

Aug 9-15, 2021

Doctrine and Covenants 88

“ESTABLISH . . . A HOUSE OF GOD”

Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 88. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet at Kirtland, Ohio, December 27 and 28, 1832, and January 3, 1833. The Prophet designated it as the “olive leaf . . . plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord’s message of peace to us.” The revelation was given after high priests at a conference prayed “separately and vocally to the Lord to reveal his will unto us concerning the upbuilding of Zion.” 1–5, Faithful Saints receive that Comforter, which is the promise of eternal life; 6–13, All things are controlled and governed by the Light of Christ; 14–16, The Resurrection comes through the Redemption; 17–31, Obedience to celestial, terrestrial, or telestial law prepares men for those respective kingdoms and glories; 32–35, Those who will to abide in sin remain filthy still; 36–41, All kingdoms are governed by law; 42–45, God has given a law unto all things; 46–50, Man will comprehend even God; 51–61, The parable of the man sending his servants into the field and visiting them in turn; 62–73, Draw near unto the Lord, and ye will see His face; 74–80, Sanctify yourselves and teach one another the doctrines of the kingdom; 81–85, Every man who has been warned should warn his neighbor; 86–94, Signs, upheavals of the elements, and angels prepare the way for the coming of the Lord; 95–102, Angelic trumps call forth the dead in their order; 103–16, Angelic trumps proclaim the restoration of the gospel, the fall of Babylon, and the battle of the great God; 117–26, Seek learning, establish a house of God (a temple), and clothe yourselves with the bond of charity; 127–41, The order of the School of the Prophets is set forth, including the ordinance of washing of feet.*

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What repeated reminders do Jews and Arabs have about “Peace?”

The Hebrew word “Shalom” and the Arabic word “Salaam” mean, among other things, peace. It is also used for hello and goodbye. (I recommend looking into their eyes to see if they are coming or going!) It is one of the names of the Lord, the Prince of Peace. (**Isaiah 9:6**) When Jesus appeared to the ten, then eleven New Testament Apostles, he said, “Shalom, Shalom Aleichem.” (**John 20:19**) “Peace be unto you.” It was as if he was saying, “Shalom all of you (in a southern American dialect: Shalom Y’all!). Also enveloped into the word shalom are meanings like wholeness, peace, security, tranquility, completeness, contentment, safety and well-being. These are all available to us by taking the name of the Lord upon ourselves. In the opening sentence of the *Kaddish* prayer which is recited more often than any other

prayer, is the expectation of the Messiah. “The word *kaddish* is Aramaic for ‘Holy’ and signifies the main theme of the prayer which is sanctification of God’s name . . . In its original usage, the *Kaddish* is a fervent plea for the coming of the Messiah and an expression of the Jew’s steadfast belief that God ‘who makes peace in the heavens will make peace for us and for all Israel.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How can the light I see – remind me of the Lord?

“He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which, it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof,

even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things.” (**Doctrine and Covenants 88:6-13**)

How uncommon is the concept of Resurrection?

The understanding of the term “resurrection” is quite lost by most Christians and Jews. In previous discussions we have pointed out that for Jews, the concept of God has diminished since the days of Biblical writings that constantly referred to God in anthropomorphic terminology. Likewise, the concept of life after death in a resurrected state has largely disappeared; and when used, it refers mostly to the righteous in a distant future.

“Resurrection” is also one of the Lord’s names. The Book of Mormon prophet, Alma, teaches that there is no resurrection until after the coming of the Messiah. Judaism, nowadays, has little belief in resurrection or life, as such, after death. To the Jews, the Messiah has not come; consequently, it is understandable that they do not have an active belief in the resurrection. There are, however, benedictions and other statements with words that seem to connect to a former belief in Resurrection. “. . . *Barukh mehayyeh ha-metim* (‘Blessed be . . . He Who revives the dead’) is therefore also known as *Tehiyyat ha-Metim* (‘Resurrection of the Dead’) . . . the righteous of all generations will be reunited at the time of the resurrection of the dead during the messianic period.”

They (the Dead Sea Scroll’s Jews or Essenes) believed in reward and punishment; in immortality of the soul; but not in physical resurrection.” “Some rabbis believed in resurrection. That is that at a certain point in time God will bring everybody back to life and then the world will be a perfect place and physical life will go on indefinitely. This doctrine poses some obvious difficulties: the body actually decomposes after burial so how can it be reconstituted; furthermore, what about overpopulation of the world? Those who believe in resurrection claim that anyway the whole process will be miraculous, and the miracle will solve all the problems. Other rabbis however denied physical resurrection entirely and understood the afterlife to be a completely spiritual experience.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How did the belief in resurrection fade away?

