

May 24-30, 2021

# Doctrine and Covenants 58–59

“ANXIOUSLY ENAGED IN A GOOD CAUSE”

---

**Summary:** *Doctrine and Covenants 58. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, August 1, 1831. Earlier, on the first Sabbath after the arrival of the Prophet and his party in Jackson County, Missouri, a religious service had been held, and two members had been received by baptism. During that week, some of the Colesville Saints from the Thompson Branch and others arrived (see section 54). Many were eager to learn the will of the Lord concerning them in the new place of gathering. 1–5, Those who endure tribulation will be crowned with glory; 6–12, The Saints are to prepare for the marriage of the Lamb and the supper of the Lord; 13–18, Bishops are judges in Israel; 19–23, The Saints are to obey the laws of the land; 24–29, Men should use their agency to do good; 30–33, The Lord commands and revokes; 34–43, To repent, men must confess and forsake their sins; 44–58, The Saints are to purchase their inheritance and gather in Missouri; 59–65, The gospel must be preached unto every creature.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 59. Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, August 7, 1831. Preceding this revelation, the land was consecrated, as the Lord had directed, and the site for the future temple was dedicated. On the day this revelation was received, Polly Knight, the wife of Joseph Knight Sr., died, the first Church member to die in Zion. Early members characterized this revelation as “instructing the Saints how to keep the sabbath and how to fast and pray.” 1–4, The faithful Saints in Zion will be blessed; 5–8, They are to love and serve the Lord and keep His commandments; 9–19, By keeping the Lord’s day holy, the Saints are blessed temporally and spiritually; 20–24, The righteous are promised peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come.*

---

## Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

### How do I view the term Judges in Israel?

The information about the Old

Testament Judges of Israel may, at best, be incomplete. Their positions are generally considered local and did not seem to be responsible to or for the entire nation of Israel. Jewish sources identify them more often as local military leaders who were God inspired. “These Judges were not judges in the legal sense, but heroes upon whom “rested the spirit of God” and who led single tribes or groups of tribes in military campaigns to free Israel from periodic foreign oppression. The rule of each judge was temporary and in no case did these leaders receive the allegiance of all the tribes. Only in the case of Deborah is there any hint of a judicial function among the activities of a Judge-savior.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

The most famous story of Deborah is the conquering of the Canaanites. Barak (‘lightning’ in Hebrew), the military leader of Israel, was hesitant to follow her prophetic instruction to engage the enemy. He acquiesced after she agreed to accompany him. (There may have been fewer wars if presidents and prime ministers had accompanied their young soldiers to battle).

### How has democracy played a role in ancient Israel?

“From the political point of view, the people of Israel have more often been ruled by monarchies than by democratic forms of government. The Book of Deuteronomy makes provision for the people of Israel to have a king, but insists that the king must rule by law and “that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren.” In biblical times, the Israelites believed that their government had to derive from

God. Thus, when Moses accepted the advice of his father-in-law Jethro to appoint leaders, he first obtained God's permission and then, with God's authority, appointed judges. Later, the people rejected the advice of the prophet Samuel and insisted on having a king --- this led to the reign of Saul, followed by that of David. In spite of this, Jewish law still states that decisions are to be made and conflicts to be resolved according to the principle of majority rule." ". . . the Great Sanhedrin was the name of the unique court consisting of . . . judges which sat in a special part of the Temple in Jerusalem. These judges had to know a great many languages in order to understand the witnesses and the litigants without an interpreter (who might change — ever so slightly the original statement). They never saw the litigants or the accused, in case their judgment might be influenced by their appearance. (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The judgement is always made through a curtain.

### **How is judgment to be carried out?**

"Judaism demands of its judges this same balance, and the principle of mercy thus assumes extreme importance in the administration of Jewish law. The prophet **Zechariah (7:9)** put it: ". . . execute the judgment and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother." "Mercy and forgiveness, says the Talmud, are distinguishing characteristics of Abraham and his seed, and these characteristics motivated God to choose Israel as His people." "Throughout the numerous persecutions and oppressions which the Jews suffered, the Jewish attitude toward Christianity was molded. The Jews viewed Christianity as the contradiction between the high ideals it preached (love, mercy and "turning the other cheek") and the violent anti-Semitism and discrimination it practiced." "The prophets cried out against hypocrisy and social injustice, "What does the Lord

require of thee: only to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God" (**Micah 6:8**). This is one of many passages which sum up the ethical principles which are at the heart of Jewish religion and which have influenced later religions." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **How significant is it to obey the laws of the land?**

