

Doctrine and Covenants 41–44

“MY LAW TO GOVERN MY CHURCH”

Summary: *Doctrine and Covenants 41. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 4, 1831. This revelation instructs the Prophet and Church elders to pray to receive God’s “law” (see section 42). Joseph Smith had just arrived in Kirtland from New York, and Leman Copley, a Church member in nearby Thompson, Ohio, “requested Brother Joseph and Sidney [Rigdon] . . . live with him and he would furnish them houses and provisions.” The following revelation clarifies where Joseph and Sidney should live and also calls Edward Partridge to be the Church’s first bishop. 1–3, The elders will govern the Church by the spirit of revelation; 4–6, True disciples will receive and keep the Lord’s law; 7–12, Edward Partridge is named as a bishop unto the Church.*

Doctrine and Covenants 42. Revelation given in two parts through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 9 and 23, 1831. The first part, consisting of verses 1 through 72, was received in the presence of twelve elders and in fulfillment of the Lord’s promise previously made that the “law” would be given in Ohio (see section 38:32). The second portion consists of verses 73 through 93. The Prophet specifies this revelation as “embracing the law of the Church.” 1–10, The elders are called to preach the gospel, baptize converts, and build up the Church; 11–12, They must be called and ordained and are to teach the principles of the gospel found in the scriptures; 13–17, They are to teach and prophesy by the power of the Spirit; 18–29, The Saints are commanded not to kill, steal, lie, lust, commit adultery, or speak evil against others; 30–39, Laws governing the consecration of properties are set forth; 40–42, Pride and idleness are condemned; 43–52, The sick are to be healed through administrations and by faith; 53–60, The scriptures govern the Church and are to be proclaimed to the world; 61–69, The site of the New Jerusalem and the mysteries of the kingdom will be revealed; 70–73, Consecrated properties are to be used to support Church officers; 74–93, Laws governing fornication, adultery, killing, stealing, and confession of sins are set forth.

Doctrine and Covenants 43. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, in February 1831. At this time some members of the Church were disturbed by people making false claims as revelators. The Prophet inquired of the Lord and received this communication addressed to the elders of the Church. The first part deals with matters of Church polity; the latter part contains a warning that the elders are to give to the nations of the earth. 1–7, Revelations and commandments come only through the one appointed; 8–14, The Saints are sanctified by acting in all holiness before the Lord; 15–22, Elders are sent forth to cry repentance and prepare men for the great day of the Lord; 23–28, The Lord calls upon men by His own voice and through the forces of nature; 29–35, The Millennium and the binding of Satan will come.

Doctrine and Covenants 44. Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at Kirtland, Ohio, in the latter part of February 1831. In compliance with the requirement herein set forth, the Church appointed a conference to be held early in the month of June following. 1–3, Elders are to assemble in conference; 4–6, They are to organize according to the laws of the land and to care for the poor.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What happens to the concept of revelation when it ceases to be recognized?

Nowadays, in Judaism, “looking to God” and “revelation” have become figurative and in modern times are described as unexplainable. “Revelation, the act by which the hidden, unknown God shows himself to man. There is no specific term corresponding to “revelation” in the

Bible or in rabbinic Hebrew. God is said to “appear” to the patriarchs and prophets, and the appearances are described by a series of anthropomorphic (i.e., human) expressions and concrete images. Sometimes God manifests Himself “in a vision” or “in a dream” or he appears through the mediation of an angel. However, the Bible emphasizes that no direct, sensory perception of God is possible. Thus, various phrases are used when describing appearances of the Divine,

for example *kavod* ("glory") or *shekhinah* ("Divine Presence") or *davar* ("word" of God)." "Any event in which the Divine presence is felt is called a revelation, but the term is applied more particularly to communications of the Divine will as revealed through God's messengers, the prophets. The Bible itself, and later the rabbis, discerned among the prophets a hierarchy of form and degree, with that of Moses as supreme and unique. At Sinai, the principal revelation of God to man took place. At that time, all the assembled "heard" the Voice of God, and through the mediation of Moses (who, according to the rabbis, functioned there as a scribe), received the complete text of the Torah and its interpretation, the Oral Law."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How helpful would revelation be today?

"The phenomenon of prophecy is founded on the basic belief that God makes His will known to chosen individuals in successive generations. A prophet is a charismatic individual endowed with the divine gift of both receiving and imparting the message of revelation. A prophet does not choose his profession but is chosen, often against his own will, as in the case of Jonah, to convey the word of God to the people regardless of whether they wish to hear it. The prophet, although conscious of being overwhelmed by the divine word and of being involved in an encounter with God, is still capable of reacting and responding, and may even engage God in dialogue." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What does revelation repeatedly teach us about morality?

