

November 6-12, 2023

## Hebrew 7–13

“AN HIGH PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS TO COME”

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**Summary:** *Hebrews 7. 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.*

*Hebrews 8. Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin—God promised to make a new covenant with Israel.*

*Hebrews 9. The Mosaic ordinances prefigured Christ’s ministry—Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant.*

*Hebrews 10. 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.*

*Hebrews 11. 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.*

*Hebrews 12. 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.*

*Hebrews 13. Marriage is honorable—Christ is the same everlastingly—Paul explains how the Saints are to offer acceptable sacrifices.*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### How can I better understand the function of Melchizedek Priesthood that

#### administered the Aaronic Priesthood?

The central issue in this lesson was foreshadowed by the Children of Israel through an Aaronic Priesthood Passover meal (*Seder*) for almost three and a half thousand years. In fact, the substantive elements of that meal, “fruit of the vine” (wine) and a small morsel of risen bread preceded the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. It is important to realize that what members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints call the “sacrament” was, in fact, an ancient ordinance. The performances of ordinances may be updated from time to time, yet the covenant basis is still the same. You realize that the full Gospel existed before

the Mosaic Law went into effect. “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.” (**Genesis 14:18**) “And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he broke bread and blest it; and he blest the wine, he being the priest of the most high God . . .” (**JUST Genesis 14:17**) “It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world . . . 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**) “. . . the law of carnal commandments, the law of performances and ordinances

revealed through Moses, was an old covenant as compared with the gospel restored by Jesus and his apostles. But this new testament or covenant, this restored gospel, was the same testament (covenant) that had been in force between God and his people from Adam to Moses in both the old and the new worlds.” (Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, Pg.543) Religious Jews still practice many forms of ancient Mosaic rites and rituals whose meanings may have become distorted or lost over many years without Melchizedek priesthood guidance. Now that the higher priesthood has been restored, we can learn about the old practices in order to better understand the “Old Covenant,” which was true, and how the restored ancient pre-Mosaic practices were restored to become the “New Covenant.”

### **How important is true religious organization?**

The organization and growth of the Church in the Meridian of Times parallels the organization of the Church in ancient and modern times. These were and are men, in their respective times, who had the Melchizedek authority from God to bring light and truth to the people. Anciently, Moses had a “First Presidency:” two assistants, Aaron and Hur. Additionally, he had an organization of Twelve and Seventy. “And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have matters to do, let him come unto them.” (Exodus 24:14) “These are those that were numbered . . . and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers.” (Numbers 1:44) “And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.” (Exodus 24:1) The parallel organization is seen in the primitive Church with Peter, James and

John appearing as a “First Presidency” within the original Twelve. “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.” (Matthew 10:2) “And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;” (Luke 6:13) “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.” (Luke 10:1) And, of course, we see a similar structure today in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### **How are 3, 12, and 70 represented among the ancients?**

“Of the Melchizedek Priesthood, three Presiding High Priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church, form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church. The twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world--thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. And they form a quorum, equal in authority and power to the three presidents previously mentioned. The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world--thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling.” (Doctrine & Covenants 107:22-25) In that sense, the organization today may give us insight to what was happening in former days. “And it is according to the vision showing the order of the Seventy, that they should have seven presidents to preside over them, chosen out of the number of the seventy;” (Doctrine & Covenants 107:93) “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the

Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint . . .” (Acts 6:3)

### **What is prophesied about a new covenant with Israel?**

Many Jews in the meridian of times held on to their traditions (which at the occasion of the Golden Calf became a “lesser law” with an Aaronic priesthood leadership.) The appointment of religious officers and leaders was compared to parts of the body. All parts were needed and had to work together. The original Adamic religion in ancient times, the meridian of times, as well as today was the “higher law” and the original covenant. The prophet Jeremiah was extraordinarily notable in using the history of people stuck in a Mosaic “lesser law” to prophesy of a new covenant, a “higher law” with the house 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 repentant people. “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 are some of the Ancient Prophecies of the Latter-day gathering?**

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)

### **How can separated family lines have combined destinies?**

Today, a population of close to seventeen 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 gathering, respecting the Sabbaths of both covenant people, brings “Judah,” seventeen million Jews, 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**)

### **What is the Jewish view of a Latter-day Joseph?**

As you search for the identities of these servants, 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 can be seen as having 'chosen' responsibilities. Jews maintain an "Aggadah" (tradition) of a "Messiah Ben Joseph." The late Rabbi Avraham HaCohen Kook chosen by the British to be the first "Chief Rabbi" of a rapidly forming restored State of Israel, referred to the tradition when asked if the temple could be built soon. He deferred to a latter-day Joseph, and he said in effect, "To him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore temple worship." Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints maintain that the Jews will build that temple. Let's allow a Prophet of the Lord to clarify that statement.

