

June 28-July 4, 2021

Doctrine and Covenants 71–75

“NO WEAPON THAT IS FORMED AGAINST YOU SHALL PROSPER”

Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 71. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at Hiram, Ohio, December 1, 1831. The Prophet had continued to translate the Bible with Sidney Rigdon as his scribe until this revelation was received, at which time it was temporarily laid aside so as to enable them to fulfill the instruction given herein. The brethren were to go forth to preach in order to allay the unfriendly feelings that had developed against the Church as a result of the publication of letters written by Ezra Booth, who had apostatized. 1–4, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon are sent forth to proclaim the gospel; 5–11, Enemies of the Saints will be confounded.*

Doctrine and Covenants 72. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, December 4, 1831. Several elders and members had assembled to learn their duty and to be further edified in the teachings of the Church. This section is a compilation of three revelations received on the same day. Verses 1 through 8 make known the calling of Newel K. Whitney as a bishop. He was then called and ordained, after which verses 9 through 23 were received, giving additional information as to a bishop’s duties. Thereafter, verses 24 through 26 were given, providing instructions concerning the gathering to Zion. 1–8, Elders are to render an account of their stewardship unto the bishop; 9–15, The bishop keeps the storehouse and cares for the poor and needy; 16–26, Bishops are to certify the worthiness of elders.

Doctrine and Covenants 73. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at Hiram, Ohio, January 10, 1832. Since the early part of the preceding December, the Prophet and Sidney had been engaged in preaching, and by this means much was accomplished in diminishing the unfavorable feelings that had arisen against the Church (see the heading to section 71). 1–2, Elders are to continue to preach; 3–6, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon are to continue to translate the Bible until it is finished.

Doctrine and Covenants 74. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Wayne County, New York, in 1830. Even before the organization of the Church, questions had arisen about the proper mode of baptism, leading the Prophet to seek answers on the subject. Joseph Smith’s history states that this revelation is an explanation of 1 Corinthians 7:14, a scripture that had often been used to justify infant baptism. 1–5, Paul counsels the Church of his day not to keep the law of Moses; 6–7, Little children are holy and are sanctified through the Atonement.

Doctrine and Covenants 75. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Amberst, Ohio, January 25, 1832. This section comprises two separate revelations (the first in verses 1 through 22 and the second in verses 23 through 36) given on the same day. The occasion was a conference at which Joseph Smith was sustained and ordained President of the High Priesthood. Certain elders desired to learn more about their immediate duties. These revelations followed. 1–5, Faithful elders who preach the gospel will gain eternal life; 6–12, Pray to receive the Comforter, who teaches all things; 13–22, Elders will sit in judgment on those who reject their message; 23–36, Families of missionaries are to receive help from the Church.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How can I better deal with enemies? We’ve heard of the human reaction of “fight or flight.” Let’s consider the alternative, the purpose in

being the “leaven.” Through the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we find the motivation of people, that many call the Essenes, was to move away from wickedness and establish a singular community of righteousness. Their

organization even had a shadow of biblical organization. Their leader was called the "Teacher of Righteousness" and he had two assistants. There was also a council of "Twelve Overseers." They had an order following the 'righteous king', which is said in Hebrew, "Melech Zedek." The Dead Sea sect shunned others, and probably evoked one of the Savior's comments in the Sermon on the Mount; "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?"

(Matthew 5:43-46) With that verse in mind, remember the promise we have. ". . . There is no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper. And if any man lift his voice against you, he shall be confounded in mine own due time. Wherefore, keep my commandments . . ." **(Doctrine and Covenants 71:9-11)**

Who will "fight our battles" for us?

The greatest miracle in Jewish history is the grand exodus from Egypt. The account is repeated every year at Passover, the feast (celebration) of deliverance. A handbook (*Haggadah*) explains the miraculous event. "Since the overriding theme of the *Haggadah* is that God saved the Jewish people from their enemies, Moses' name is not mentioned in the *Haggadah* (except for one passing instance). This emphasizes that it was God Himself --- not an angel and not a messenger --- who redeemed Israel. Accordingly, a large part of the *Haggadah* is filled with songs of praise for the great miracles that God performed."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) "Micah directed his prophecy against the rich who lived in ill-gotten splendor at the expense of the poor. He warned them that God would forsake His people and that the inevitable results of the corruption of Judah would follow: the ravaging of Judah by its enemies, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and exile. Micah stated God's demands simply: justice tempered with mercy. Micah's verses of consolation are beautiful in their vision of the glorious future of Zion: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem . . . And they the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid . . ." **(Micah 4:5).**" **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

What is a more current example of the "enemy confounded?"