In reflecting on the Old Testament's high standards and principles, we read once again of the modern Jewish attitude for themselves and others (non-Jews) on sexuality and morality. "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*

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*." "Like other basic human desires, sex is regarded in a positive light in Jewish teaching, especially as it is the means of fulfilling the first biblical commandment: 'Be fruitful and multiply.' Judaism does not encourage the unbridled fulfillment of desire, however, but rather imposes restrictions which raise the act to the level of holiness. "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." "In general, moderation and self-control in sexual activity are encouraged. Chastity, the goal to be aimed for, does not mean the avoidance of all sex but of illegal sex. This includes adultery, incest, sodomy, rape and seduction. Adultery is defined as sexual relations between a married woman and any man other than her husband. "Judaism encourages modesty as one of the means to chastity. Thus the Jewish woman is enjoined to dress and act modestly at all times. Furthermore, a man is forbidden to be alone with a woman with whom he is not permitted to have sexual relations from considerations of both chastity and modesty."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How is a view of pride repeated throughout revelations?

On the subject of pride, Latter-day Saints have been given special counsel. In 1989, President Ezra Taft Benson said, "Pride is ugly." There is no justifiable use of the words pride or proud. Apparently, every mention of pride in the scriptures is negative. As a replacement for the word pride or proud let us consider the highest compliment and honor as stated in the

scriptures. “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (Matthew 17:5) “When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith History 1:17) In Hebrew the root meaning for pride is actually “excellence.” Who are we to call ourselves, “excellent?” After I had spoken on this subject in a fireside, a couple named Brother and Sister Pride, came to me and said that they were now considering changing their names to Brother and Sister “Pleased!”

What can I learn about babbling proudly?

The unfinished Biblical tower, called Babel, was so named because God mixed up (Hebrew *babal*) man's language. They “babbed.” “According to some modern commentators, the building of the tower was an example of man's extreme pride in his own ability. The building became such an obsession that, according to the Midrash, when a builder fell off the tower to his death, the other builders paid no attention, but when a brick fell, they would cry: ‘When shall another come in its place?’ According to this interpretation, every generation has its own Tower of Babel, when it begins to idolize its technology. The moral of the story is thus as applicable today as it was thousands of years ago.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The tower people wanted to ‘make a name’ for themselves rather than take the ‘name of God’ upon themselves.

How would be the value in reducing how often I say “I AM?”

In Hebrew, the name of God, “Jehovah,” (English spelling) is unmentionable. It means “I AM.” That conjugation is not even used in modern Hebrew. Moses asked the Lord's name: “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto

them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” (Exodus 3:13-14) The practice of avoiding the use of “I am” in Hebrew seems to suggest a way to reduce pride. Ancient Joseph overcame his “pride” and served his brothers forgivingly (at first without identifying himself). He thereby established a pattern for a latter-day Joseph, who for the time being is keeping his identity from Judah and should avoid all forms of pride as he serves his family forgivingly.

What can be done by “Faith in the Lord?”

Anciently, Elisha's example as a servant of God was shown as he refused payment for healing Syria's highest-ranking officer in the Land of Israel at that time. The complication was that the Children of Israel strongly objected to the Syrian “occupying” forces. Recalling, the faithful young woman, serving in Naaman's household, was a believer and prompted the “occupying” Syrian officer to come to the prophet to be blessed. The prophet sent a message to do something simple, bathe in the Jordan River. When he finally “swallowed his pride,” he was blessed! Imagine—the “enemy” was blessed! Fast forward to the Savior's teaching, “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.” (Matthew 5:44) Back to Elisha, we don't know for sure if that even resulted in the conversion of Naaman, and it does not matter. The blessing was unconditional at that point. The prophet was teaching the same principle that Jesus would teach, and that has been revealed again in our day: “Then saith he unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.” (Matthew 22:21) “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.” (Articles of Faith 12) The lesson for the unbelieving Israelites was repeated by the Savior as he said: “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of (Elisha) the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” (Luke 4:27)

How does caring for the poor help us become more like the Messiah?