### **What did a Prophet tell a prominent Jew about Latter-day Temples?**

At the beginning of the century, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, John Taylor, was speaking to Baron Rothschild, a prominent Jew visiting from the Holy Land. As the Prophet was showing him the Salt Lake City 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**)

### **What do religious Jews say about a Latter-day Temple?**

A new temple will be built in Jerusalem – Jews pray for it before and after every meal, six 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.**) Israel shall return to their lands of promise. (**Isaiah 14:1–2**). On the other hand and to another part of the Israelite family, America also has a place as a promised chosen land as described in the *Book of Mormon*. (**2 Nephi 24:1–2**)

### **How was the faith of the ancients centered on the Messiah?**

There are more than 100 different names used to identify the Messiah. Here are the most often repeated terms: He is the SON of God. He is the FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS. He is the ROCK OF SALVATION. Look how Jewish sources use them repeatedly. There is an *Akeda* reading every morning during daily prayers. It is a reminder of Abraham's and Isaac's willingness to obey the Lord and perform the sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah. The point here is the daily reminder of the imagery of the Father and the Son. Abraham received the lesson; 'It is not your son to be sacrificed, it is my son!' Our daily reading and prayers should have the same intent and purpose; remember the Son. "In the Jewish liturgy, readings from the Bible play a prominent role. The *Shema* as well as the Song of Moses (used after the crossing of the Red Sea) are central to the daily morning service, and the prayers are studded with various selections from the Book of Psalms as well as verses from other Books." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What do I think of when I am around water?**

Living water is from the heavens or from springs that freely flow. In Israel, water has always been a concern because most of the rainfall occurs within the months of December, January and February. If it doesn't rain then, Israel is in risk of a drought. Water has been a metaphor of life throughout the scriptures and "Living Waters" is one of the many names used for the Savior, the giver of life. "Although the country is described as 'a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths springing forth in valleys and hills' ([Deuteronomy 8:7](#)) there is no evidence that in ancient times there were more than the hundreds of small springs and the few

significant water sources which now exist. The ancient Israelites were careful in their use of rain, which was often stored in cisterns. They mastered the cultivation of the soil, often farming the hills as well. In order to protect the topsoil from erosion, they built contoured stone terraces, some of which may still be seen today." "The soil was plowed twice, first to allow the rainwater to penetrate, and then to level the ground before planting or sowing. The ancient wooden plow used in Israel had a plowshare made of bronze, or later of iron. The heads of the oxen were framed in a wooden yoke, which was tied to the plow, and a hoe was used to remove weeds in mountain areas where the plow could not reach. Water for irrigation was drawn from a well in earthenware or metal pitchers attached to a rope or chain."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How important is water in ceremony and in religious life?**

"When a person dies, the body is covered with a sheet and a lighted candle placed at the head. There is an ancient custom to cover all the mirrors in the house and to pour out any water that was in containers or vessels at the time of death This latter practice may be the result of superstitious beliefs but it has been suggested that it was a way to tell the neighbors that a death had occurred without having to say the actual words." "It is a particularly important religious duty to wash the hands before eating bread and this washing must be performed by pouring water over the hands from a utensil with a wide mouth, the lip of which must be undamaged. Prior to this ritual washing, the hands must be clean and without any foreign object (such as a ring) to intervene between hand and the water. After this ritual washing, and the washing on rising from bed in the morning, the benediction "on the washing of hands" (*netilat*

*yadayim*) is recited.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What is a nowadays concern of water in Israel?**

It is interesting to note the desire of Israelis to bring more water to the ever-growing population. Many resources have come from Latter-day Saints who have taught the Israelis about water conservation and distribution. Two of them include the late Joel Fletcher from Southern Utah, the developer of Doppler Radar, and John Hanks of the northern Utah city of Logan and the Utah State University. On his last visit, Brother Hanks told me, “I’m not teaching them anymore; they’re teaching me!” Israel’s water conservation and distribution system has become a model to many of the world’s under-developed communities. “In order to solve the water problem in this arid country, a national water system was devised, by which water is drawn from the northern portion of the Jordan River via pipelines all the way down to the Negev. This main pipe also links all the local and regional water works. Israel has also developed very efficient irrigation systems which increase the agricultural output.”