A matter of dissent with subsequent success is when the State of Israel's government had approved the building of the "Mormon" center on Mount Scopus where the BYU Study program is currently located. The building was well under way when an Orthodox Jewish group called, *Yad Le-achim*, (dedicated to crushing all Christian activities in Israel) started a two-fold public campaign. First, in discrediting the government (which they did not support anyway) for allowing the BYU facilities to be built. Secondly, using a chord of "antisemitism," they called the center a "missionary activity." There are three kinds of antisemitism to the Jews; 1) kill the Jews, 2) let someone else kill the Jews, and 3) convert the Jews. This small Orthodox group has attempted, for decades, to pass a law against proselytizing in Israel and has failed. There is NO Israeli statute prohibiting missionary activity. Let it be known,

however, missionary activity is deemed highly insensitive and frankly, “antisemitic.” *Yad Le-achim* did manage to pass a law that prohibits any type of bribe or payment to induce Jews to change their religion. (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not pay people to become members – they charge them!) BYU did sign a statement announcing they had no intention of doing missionary activities. President Howard W. Hunter also signed a statement on behalf of the Church to the same effect with the statement added, “so long as such activity is prohibited by the government of Israel.” The real reason Latter-day Saints are not proselytizing in Israel is because it is the Lord’s will. “And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations, both unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles; and after he has manifested himself unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles, then he shall manifest himself unto the Gentiles and also unto the Jews, and the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.” (1 Nephi 13:42) Israeli government leaders kept their commitment to allow the building. The Orthodox group did not manage to convince the government to stop the BYU project, and no legal precedent was established that might affect the Latter-day Saints or for that manner, any other church.

How does the promise cover both parts of the Children of Israel?

Likewise, present-day attempts at undermining the existence of Israel, such as calling for the elimination of Jerusalem as its’ capital or calling for the annihilation of Jews, will be met with the same response as in older times. “And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God . . .” (Nehemiah 4:8-9) In Jerusalem, the Apostle Orson Hyde said; “Let that nation or that people who

shall take an active part in behalf of Abraham's children, and in the raising up of Jerusalem, find favor in Thy sight. Let not their enemies prevail against them, neither let pestilence or famine overcome them, but let the glory of Israel overshadow them, and the power of the Highest protect them; while that nation or kingdom that will not serve Thee in this glorious work must perish, according to Thy word --Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” (History of the Church, vol. 4, pp. 456-57.)

What changed the obligation of circumcision?

The ancient sign of being a part of the Children of Israel has been changed from male circumcision at eight-days of age, to the restoration sign of baptism by immersion, usually at eight years of age. The Jewish custom is still carried on. “A special chair is set aside for Elijah at circumcisions, as he is called the protector of children, and the upholder of the covenant between God and Israel, and Elijah is supposed to visit every Jewish home on Passover, so a special cup of wine (or juice) is set aside for him. And, says the *Midrash* (scripture commentary), when the time is right, it will be Elijah who will herald the coming of the Messiah.” “Jewish custom provides for great festivity and joy following the birth of a child. A boy is named when he is eight days old at his circumcision ceremony, an event of great religious importance and happy celebrating. A girl is named in the synagogue on the first day following her birth on which the *Torah* is read. The service, usually on the Sabbath, is likewise followed by a festive meal popularly known as a *Kiddush*.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) To Temple endowed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the blessing and naming of newborn children renders them a child of the covenant.

How do I know that Baptism is an eternal covenant?

“Marriage for eternity is a new and everlasting covenant. Baptism is also a new and everlasting covenant, and likewise ordination to the priesthood, and every other covenant is everlasting and a part of the new and everlasting covenant which embraces all things.” (Joseph Fielding Smith **Answers to Gospel Questions, 1:65.**)

“Baptism is the gateway, or requirement, for entry into the celestial kingdom for anyone who has reached the age of accountability (see **2 Nephi 31:15–21**). The ordinance of baptism, while absolutely essential, becomes valid only when it is accompanied by a corresponding change of life. To be born again suggests that one begins a new life, that he is a new person. (churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-student-manual/section-22-baptism-a-new-and-everlasting-covenant) “The gospel is the new and everlasting covenant by means of which God, on his own terms, offers salvation to man. Baptism is the formally appointed means and ordinance which the Lord has provided so that man can signify his personal acceptance of all of the terms and conditions of the eternal gospel covenant. Thus in baptism, which as part of the gospel is itself a new and an everlasting covenant (**D. & C. 22**), man covenants to abide by all of the laws and requirements of the whole gospel.” (Bruce R. McConkie, **Mormon Doctrine, Pg.69**) “. . . build a house to me, wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world . . .” (**Doctrine and Covenants 124:33**) “Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of

men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.” (**Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44, Pg.308**)

What is the practice of immersion still being done by the Jews?