“The highest form of charity is not to give alms but to help the poor to rehabilitate themselves by lending them money, taking them into partnership, employing them, or giving them work, for in this way the purpose is achieved without any loss of self-respect at all.” “This last way of helping the poor is known as *gemilut hasadim*, ‘dispensing kindness.’ This term also includes aiding people who need help and encouragement and includes such matters as visiting the sick and looking after them and inviting needy guests to eat at your home. One of the greatest acts of charity is to provide for orphans.” “Throughout History the Jewish community has always been sensitive to the needs of the poor and established institutions to provide them with relief. This was a form of taxation which nobody could refuse if he wanted to be considered a member of the community. During the Middle Ages in some towns ‘meal tickets’ were distributed to the needy entitling them to eat at various homes, and there is hardly a synagogue even today without a charity box. Before festivals, charity is distributed so that the poor will also be able to enjoy the Holy Day; this is especially true of Passover when the charity is given a special name, *ma’ot hittim*, ‘money for wheat’ to make *mazzot*. “Many associations were formed for charitable purposes, particularly to look after the sick and provide proper burial. Some communities set up hospitals; this has its result in modern times in institutions like the Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York which was established by Jews. Often the charitable society would own and maintain a hostel where needy wayfarers could spend the night. “Nowadays many communities integrate all their charitable endeavors into one central agency. In the State of Israel the needs of the poor are looked after by the Ministry of Welfare, which is a government agency. However, a great deal of private, non-governmental charity work still goes on.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How will being merciful bring me closer to the Savior?

Being like the expected Messiah is reflected in subsequent latter-day Judaism. “The exercise

of mercy is an obligation for all Jews. By this it is meant that they must act with compassion and forgiveness towards all mankind, and perform deeds of charity and kindness. This quality is an essential characteristic of God who is known as *Rahum* (‘Merciful’) and, in accordance with the tradition which sets as man’s goal the imitation of God: ‘As He is merciful, so be you merciful.’ Just as God is bound by His covenant of mercy with His people, so is the Jew bound by specific commandments to act mercifully to the oppressed, the alien, the orphan, the widow, and indeed, every living creature. “The Hebrew word for justice is *zedek*, and indicative of Judaism’s attitude is the fact that another form of the same root *zedakah*, means ‘charity.’ For justice must be tempered with mercy and indeed the main attribute of God is His integration of justice and mercy. Yet another Hebrew word derived from the same root is *zaddik*, which means ‘righteous.’ The righteous man is one who is both just and merciful.” “The stress placed upon this quality is evident both in the many charitable institutions existing in Jewish communal life, and in the daily prayers which implore God to deal compassionately even with the undeserving man. Human beings are frail, imperfect creatures constantly open to error, and so they are totally dependent on God’s mercy.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Where is ZION?

The word Zion evokes very strong feeling among the Jews. As there are two gatherings, one spiritual and another physical, there are also two definitions of Zion, one in the heart and another in a place. What the Jews may not realize is that there are two chosen people that will have more than one Zion headquarters. Presently, centers in the “Tops of the Mountains” should be considered. At the moment, there are two dedicated centers in the two “Zions” in the two “Tops of the Mountains,” Jerusalem and Salt Lake City. The Lord will speak from two Zions. “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 about multiple ZION centers?

The "Zions" points to unique geographical considerations. In this case, geography lends its testimony of the Lord. In ancient times, the word of the Lord came from the "tops of the mountains," Jerusalem, where the tribe of Judah and the prophets of Israel lived. These mountains create a backbone of the country of Israel. In fact, the land of Israel has mountains from its northern to its southern borders. It is a mountain range that is "everlasting." In latter times, the administration, the law, of the Lord comes from the "tops of the mountains," Salt Lake City, where the prophets and leadership of the Lord's kingdom and the tribe of Joseph are presently situated. The Ute Indians used the word Utah to denote the tops of the mountains. It is also the only other range of mountains that extends from the northern to the southern borders of the land. It is also the "land of everlasting hills." Judah and Utah even sound linguistically similar. There is an Arab village close to Hebron that is called "Yatta." An old synagogue of the first century was found there with characteristics of Levitical use. Some even suggest it to be the wilderness area of Judah where John the Baptist (a Levite) might have lived.

How will the blessings of the "everlasting hills" continue to affect all the world?

"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his

brethren." (Genesis 49:26) "And the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall tremble at their presence." (Doctrine & Covenants 133:31) "Everlasting is also used to signify the eternal, lasting, and enduring nature of some particular thing. For instance: the 'everlasting covenant' (D. & C. 1:15), 'the everlasting gospel' (D. & C. 36:5), 'songs of everlasting joy' (D. & C. 45:71), 'an everlasting inheritance' (D. & C 57:5), 'the everlasting hills.' (D. & C. 133:31.)" (Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, Pg.243) How beautiful upon the mountains of Judah and Joseph are the feet of Him who brought salvation to all of us! "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)

What is the probability of more than one "New Jerusalem?"

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 - p.70) "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. "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 house, in His city, in His glory!