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

In the recent years, Israel has perfected Mediterranean water desalination economically. It is now totally independent for water resources!

### **How can biblical events be seen to foreshadow the “Fountain of Living Waters?”**

Biblical accounts of finding and using water to bless the population include the prophet Elisha blessing a brackish spring at Jericho. It is still running pure water to this day. Also, David brought life back to Jerusalem by using a water tunnel. “David managed to capture Jerusalem with relative ease by infiltrating his men into the city through the water tunnels and surprising the enemy within the city walls.

He used his own private army for this purpose rather than the combined armies of all the tribes. The city therefore became his royal domain -- the “City of David,” capital of Israel.” “One of the points that has intrigued archaeologists and historians alike is the way in which Jerusalem has been supplied with water throughout the ages. There is only one natural water source in the Jerusalem vicinity --- the Gihon spring on the eastern slope of the Old City. The Canaanites built a tunnel leading from the spring into the city and it was through this tunnel that David made his historic entry into the city. At the end of the eighth century B.C.E. Hezekiah, king of Judah, had a new tunnel built which conducted the waters of the Gihon to the Siloam pools within what were then the city limits. This tunnel is still in existence today. One can wade through it and read the inscription placed there by the builders over 2,500 years ago. It tells how the workers, digging from both ends, met at an exact point in the center in what must have been a great engineering feat for those days.” “There were other pools, cisterns and reservoirs built round the city to increase its water supply but they proved to be inadequate for the growing population. So Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler, built an aqueduct to bring more water from the springs near Hebron in the first century C.E.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How was water a Temple emblem?**

There are also traditions that teach the value of water. The following explains “The Water-Drawing Celebration.” Note the connection of light with water (both are names of the Lord). “In the days of the Temple, each day during the last six *hol ha-mo’ed* days of the festival (though not on the Sabbath), the priests used to fill a golden flagon with water drawn from the beautiful spring of Siloam in the valley to the south of the Temple Mount and carry it up the hill for a ceremony at the altar.

This ceremony was called *Simhat Bet ha-Sho'evah* (the joy of the water drawing). According to the *Mishnah* ("how-to" oral traditions which have now been written), whoever failed to witness this ceremony in his lifetime "never witnessed real joy." Golden candlesticks, 50 cubits high, were lit with wicks made out of worn-out garments of the priests, and the light emitted was so bright that "there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light of the *Bet ha-Sho'evah*." Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before the candlesticks with burning torches in their hands, singing songs and praises. And countless Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and other musical instruments, on the 15 steps leading from the Court of the Israelites to the Court of the Women." "King Alexander Yannai, who also acted as High Priest, once chose to ignore the traditional way of conducting this ceremonial. The vast throng of worshipers immediately reacted by pelting him with thousands of *etrogim* (citrus fruits)." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **How has peace and holiness been a hallmark of biblical behavior?**

"The *Hasidic* movement in Judaism places great emphasis on the necessity for *kavvanah* (holiness) in prayer. According to hasidic teaching, man may easily be overcome by "evil thoughts" which deprive him of *kavvanah* and which, eventually, may destroy his moral and spiritual life. Prayer, in part, involves the "annihilation" of evil thoughts; it helps the good, already present in man's soul, to come forth; it enables man to achieve an intense closeness (*devekut*) to God. Many scholars believe that Hasidism stresses the *devekut* aspect of prayer even more than the literal meaning of the words recited." "In prayer, mention of God's holiness should stimulate the worshiper to seek holiness in his own religious and moral life. Holiness is acquired by

separation from evil, by the performance of *mitzvot* (commandments, blessings) and by one's willingness to do even more than the law requires, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God, am holy" (Leviticus 19:2)." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) It is worthwhile to note that Ephesus had a large business surrounding the Goddess Diana. The tradition of the burial of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the subsequent veneration of Mary beginning in Ephesus became a counterfeit substitute for a n unholy religion. The "business" of religion eclipsed the essence of religion. Jesus taught that the first aspect of true religion is to love God and the second is to love your neighbor. That likens the holiness of all people with the holiness of God. ". . . holiness . . . applies to the ordinary Jew as much as to the priests. Indeed, one memorable verse reads: "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to the whole Israelite community and say unto them: You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy,'" and among the laws immediately following this statement comes the commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Clearly, the holiness is not just that of the Tabernacle and the sacrifice, but that of everyday life." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **How can I sense that Marriage is honorable?**

