

APRIL 26-May 2, 2021

Doctrine and Covenants 45

“THE PROMISES” . . . SHALL BE FULFILLED”

Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 45. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 7, 1831. Prefacing the record of this revelation, Joseph Smith’s history states that “at this age of the Church . . . many false reports . . . and foolish stories, were published . . . and circulated, . . . to prevent people from investigating the work, or embracing the faith. . . . But to the joy of the Saints, . . . I received the following.” 1–5, Christ is our advocate with the Father; 6–10, The gospel is a messenger to prepare the way before the Lord; 11–15, Enoch and his brethren were received by the Lord unto Himself; 16–23, Christ revealed signs of His coming as given on the Mount of Olives; 24–38, The gospel will be restored, the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled, and a desolating sickness will cover the land; 39–47, Signs, wonders, and the Resurrection are to attend the Second Coming; 48–53, Christ will stand on the Mount of Olives, and the Jews will see the wounds in His hands and feet; 54–59, The Lord will reign during the Millennium; 60–62, The Prophet is instructed to begin the translation of the New Testament, through which important information will be made known; 63–75, The Saints are commanded to gather and build the New Jerusalem, to which people from all nations will come.*

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What happened to mankind’s knowledge of God?
The anthropomorphic nature of God was known to the Jews before and 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 (1138–1204), 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” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The first three of the thirteen fundamentals (Articles of Faith) 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.

How did Jews replace the concept of “Becoming Like God?”

Since the Jewish concept of God has diminished, it is difficult to find commentary about becoming like Him. At

least the concept of being chosen remains. “How odd of God, to choose the Jews.’ W.N. Ewer (1885-1977), who wrote this jingle, could not understand why Israel is God’s Chosen People. Moses, in **Deuteronomy 7:7–8**, explains it thus: ‘The Lord did not set His love upon you because you 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.’ The rabbis insist that Israel was elected because it voluntarily accepted the Torah whereas other nations would not. 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.” “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. ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him’ (**Joshua 24:22**). This is the trust of the anonymous retort to the above jingle: ‘Its not so odd, the Jews chose God.’ “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. “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**).” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What Old Testament indications are there about the Messiah’s comings?

It bears repeating, as stated in the Book of **Numbers (19:1-9)**, the Red Heifer ritual was for forgiveness of sins. We suggest that 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). 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.” “The Bible is very specific about the kind of (calf or heifer) 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.**)

When the “Day of the Lord” comes, where will He appear, what will He wear?

“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) “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.” (Isaiah 63:2-3) “Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.” (Doctrine and Covenants 19:18-19) “I have trodden the wine-press alone, and have brought judgment upon all people; and none were with me; And I have trampled them in my fury, and I did tread upon them in mine anger, and their blood have I sprinkled upon my garments, and stained all my raiment.” (Doctrine and Covenants 133:50-51)

What questions are asked 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 educated in these matters. They just do not 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)

How will I be set free?

It will be a Godly sorrow and, better yet, from the captivity of all the 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 broken hearted, 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.

Where can I go to prepare myself?

Although mentioned previously, let’ consider again the image of heavenly living that is 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 represented in Temples of the Most High. "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." (Isaiah 60:14) It seems that anciently, 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.) "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) "Some traditional commentators and many critical scholars believe that these terms may refer to more than one place;" (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) 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. Consider the following verse that adds "cities" and "Stakes" as places for Temple work: "For it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for your dead." (Doctrine and Covenants 124:35)

How will entire cities become "Temples?"

"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) Going back in

history, turning around and looking at today, I begin to better understand the present and the future of building temples, temple cities and the system of two capital cities, the Lord's cities of new and old Jerusalem. I see the possibility of being the Lord's people, dwelling with him in his city (or cities). We have additional insights from Elder Bruce R. McConkie. "Up to now, through all of earth's long years, there has been one time, one time only, when the Lord's system of capital cities has worked perfectly. Such was in the day of Enoch, the seventh from Adam. In that holy day, so faithful were the saints that the Lord, the Great Jehovah, 'came and dwelt with his people,' even as he will in the millennial era that is to be. In that holy day, the saints 'dwelt in righteousness,' even as they shall when the Lord comes again to dwell among mortals." **(Bruce R. McConkie, The Mortal Messiah, Vol.1, p.84)** "And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them. And Enoch built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even ZION. And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, ZION IS FLED." **(Moses 7:16-21, 69)**

What is a parallel of old Zion and new Zion?

Prophecies of one may apply to both. One thing is for sure: The Lord will come and He will dwell in his cities. That means that a degree of sanctity and cleanliness must exist in these cities. It is the same sacredness that any temple building requires. It will require us to be a "temple society." "Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain."

(Zechariah 8:3) The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Judah must return, Jerusalem must be rebuilt, and the temple, . . . and all this must be done before the Son of Man will make His appearance" **(History of the Church 5:337)**. "Jerusalem of old, after the Jews have been cleansed and sanctified from all their sin, shall become a holy city where the Lord shall dwell and from whence he shall send forth his word unto all people. Likewise, on this continent, the city of Zion, New Jerusalem, shall be built and from it the law of God shall also go forth. There will be no conflict, for each city shall be headquarters for the Redeemer of the world, and from each he shall send forth his proclamations as occasion may require. Jerusalem shall be the gathering place of Judah and his fellows of the house of Israel, and Zion shall be the gathering place of Ephraim and his fellows, upon whose heads shall be conferred 'the richer blessings'." **(Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol.3, p.69-70)**

Which Jerusalem is your gathering place?

"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' **(Isaiah 11:11)**. With the coming of the Messiah, Jews will come home to Jerusalem, the everlasting city." "The majority of religious leaders believed that there could be no return to Zion before the coming of the Messiah; and the active Zionists were mostly those who had abandoned their traditional religious roles and replaced them with secular, political activities." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)** "Now many will feel disposed to say, that this New Jerusalem spoken of, is the Jerusalem that was built by the Jews on the eastern continent. But you will see, from **Revelation 21:2**, there was a New Jerusalem coming down from God

out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband; that after this, the Revelator was caught away in the Spirit, to a great and high mountain, and saw the great and holy city descending out of heaven from God. Now there are two cities spoken of here. As everything cannot be had in so narrow a compass as a letter, I shall say with brevity, that there is a New Jerusalem to be established on this continent, and also Jerusalem shall be

rebuilt on the eastern continent (see Book of Mormon, **Ether 13:1-12**). This may suffice, upon the subject of gathering, until my next.” (**Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Two 1834-37 p.86**) 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 houses, in His Stakes, in His cities, in His glory!