Some religious Jews who experience repeated immersions, (monthly for women and regularly for men) step into their immersion font from the east side, immerse themselves, and then exit to the west side. This could be a reminder of entering into the gateway of cleanness as the Children of Israel entered into their Promised Land. For the religious Jews, immersions are favored below ground level in flowing water that emanates from bedrock - the “Rock of Salvation.” The immersion font is called a *mikveh*. Consider that the lowest spot on the face of the earth where water flows that originated in bedrock is where the Children of Israel crossed into their erstwhile homeland. Judaism and Christianity agree that it is also the likely spot where Jesus came to John in Judea to be immersed. The twelve stones that the Children of Israel removed from the Jordan River (**Joshua 4:19-20**) were probably used as the altar at Gilgal, just East of Jericho. Gilgal became the temporary site of the center of worship, in effect, a temporary Temple.

How do I know that children are holy and must be accountable before baptism?

“Behold I say unto you that this thing shall ye teach—repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin . . . little children need no repentance, neither baptism. Behold, baptism is unto repentance . . . unto the remission of sins. “But little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world.” (**Moroni 8:9–12.**)

What do the scriptures teach about being idle, labor and work?

In Ecclesiastes, one of five shorter books of the Bible, (*Megillot* in Hebrew) that has won enduring popularity because of its wise maxims and its counsel on life, we read of the wisdom that has been a continuing source of inspiration. "Some of the maxims are: He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; Sweet is the sleep of a laboring man . . . ; To every thing there are a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born and a time to die; . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh; . . . a time to love and a time to hate; . . . a time for war and a time for peace." "When a man has worked hard to raise a family or rear a herd of animals, and finally sees the first fruits of his labor, the *Torah* tells him that these first fruits belong to God. Therefore, if man wishes to own and enjoy these gifts, he must redeem them from their rightful owner." "The ceremony of the redemption of the firstborn is of great significance. In the case of a human *bekhor*, this ceremony . . . consists of redeeming the child from a *kohen* (priest) by giving the *kohen* five silver coins. During the ceremony, the father presents his son, often on a specially embellished tray, to the *kohen*, who asks him in an ancient Aramaic formula, whether he wishes to redeem the child or to leave him to the *kohen*. (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The legendary status of Elijah as an emissary for the coming Messiah (to some – He came as a newborn laid in a stone manger filled with straw) is shown in the story of Rabbi Akiva. In the second century C.E., young Rabbi Akiva worked as a shepherd for one of the wealthiest men of Jerusalem, Kalba Savua, who had a beautiful daughter, Rachel. "Akiva and Rachel fell in love, but her father opposed the marriage because Akiva was unlearned and illiterate. He promised to learn, but Kalba Savua was stubborn in his opposition. He refused to see the

young couple or to give Rachel any dowry when she left home to marry Akiva. Instead of beds, they had straw to sleep on. Akiva told Rachel: "I wish I could afford to give you a Jerusalem of Gold." (This was a gold design of the city which was popular as an ornament.) According to a legend, Elijah then appeared to them as a poor man begging for a bit of straw on which he could lay his newborn infant. Akiva told Rachel, "See, we are not really so poor --- that man doesn't even have straw!" (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." (**Isaiah 64:8**)

Who else has the custom of going house to house, village by village, leaving a blessing?

Ancient Joseph was blessed and authorized by his father Jacob when Jacob laid his hands on Joseph's head. "In the same way that priests lift their hands in blessing, so parents place their hands on the heads of their children when they bless them. (For example, in the Bible, Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by placing his hands on their heads.) Placing the hands on another person is symbolic not only of transferring blessing but also of passing on authority. In *talmudic* times, scholars received their rabbinic ordination through the symbolic act of placing of the hands (known as *semikhah*)." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What is the Jewish custom of "Ask and ye shall receive, knock and shall be opened?"

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 restrained him and said, "Inside represents the presence of the Lord. Be polite; first you knock, then pull the curtain aside to take the scroll." "But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within

you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right." (**Doctrine & Covenants 9:8**) In Judaism there is a daily prayer (*Amidah*) asking for forgiveness. A meal always concludes with a benediction called *boneh Yerushalayim*, it "asks God to have mercy on Israel and to restore the Temple and the Kingdom of David. It includes a plea that He may always sustain and support Israel." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)