"Judaism believes that man must serve God with his soul and his body. A person's soul is that part of him that loves God and His goodness and wants to be like Him, and a person's body is the physical container of his soul on earth. Nearly all the *mitzvot* (commandments, blessings) which God gave are to be performed with the body. Thus the physical actions of man are sanctified. This applies to all the physical aspects of life: even sex when it is practiced in the proper framework, marriage, is in accordance with the will of God and is a *mitzvah*." "Detailed legislation concerning

sexual behavior can be found in the Bible as well as in the Talmud and subsequent rabbinic literature. Celibacy (complete abstinence from all sexual activity) is discouraged as an unnatural state and detrimental to the human personality. The primary restriction of sexual activity in Jewish law is that it should take place within marriage, as an expression of love between husband and wife as well as out of a desire to fulfill God's commandments. An element of holiness is added by the laws of *niddah* (separation during the period of menstruation which ensure that the couple does not indulge in sex on impulse but rather directs the act to holiness.) ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How does proper ritual solidify the covenant of marriage?**

Ordinances are usually tokens or signs of covenants. Many times they represent a physical gesture or a spiritual commitment. An ordinance can also be a regulation, a directive, and can contain instructional value. The sacred ordinances of life deal with our commitment to accept the personal value of the atonement. Other ordinances of life deal with marriage and creating a family. Those ordinances lead us to fulfilling our responsibility as husbands, wives and children. Jeremiah used the favorite image of an even earlier prophet, Hosea, comparing the relationship between God and Israel to that of husband and wife. Israel, in not keeping its responsibilities, deserted the true faith and had become like an unfaithful wife. Both husband and wife have a commitment to each other that should be like God's and Israel's dedication to one another. One of the greatest rituals and covenants that Jews maintain is that of marriage and, subsequently, family life. Notice in the following excerpts the similarities of LDS practices to the Jewish practices that seem to come from ancient times. The ritual of marriage in Judaism is considered

without end; there is no statement, "Until death do you part." The canopy or huppah is reflective of the ancient temple. In some cases the huppah is a tallith, the garment that reminds a Jew of the covenants and commandments he has bound to himself. A minyan or "prayer circle" is formed at the marriage. Two witnesses are also present. As in all religious ceremonies, men are separated from women on two sides of the room or hall. Head covering is also required. Blessings are given to the bride and groom. Where polygamy was once accepted, it later was rescinded.

### **What is the biblical view of celibacy?**

"In Jewish teaching, marriage is considered the ideal human state and a basic social institution established by God at the time of Creation. Both the Bible and the rabbis reject celibacy as unnatural and harmful to the human personality, and insist upon the need for marriage, not only for purposes of procreation, but also for companionship and human self-fulfillment: "It is not good that man be alone; I will make a helpmeet for him" ([Genesis 2:15](#)) and "He who has no wife is not a proper man; he lives without joy, blessing and goodness." The successful marriage in the eyes of the prophets and the rabbis was the most perfect symbol of a meaningful and purposeful relationship and was taken by them as the closest approximation to the idealized relationship between God and Israel, and between Israel and the Torah. The laws of marriage and the customs and practices of the marriage ceremony which developed over the generations are numerous and varied, but all take as their goal the glorification of marriage as a sanctified state and the desire to facilitate to the greatest possible extent the maintenance of a successful and harmonious marriage." "The biblical idea of marriage was essentially monogamous, although polygamy was common among the upper classes of society. Among the



rabbis, polygamy was almost unknown, but it was not until the 11th century that multiple marriages were legally prohibited. Then an enactment associated with the name of Rabbenu Gershom ben Judah was promulgated which established monogamy as the legal norm for all the Jews living in Europe.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What are Jewish legal aspects of marriage?**

