

November 25-December 1, 2019

1 and 2 Peter

“Rejoice with Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory”

Summary: *The trial of our faith precedes salvation—Christ was foreordained to be the Redeemer.*

Converts are newborn babes in Christ—He is the chief cornerstone—Saints hold a royal priesthood and are a peculiar people—Saints are in subjection to the laws of man.

Husbands and wives should honor each other—Saints should live by gospel standards—Christ preached to the spirits in prison.

Peter explains why the gospel is preached to the dead—Saints should speak as the oracles of God—The righteous will be tried and tested in all things.

The elders are to feed the flock of God—Humility and godly graces lead to perfection.

Peter urges the Saints to make their calling and election sure—Prophecy comes by the power of the Holy Ghost.

False teachers among the Saints are damned—Lustful Saints will perish in their own corruption.

Some in the latter days will doubt the Second Coming—The elements will melt at the coming of the Lord.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What if you found many close relatives?

The supplemental material for this lesson

comes from a symposium sponsored by the Ensign Foundation. Two highly educated teams of Jews and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints joined at Denver University to present and discuss each other’s concept of being “chosen.” The introductory Remarks at the Symposium on Covenant and Chosenness, Denver University, January 26, 1998 by Daniel Rona, Chairman, The Ensign Foundation, matches the joy and glory of family theme of this lesson.

“God could maybe choose someone else?”

Welcome to this symposium of two great peoples who are culturally and religiously dealing with being chosen and having

made a covenant with the Lord. There are times, however, when both of us may be heard complaining about being chosen - - much like Tevia who suggested that “God could maybe choose someone else?” What a wonderful opportunity we now have to be learning from each other about “chosenness.” I believe that this symposium will be more than just a scholarly exercise but also a wonderful social family reunion.

Who are the Chosen People?

From the Encyclopedia Judaica under the title ‘Chosen People’ I found the following statements. “How odd of God, to choose the Jews.” W.N. Ewer, who wrote this jingle, could not understand why Israel is God’s Chosen People. Moses explains it thus:” “The Lord did not set His love upon you because ye were more in number than any people . . . but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your

fathers. . . Know therefore that the LORD . . . is the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;" **(Deuteronomy 7:7-9)**

Choice, Chosen or Both?

"The rabbis insist that Israel was elected because it voluntarily accepted the Torah whereas other nations would not . . . and [this] characteristic motivated God to choose Israel as His people."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) A legendary anecdote relates that God was seeking among his children those who would accept his commandments. When the Barbarians heard "Thou shalt not kill," they declined. When some Europeans heard "Thou shalt not commit adultery," they declined. However, when he approached the Israelites with commandments, their only question was "How much did they cost?" God answered, "They're free." Immediately Israel said, "Okay, we'll take ten!"

Where can I emulate the Glory of God?

"The covenant which signifies the special relationship between God and Israel is based on Israel being elected by God. God has chosen the Jews. Israel has also chosen God." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)** "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him. And they said, We are witnesses." **(Joshua 24:22)** "This is the thrust of the anonymous retort to the above jingle: "Its not so odd, the Jews chose God." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

How does responsibility play a role in happiness?

"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.) We read that God said: "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)** And, God also indicated on what basis he would keep the perpetuity of the covenant. "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant." **(Exodus 31:16)**

What are the traits of the chosen?

This "chosenness" is identified by a people, by their land, by their kings, by their prophets and prophecies, by their scriptures, and by their fruits. "Writing had a profound effect on Judaism. The covenant between God and the Chosen People was transformed into a written text; the central religious object became the Ten Commandments, inscribed on stone; and later the Torah scroll was to be revered. The biblical society as a whole became 'book centered'." ". . . these Books are considered books of prophets, firstly because their authors were divinely inspired, and secondly because they are more than histories of Israel: they also record the Covenant between God and Israel, and they stress that only by continued and faithful adherence to that Covenant can Israel hope to survive." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

What teaches me how to be a "Royal Leader" in the family?

In ancient times, in the "Crossroads of the East" Israel's rightful Kings were established through God's will. These kings ruled and judged being advised and guided by God's prophets. "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 . . . The ideal king was seen as a king of justice. Prophecies of the future declare that in the "end of days" the kingdom of the Jews will be returned to a descendant of the House of David."

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

How am I becoming a keeper of the New Covenant?

"The prophet Jeremiah was extraordinarily important in the history of the people of Israel. In his criticisms of the people for their transgressions . . . and that after the sinful generation had died out God would contract a new covenant with the reformed people . . ." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) "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:" (**Jeremiah 31:31-32**)

What can I learn from the ancient prophecy of Latter-days?

The great prophet wordsmith, Isaiah, spoke and wrote of latter-day servants of the Lord and the fruits of their labors. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: . . . And in that day there

shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And 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 . . . And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." (**Isaiah 11:1-12**)

What are the Latter-day traits?

