seclusion following the ceremony; and *sheva berakhot*, the seven blessings which combine the hopes of the young couple with the prayers and aspirations of the Jewish people. Differences in detail of foods, dress, procedures etc. which attend the joyful occasion vary as widely as the communities from which the participants come. The shattered glass, recalling the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, is a custom which is widely, but not universally, practiced. Some oriental Jews have a relative cutting paper during the ceremony, to ward off evil spirits. Some Ashkenazi brides make seven circuits around the groom to create a mystical ring which is presumed to serve the same purpose.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What necessitated the return of the full, original true religion and its priestly authority?

The restoration included the higher priesthood that was taken from the general population of Israel. “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent (turn away), Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” (Psalms 110:4) The official declaration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints states: “When Jesus came, He restored the Melchizedek Priesthood to the Jews and began to build up the Church among them. However, it was lost again by apostasy and was taken from the earth. The Melchizedek Priesthood was restored to the earth in these last days by the ministry of Peter, James, and John, who literally came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the spring of 1829 and conferred this power and authority upon them (D&C 27:12–13). Later, Moses, Elias, and Elijah gave them further keys by which these brethren

could use the Melchizedek Priesthood in additional ways (D&C 110). The president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the president of the high or Melchizedek Priesthood, and by virtue of this position, he holds all the keys that pertain to the kingdom of God on the earth.” (Bible Dictionary)