Other details of Jewish marriage are included to explain interesting cultural and traditional practices. “A Jewish marriage consists, from the point of view of rabbinic law, of two separate acts, called *kiddushin* and *nissu'in*, which were originally performed at an interval of a year or more apart, but which from the 12th century onward became united in one ceremony.” “Kiddushin is a legal act of acquisition of the bride by the groom: by handing over an object of value (usually a simple ring) to the bride in the presence of two witnesses and reciting the formula, "Behold you are consecrated unto me with this ring according to the law of Moses and Israel," the groom signifies his intent to reserve the bride exclusively to himself, and by accepting the ring the bride signifies her consent. (The *halakhah* (Biblical Law) also recognizes the validity of *kiddushin* performed through the writing of a contract or through actual cohabitation, but both these methods became obsolete at an early date and today *kiddushin* is uniquely performed through the transference of an object of value.)” “*Kiddushin* is thus a legally binding form of betrothal, but it must be followed by *nissu'in*, the marriage proper, for the couple to be considered completely married. In the *nissu'in* ceremony, the bride is led under a canopy (*huppah*) symbolic of the groom's house, and benedictions are recited, after which the couple may legally live together.” “The separation of the two ceremonies in

*Talmudic* times allowed the arrangement of long betrothals, but the uncertainties of life in medieval Europe made such an arrangement impractical and perilous, and it was for this reason that it became customary to perform both ceremonies together. The actual wedding ceremony as performed today is an amalgam of customs and traditions which developed over the generations, but its basic features can be summarized as follows: “Before being led to the *huppah* the groom, in the presence of witnesses, undertakes by an act of *kinyan* the obligations of the *ketubbah* (marriage contract; see below). He is then escorted to the place where the bride is waiting and lets down the veil over her face, while the rabbi pronounces the blessing invoked on Rebekah, "O sister! May you grow into thousands of myriads" ([Genesis 24:60](#)). (This ceremony is known in *Yiddish* as *bedeken di kale* ("veiling the bride") and is not practiced by *Sephardic* (Eastern) Jews.) The groom is then led to the *huppah* by his and the bride's father, while the bride is accompanied to the *huppah* by her and the groom's mother.”

### **How does the Minyan or Prayer Circle connect marriage to temples?**

“The ceremony proper (customarily performed in the presence of at least a *minyan* of males --- a precautionary measure eliminating the possibility of secret marriages) then begins with the recitation of the marriage blessing over a goblet of wine, from which both bride and groom drink. The groom then places the ring on the forefinger of the bride's right hand and in the presence of two witnesses repeats the marriage formula. *Kiddushin* has now been performed, and in order to separate it from the *nissu'in* (consummation of the marriage) which is to follow, the *ketubbah* (marriage contract) is read out loud. Seven marriage blessings are then recited over a second goblet of wine and the ceremony

concludes with the groom crushing a glass under his right foot, as a sign of mourning over the destruction of the Temple. To the rejoicing of the invited guests, the couple are then led to a private room in which they spend some time together, while witnesses are stationed outside. After this *yihud* (being alone together) they are finally considered to be man and wife." "Both the week before the wedding and the week after are celebrated in special fashion. In the synagogue on the Sabbath preceding the marriage, the groom is called to the reading of the Torah and, in some communities, while standing at the *bimah* is showered with nuts and candies, in symbolic representation of everyone's wish for his fruitfulness and happiness. This custom is called in Yiddish *aufrufen*. During the days immediately preceding the wedding, bride and groom customarily do not see each other (the actual period varies in different communities from a week to the day of the marriage), and both fast on the day of their wedding as an indication of the spiritual importance of marriage and the fact that they are about to start a new life together. Following the wedding ceremony a festive meal is served, during which the guests entertain the newly-wed couple and following which the seven wedding blessings are again recited. The seven days following the wedding are known as the *Sheva Berakhot*, for festive meals in honor of the couple are arranged each day, and at the conclusion of each of the seven wedding blessings are recited in the presence of a *minyán* of invited guests. ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What may be an “echo” of an eternal marriage covenant?**