A previous Gospel Doctrine discussion in this series compares the modern Jewish concept that the Law of Moses is for the Jews and the Law of Noah (Noachide Laws) are for the Gentiles. The Apostle Paul explains the proper perception of the same law for everyone as he spoke to King Agrippa at Caesarea. "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." (**Acts 26:22-23**) "At this time gentiles were either natives living in Erez Israel or travelers passing through it. Resident gentiles were protected by traditional hospitality and by contractual agreements made between Israel and the neighboring states. Native gentiles were expected to be loyal to Israel's civil laws in return for protection, but were generally in a humbler position than the Israelite population." "The gentile was not obliged to acknowledge God, but was at least obliged to abandon the worship of false gods. Unlike Jews, Noachides were not required to suffer martyrdom rather than break the law against idolatry; they were, however, required to choose martyrdom rather than shed human blood. In some instances gentiles were also required to observe Sabbath and the festivals, and to fast on the Day of Atonement. Social differences remained, nonetheless . . ." "During the latter part of the Second

Temple period (from the second century B.C.E.) the prohibition against Jews marrying gentiles, limited originally to the seven Canaanite nations --- Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (“neither shalt thou make marriages with them” **Deuteronomy 7:3**) --- was extended to include all gentiles, who might lure Jews away from the true God. In order to prevent the possibility of intermarriage the rabbis enacted a series of laws intended to limit social contact between Jew and non-Jew. These included a strict prohibition on the use of gentile wine, originally limited to that used in idolatrous libations, but later extended to cover all non-Jewish produced wine.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **What does God prefer, kingship or a system of judges?**

“From the political point of view, the people of Israel have more often been ruled by monarchies than by democratic forms of government. The Book of Deuteronomy makes provision for the people of Israel to have a king, but insists that the king must rule by law and “that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren.” In biblical times, the Israelites believed that their government had to derive from God. Thus, when Moses accepted the advice of his father-in-law Jethro to appoint leaders, he first obtained God’s permission and then, with God’s authority, appointed judges. Later, the people rejected the advice of the prophet Samuel and insisted on having a king --- this led to the reign of Saul, followed by that of David. In spite of this, Jewish law still states that decisions are to be made and conflicts to be resolved according to the principle of majority rule.” “In biblical times in the ancient Near East, the monarch was accepted as the sole ruler, with complete authority over his subjects. The status of kings varied from emperor to vassal as the kingdoms varied in size

from a tribe like Midian to a vast empire such as Egypt. But the idea common to all was that the direct relationship between the king and the deity was part of the natural order.” “The primary feature of the coronation was the anointing of the king’s head with oil by a priest or prophet, the sign of the divine covenant --- that is, he had been chosen as God’s anointed.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **What biblical examples show the importance of obeying the laws of the land?**

The prophet Elisha healed Naaman the Syrian. A faithful young woman, probably serving in Naaman’s household, was a believer and prompted the “occupying” Syrian officer to come to the prophet to be blessed. Elisha sent a message to do something simple - bath in the Jordan River. When Naaman finally “swallowed his pride,” he was blessed! Imagine - the “enemy” was blessed! Elisha’s continued theme was that he was a servant of God, even refusing payment from Syria’s highest-ranking officer in the Land of Israel at that time. The anomaly is that the children of Israel strongly objected to the Syrian “occupying” forces. The prophet was probably teaching the same principle that Jesus taught 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 11**) “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**) We don’t know for sure if that even resulted in the conversion of Naaman and it does not matter. The blessing was unconditional on that point. 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 can I better understand the Lord's Day?

The prime factor of religious observance for the Jews is keeping the Sabbath day holy. They feel that Sabbath observance identifies them over all other peoples. "The Hebrew name for the Sabbath is *Shabbat*, which derives from a root meaning to cease or desist. It gets this name because the Bible tells us that on the seventh day of Creation, God "*shavat mi-kol melakhto*" --- He "ceased" or "desisted" from all His work (i.e., of Creation). It is from this that the supreme importance of the Sabbath derives; observance of the Sabbath is an act of testimony to the fact that God created the world." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) On the subject of blessings, it is interesting to note that in some Jewish communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue: "Hands are also significant in the symbolic act of bestowing a blessing. In rabbinic literature the priestly blessing is known as *nesi'at kappayim* ("raising of the hands") and is pronounced with the hands uplifted, and the fingers spread in a special formation. In fact this special formation of the hands is often engraved on the tombstones of *kohanim* (priests)." "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.) "Before the Resurrection of Christ, the members of the Church observed the last day of the week as the Sabbath, as did the Jews. After the Resurrection, the members of the Church, whether Jews or Gentiles, observed the first day of the week (the Lord's day) to remember the Lord's Resurrection. The Church today continues to observe one day each week as a holy sabbath day on which to worship God and rest from the labors of the world." (Bible Dictionary, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