“The argument about resurrection lasted well into the Middle Ages, and was one of the reasons for the sharp attacks against Maimonides (1138-1204). Many believed that he denied the doctrine and his views started a controversy that lasted for hundreds of years. In modern times most Jewish theologians do not subscribe to the doctrine of physical resurrection and movements such as Reform Judaism do not consider it to be a necessary belief for the Jew.” “The whole subject of (an) afterlife is not explicitly stated in the Bible and many scholars are of the opinion that belief in (an) afterlife was adopted by Jews during the Babylonian exile after the destruction of the First Temple when they came into contact with eastern religions such as Zoroastrianism. “The Sadducees also rejected the Pharisaic belief in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, claiming that there is no basis for these beliefs in the Torah.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) To better remember that it was the Sadducees who

did not believe in resurrection, you could say, “They were sad, you see!”

How recurring is it to establish a house of God?

Before the first Israelite temple was built, the entire encampment of Israel was a city temple and apparently it will be that way again when the Lord returns to Jerusalem (**Doctrine and Covenants 124:36**): The 12-tribes (Joseph sons, Ephraim and Manasseh became 2 tribes) were assigned areas, with stakes and banners. They surrounded the tribe of Levi, and within Levi were staks and curtains that enclosed the “presence of the Lord – the Holy of Holies.” That is clearly imaginable as “Telestial, Terrestrial and Celestial.” “In pre-Temple times, in the desert, the whole encampment was considered to be in a state of sanctity, and hence anyone who was *tameh* (unclean) was forced to go outside the marked boundaries and was forbidden to return until he had completed the purification ritual. With the destruction of the Temple, such sanctions ceased to apply. Nevertheless, the maintenance of ritual impurity has remained an essential aspect of Jewish life. Thus, because all Jews are now assumed to be ritually impure, they are even today forbidden to enter the Temple area in Jerusalem.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

Who is welcome in the House of the Lord?

The call to go to the temple includes the phrase, “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.” (**Psalm 24-1-3**) Since the Jews feel they do not have a temple, they have used the meal table as a substitute “altar.” It is appropriate to wash hands before every prayer at the beginning and ending of each meal. That is why kosher hotels have a basin and naturally flowing water at the entrances of each dining room. There are large cups in public restrooms

and other public fountains (like the Western Wall) so a Jew can fill the cup and then let the water flow naturally over his hands before he prays. The two prayers include a plea to rebuild the temple. The Lord’s house is where His glory and honor dwells. (**Psalm 26:8**). In a synagogue, 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 stopped him and said, “Inside represents the essence and the presence of the Lord. Be polite; first you knock, then pull the curtain aside and only then you take the scroll.”

How is light connected with the Temple?

As David wrote the Psalm indicating that the Lord is his light (**Psalm 27:1**), he must have known that the ark contained a special *menorah*, a light with seven candles or wicks. That symbol is now the official seal of the State of Israel. It is a chiasmus; the first and the last candles or lights are connected at the base. Likewise, the second and six, and third and fifth are connected and the center light is the main light. Could that have represented the Lord? After all, He should be the center of our attention. The center of the Lord’s house was curtained off because of its sacredness, a courtyard where we could converse with the Lord. As mentioned previously, the Children of Israel lived in a “camp” that was divided into three sections; the people, the Levites and the Lord. We long for the time when we can return to “dwell in thy courts” (**Psalm 65:4**), and be “shielded,” safe from the imbalance of the world around us.

(Psalm 84). In the ancient temple, a *menorah* was brightly burning every day the temple was open.

Who oversees the House of the Lord?

A pattern that is interesting is that the first non-travelling Israelite temple in the land of Israel was in the hands of the tribe of Ephraim. "Situated in the mountains of central *Erez* (land of) Israel, Shiloh was in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim and housed the 'temporary sanctuary' or Tabernacle containing the Ark of the Law." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The latest temples outside the land of Israel are now in the hands of Ephraim, overseen by the living Prophet in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The destiny of Joseph and Judah is that they will eventually come together to build a temple in Jerusalem. There is a Jewish tradition that the Messiah's return will follow the date or event of the destruction of the First and Second Temples – a third Jerusalem Temple. The Prophet Joseph Smith's mission was to restore temple worship. Eventually, the "Lord will suddenly come to his Temple." (**Malachi 3:1**)

What is an insightful purpose of the House of the Lord?