“Although the act of marriage can be affected in different ways it has become the universal Jewish practice to use a ring (except in very few oriental communities where a coin is used). By law, the ring

must belong to the bridegroom, and can be constructed of any material, as long as it is free of precious stones and its value is more than a *perutah*, the smallest denomination of currency in *Talmudic* times.” “(The *Ketubbah*) is the marriage contract, the document which records the financial obligations which the husband undertakes toward his wife consequent to their marriage. In principle, the obligations recorded in the *ketubbah* are imposed upon the husband by law, independent of the writing of the contract, but the *halakhah* still dictates that a deed be written and that it is “forbidden for the groom to live with the bride until he has written and delivered the *ketubbah* to her.” According to the Talmud, the *ketubbah* was instituted in order to protect the woman, since it imposes a monetary punishment upon the husband in the case of a divorce, and it also assures the wife at least minimal compensation upon the death of her husband. In the *ketubbah* are spelled out the minimum compensation set by law, as well as all additional sums willingly offered by the husband.”

### **How might the marriage “canopy” and clothing reflect a Temple echo?**

“Today, the term *huppah* refers to the decorative canopy under which the wedding ceremony is performed. Originally, however, it referred to the actual bridal chamber, the tent or room of the groom to which the bride was brought in festive procession for the marital union. The custom of setting up a canopy for the wedding ceremony was apparently not widely practiced until late in the Middle Ages, for many medieval responsa deal with the question whether the act of entering the *huppah* (canopy) was sufficient to constitute marriage or whether it was to be regarded only as a symbol which would still require the couple to retire in privacy (as in today's practice of *yihud*; see above). The *Talmud* relates that there was an ancient custom

to make staves of the *huppah* from a cedar and a pine tree planted specifically for this purpose at the birth of a male and female child respectively. In medieval France, it was customary for the groom to cover the bride's head with his *tallit* as a symbol of sheltering her; and in modern-day Israel, for weddings of soldiers on active duty, it is not unusual to see a *huppah* constructed of a *tallit* supported by four rifles held by friends of the bride and groom. Generally, the *huppah* is erected inside the synagogue or the hall where the wedding is to take place, but among Orthodox Jews, the preferred custom is to erect the *huppah* outside, or at least in a spot open to the sky, underneath the stars, because of God's assurance to Abraham that He would make his descendants "as numerous as the stars of the heavens" (**Genesis 22:17**). (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) In some Jewish circles, a special garment is worn in remembrance of repentance and represents the purity of the covenant of marriage. It is also used to clothe the dead. It is called the *Kitel* in *Yiddish* meaning "gown" or garment. "In *Ashkenazi* (Western) tradition it is not just the bride who wears white on her wedding day. The groom, too, stands under the canopy wearing his white *kitel*, or robe, over his wedding finery. The day of their marriage is a solemn one for the bride and groom. They pray that their past sins will be forgiven and they can start their life together afresh. The white of their clothing symbolizes the purity and the forgiveness of sin for which they are hoping. For this reason a similar garment is used to clothe the dead for burial. The *kitel* therefore also serves to remind the wearer of how brief life is, and of the necessity for atonement." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Another similarity to marriage practice in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the significance of a proper ritual marriage in the faith, even though a secular marriage has already been

performed. "A convert to Judaism is considered a new-born child, and, from the halakhic point of view, he has no father or mother. Thus, if a whole family converts, the children and the parents start their lives as Jews with no legal relationship. Because of this state of affairs, converts are always named as though they were the sons of Abraham, the first Jew. A husband and wife who convert must also have another wedding ceremony in order to be married under Jewish law." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **What else amplifies the holiness of marriage?**

The holiness of marriage is a major part of the beliefs of both the Jews and the Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "The primary restriction of sexual activity in Jewish law is that it should take place within marriage, as an expression of love between husband and wife as well as out of a desire to fulfill God's commandments. An element of holiness is added by the laws of *niddah* (separation during the period of menstruation, which ensure that the couple does not indulge in sex on impulse but rather directs the act to holiness." "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward" (**Psalms 127:3**). In Jewish tradition, the central purpose of marriage is to have children. Children are considered a great blessing; they are the hope and the promise of continuing life." Responsibilities of a man, a woman and of children are stated in the scriptures, as well as Talmudic and oral traditions. In many religious Jewish families, the father blesses his wife and children on a weekly basis. Women and children are to be cherished and blessed. They have different responsibilities, yet they should share an honorable status without preference. Yet, as Judaism spread without the guidance of living prophets, some discrimination became evident. "The woman's legal status, as de

fined in the Bible, is generally the same as that of man, as is her moral responsibility but certain laws do discriminate both for and against her. For example, special attention was paid to injury suffered by a pregnant woman, and the conditions applicable to a woman sold into slavery were far better than those of a male slave. The owner was expected to marry her himself or have one of his sons marry her and he had to treat her as a daughter-in-law." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What is a starring role of a woman?**