Today, a population of more than sixteen-million members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints call themselves "a remnant of Israel," mostly from the ancient tribe of Joseph through his son Ephraim. Their modern-day scriptures, living prophets, gathering in a land of "New Jerusalem" and identifying themselves as a "chosen people" has prompted reflection. This very conference, respecting the Sabbaths of both covenant people, brings "Judah" and "Joseph" together. In the latter-day "Joseph" scriptures, *The Doctrine and Covenants*, a series of questions were answered by the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. His answers were written as follows. "Who is the stem of Jesse spoken of in the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses of the 11th chapter of Isaiah? Verily thus saith the Lord: It is Christ. What is the rod spoken of in the first verse of the 11th chapter of Isaiah, that should come of the Stem of Jesse? Behold, thus saith the Lord: It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse (father of David and of the tribe of Judah) as well as of Ephraim, or of the house of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power. What is the root of Jesse spoken of in the 10th

verse of the 11th chapter? Behold, thus saith the Lord, 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**)

How do I make the choice, accept being Chosen or both?

Whoever these servants are, two of them will be of the tribe of Judah (David’s lineage) as well as of Joseph (Ephraim’s lineage). Both Jews and Ephraimites are chosen - whether they like it or not. Both see each other as having ‘chosen’ responsibilities. Jews maintain a tradition, an “Aggadah” of a “Messiah Ben Joseph.” The late Rabbi Avraham HaCohen Kook referred to the tradition when asked if the temple could be built soon. He deferred to the latter-day Joseph and he purportedly said, “To him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore temple worship.” The Latter-day Saints maintain that the Jews will build that temple.

Who builds, what Temple?

At the beginning of the century, LDS President John Taylor was speaking to Baron Rothschild as he was showing him the Salt Lake LDS Temple. Rothschild said,
“Elder Taylor, what do you mean by this temple? What is the object of it? Why are you building it?” President Taylor answered, “Your fathers had among them prophets, who revealed to them the mind and will of God; we have among us prophets who reveal to us the mind and will of God, as they did. One of your prophets said--The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, but who may abide the day of his coming? For he shall sit as a refiner’s fire and a purifier of silver! . . . sir, will you point me out a place on the face of the earth where

God has a temple?” Rothschild said, “. . . Do you consider that this is that temple?” President Taylor answered, “No, sir, it is not . . . The Lord has told us to build this temple so that we may administer therein [ordinances] for our dead and also to perform some of the sacred matrimonial alliances and covenants that we believe in, that are rejected by the world generally, but which are among the purest, most exalting and ennobling principles that God ever revealed to man.” Rothschild asked, “Well, then, this is not our temple?” And, President Taylor responded, “No . . . you will build a temple, for the Lord has shown us, among other things, that you Jews have quite a role to perform in the latter days, and that all the things spoken by your old prophets will be fulfilled, that you will be gathered to old Jerusalem, and that you will build a temple there; and when you build that temple, and the time has arrived, `the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.” (**Gospel Kingdom, John Taylor, Page 293**)

How will we bring our chosen family together?

A new temple in Jerusalem--you know Jews pray for it at least three times a day. And as a first step, Jerusalem, where the temple will stand again, has become the capital of a modern State of Israel. “. . . not chosen arbitrarily; it was recognized as the historic land of the Jews, to which they had a closer connection and more justifiable claim than any other group. The national home was not to be established, but re-established after a 2,000 year exile.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) On the other hand and to another part of the Israelite family, America also has a place as a chosen land as described in the *Book of Mormon*. “During the latter part of the 4th century A.D., Mormon, a prophet-general, made a compilation and abridgment of the records of the people of

Lehi, a Jew who led a colony of his family and friends from Jerusalem to their American promised land in 600 B.C. Mormon's son Moroni added a few words of his own to the record . . . the records of these . . . peoples, preserved on the Gold Plates, were translated by Joseph Smith and are known as the Book of Mormon. The main part of the work deals with the period from 600 B.C. to 421 A.D.”
(Mormon Doctrine, Bruce McConkie, Page 98)

What family records bring us together?

These words are considered books of prophets, firstly because their authors were divinely inspired, and secondly because they are more than histories of another part of Israel: they also record the

covenant between God and those Israelites, and they stress that only by continued and faithful adherence to that covenant can all of Israel hope to survive. Two peoples, Jews and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have a covenant. They are members of one family, separated by distance and time, who now seem to be coming together. In former days we may have heard, “How odd of God to choose the Jews;” and now in latter days we may hear, “There may be complaints, He chose the Saints.” Saints and Jews, we are a family, a chosen family! In god’s plan, we will be finding each other, embracing as a royal family, we will be rejoicing and have unspeakable joy.