Abraham brought his son to the mount *Moriah* (Hebrew: 'taught of the Lord'), to offer Isaac as a human sacrifice. Human sacrifice is precisely the anguish that Abraham was spared in the Ur of Chaldees. Mount *Moriah* later became the place of the Temple. The Prophet Abraham was taught a profound lesson in opposition, a chiasmus. Jewish tradition states that Isaac was in his early thirties when he was to be sacrificed. The "anguish" was spared when God instructed that a "lamb" was to be offered as a sacrifice, instead. Abraham and Isaac found an "alternative sacrifice," a ram in the thicket, and it was offered as a

substitute for Isaac. Later, other animals, first born and unblemished, were brought to the same place, the mount *Moriah* Temple. In some cases, a goat was "blessed" with the sins (anguishes) of the people in attendance. The goat would "escape" out the Gate Beautiful (also called the Gate of Forgiveness and the Gate of Mercy). It would be tied with a red ribbon and let out into the wilderness to die on its own (carrying the sins of the people). Isaiah portrays the same principle when he describes the "glory" fastened in a "sure place." It is glorious that we can bring our anguish (sins) to the Lord. Then, in his house, we leave with greater blessings than we ever imagined. "And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it." (**Isaiah 22:21-25**) In Jerusalem, there have been thousands of nails pounded into the old Western (Wailing) Wall, a remnant of the last known Jewish Temple. They remind us of a practice the Jews had until about a hundred years ago where they would "nail their sins in a sure place" and then get on with life. A glorious thought: going to the Temple for Latter-day Saints not only blesses the ancestors whose work is

being done, but those who are serving them. It is the Lord's house, where virtuous people meet, renew their souls, and remind themselves of the name they have taken upon themselves.

What religion will have a true temple?

"That temples and temple ordinances are essential to the (true) faith is well established in the Bible. Malachi predicted the coming of the Lord suddenly to his temple, in the day of vengeance, in the latter times, as a refiner and purifier. Ezekiel predicted the building of a temple in Jerusalem which will be used for ordinance work after the gathering of Israel from their long dispersion and when they are cleansed from their transgressions. John the Revelator saw the day when, after the earth is sanctified and celestialized, the presence of the Father and the Son in the New Jerusalem would take the place of the temple, for the whole city, due to their presence, would become a temple." (**Doctrines of Salvation Joseph Fielding Smith Vol.2, Pg.244**)

How significant is the "Washing of Feet" ordinance?

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (**Isaiah 52:7**) "The Bible is full of examples of hospitality. Abraham, for example, broke off a conversation with God Himself in order to receive guests (the three angels), and though weak in health, ran out to meet them, personally washed their feet, served them food, and made them feel welcomed and honored. At the upper-room Passover, Jesus concluded by demonstrating His role as their servant. "After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." (**John 13:5**) Peter objected,

and the Lord responded, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." (**John 13:8-9**) Always teaching, the Savior

continued, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (**John 13:14**) "The Joseph Smith Translation adds this explanation about this incident: "Now this was the custom of the Jews under their law; wherefore, Jesus did this that the law might be fulfilled" (**JST John 13:10**). By this clarification it appears that the washing of feet was an ordinance of the Law of Moses. Joseph Smith taught the Latter-day Apostles, "The item to which I wish the more particularly to call your attention tonight is the ordinance of washing of feet. This we ([meaning the Twelve]) have not done as yet, but it is necessary now, as much as it was in the days of the Savior; and we must have a place prepared, that we may attend to this ordinance aside from the world . . . We must have all things prepared and call our solemn assembly as the Lord has commanded us, that we may be able to accomplish his great work, and it must be done in God's own way. The house of the Lord must be prepared, and the solemn assembly called and organized in it, according to the order of the house of God; and in it we must attend to the ordinance of washing of feet. It was never intended for any but official members. It is calculated to unite our hearts, that we may be one in feeling and sentiment, and that our faith may be strong, so that Satan cannot overthrow us, nor have any power over us here." (**History of the Church, Vol 2, 308-9**)

How can my home become a model of the "House of the Lord?"

At every Jewish burial, the payers include a plea to rebuild the temple. Stones or

rocks are placed on Jewish graves as reminders of the stone-built temple and an innate desire to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Apparently, it was and will be made with stone – and the Rock of Salvation will come to that temple. Our homes can become the “temple” model of the Lord’s house and may just be the

model to prepare us to live with Him daily, in His house and in His city. Also there is the expectation that cities, including Jerusalem will become “Cities of the Lord.” (**Ether 13:5, Moses 7:62-65, 69**) May our feet “stand within thy gates.” (**Psalm 122, 134**).