The strong Jewish tradition about women places them on a lofty pedestal. "It is said that a man without a wife lives without joy, blessing and good, and that a man should love his wife as himself and respect her more than himself. Women have greater faith than men and greater powers of discernment. The *Torah*, the greatest joy of the rabbis, is frequently pictured as a woman and is represented as God's daughter and Israel's bride." "In modern Israel, the Declaration of Independence ensures complete equality of political and social rights to all its inhabitants, regardless of religion, race, or sex, but the real Magna Carta of the Israeli woman was the Women's Equal Rights Law of 1951, giving women equal legal status with men. The only field of law in which there remains a degree of discrimination against women is that of personal status. Matters of marriage and divorce come within the exclusive jurisdiction of the religious courts and thus, for example, a divorce must be given by the husband to the wife. On the other hand, in accordance with the *halakhah*, children take the national identity of their mother and not that of their father." "Woman (Eve) was created primarily to serve man (Adam) as a helper, and throughout the Bible she is expected to be a good wife and mother. But in ages when many cultures regarded their women as mere chattels, the Jews did not disregard the

girl's wishes when a marriage arrangement was made. Womanly traits, good and bad, were proverbial in the Bible. Foolishness, contentiousness and indiscretion were censured. On the other hand, graciousness, industry and generosity were lauded, particularly in the paean of praise to the woman in Proverbs, whose beginning is usually translated as "A woman of valor who shall find, and her worth is far above pearls." "The *Talmud* (Jewish biblical interpretations) teaches that it is a woman's duty to beautify herself so as to appear pleasing to her husband. The rabbis said: "A woman beautifies herself by powdering herself, by parting her hair and leaving it loose over her shoulders, and by applying rouge to her face." Said Rav Huna: "Only the young ones do so, but not the old ones." Said Rav Hisda to him: "Even your mother does so, even your grandmother does so, and even a woman on the verge of the grave." Though the *Talmudic* attitude toward the use of cosmetics is basically favorable, it is combined with warnings against its utilization for immoral purposes. Furthermore, cosmetics were not permitted during periods of mourning." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What is the role of a father?**

Jewish tradition places a strong responsibility on the husband and father. Further details of Jewish custom in the family parallel the Latter-day Saints' lifestyle. "The father's duty is to provide for his children, to give them a proper education, to teach them a trade, and to prepare them for marriage. Some authorities require that the father teach his son to swim. The father is morally accountable for the behavior and the sins of his children until they reach the age of their own responsibility --- *bat mitzvah* at the age of 12 for girls, and *bar mitzvah* at the age of 13 for boys. The father retains responsibility in legal matters for his son

until the age of 20 and for his daughter until she marries.” “Great emphasis is placed on the importance of education and religious training, which should begin early in the home. The mother's role is vital since she is the one who creates the home atmosphere in which basic values are fostered and transmitted. She trains her sons and daughters in *mitzvot* and prepares them for formal education. The rabbis advised parents to be loving but firm in the upbringing of their children and warned against showing favoritism.” “In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue.”

**What is the culture of the children's role?**

“Children are obliged to treat their parents with honor and respect. Children must

provide dependent parents with food, clothing and personal attention if it is necessary. This obligation is removed from a daughter when she marries.” “Judaism considers the establishment of a family a holy task. Children are a gift from God and childlessness the greatest misfortune that could befall a marriage. The virtues of domestic bliss have been frequently extolled by the rabbis, and the close knit Jewish family, where the home has been the center of religious practice and ceremony, has greatly helped the survival of Judaism and preserved the moral integrity of the Jews.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Marriage is one of the greatest covenants God has given to man. The sanctity of marriage is evident in the Bible. The traditions of both Jews and Latter-day Saints similarly uphold the precious responsibilities and blessings of this coven