### What are the seven extra sabbaths in the Old Testament?

There are seven events, "*miqra*" (Sabbath assemblies) that do not necessarily occur on a weekly Sabbath (Lev. 23) that are annual Sabbaths observed by Jews. Two of the Sabbath assemblies occur in spring on the first and last day of the Feast of unleavened bread (known as Passover). A third occurs in the summer, this is the Feast of Shavuot. Another four extra Sabbaths occur in the fall in the seventh month, Feast of Trumpets (*Yom Teru'ah*) on the first day of the seventh month; the next is the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*); and two more during the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) on the first and last day. Sometimes the word *Shabbaton* is used to refer to all seven events. The Gospel of John describes the day beginning following Jesus' death as, "That sabbath day was an high day" (John 19:31-42). That night began the first day of Passover week an annual *miqra*, an extra annual Sabbath. The King James Version may be the origin of naming the annual rest days as a "High Sabbath" in English. Passover is to remember "rising" quickly and being delivered from Egyptian slavery. It is a symbol of a future "rising" or deliverance that would be even greater than the first Passover. When Jesus was born, there was no calendar with a spring month of April. So, according to the biblical

calendar and because Passover always occurs at the first full moon after the first day of spring, April 6, 1830, the date the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, leads us to look at the biblical date. It was the Passover week that year!

### **How is bread and wine (or water) used on Sabbaths before the meal?**

“From Talmudic times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath. This bread, usually prepared from white flour, is also called *“hallah.”* Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Showbread in the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) In a religious Jewish home, every Sabbath Eve begins with an old ritual of a blessing and pouring of a little pure wine (or living [spring] water if wine is not available). This procedure is called *“Kiddush.”* It is followed by a blessing, breaking, and eating of a little piece of the *“Hallah”* bread. That is called *“Motzi.”* The father or grandfather in the home always partakes first, and then others receive the *Kiddush* and the *Motzi*. “The table is set for the festive meal, with the Sabbath candles glowing in polished holders. The family stands and the father raises the brimming silver cup to say *Kiddush*, the blessing and sanctification over wine. This age-old ceremony is in fulfillment of the biblical command, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” (**Exodus 20:8**)” *“Kiddush* is recited on the evening of the Sabbath, or the festival, before the start of the meal. Nothing may be eaten before *Kiddush*. On Sabbath eve, the first paragraph of *Kiddush* includes a phrase from the end of the first chapter of Genesis and the passage at the beginning of the second which describe God’s completion of Creation and His sanctification of the

seventh day as a day of rest. *Kiddush* continues with the benediction for wine, preceded by the word *savri* (Attention!) so that all present, men and women, may fulfill the requirement of *Kiddush* by listening carefully to the recital of the prayer and by responding “Amen” afterwards.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Another prayer spoken on Sabbath days is, *“ADON OLAM* (“Lord of the world”) . . . (it is a rhymed poem of unknown authorship, which was probably written in Babylon around the tenth century. The present version, as it appears in the Ashkenazi service, consists of ten verses. The first six speak of God the eternal, all-powerful and ever- ruling Creator of the universe. The next four verses are more personal in nature. Here, God is much closer to the individual worshiper, his hopes and his fears. “He is my God, my Redeemer, my Rock in time of trouble.” Because the worshiper is confident of God’s power and also aware of His personal concern, he closes his song by saying: *“Into His Hand I entrust my soul, Both while I sleep and when I am awake, And with my soul, my body too, The Lord is with me, I shall not fear.”* In many congregations, *Adon Olam* is sung at the conclusion of the *Musaf* service for Sabbath and holidays.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) During the days of the ancient Temple, additional offerings were made on high festive days. *Mussaf* is now recited instead of these offerings.

### **How does the Sabbath identify the House of Israel?**

“In the course of time observance of the Sabbath became the identifying mark of the Jew. It set him apart from all other religions. According to the First Book of **Maccabees (2:31--41)**, at the beginning of the Hasmonean revolt against Syria, the Jews would not fight on the Sabbath but let themselves be killed. Later they realized that was a mistake and that if danger to life is involved, the Sabbath is

suspended.” “The rabbis of the Talmud thought that the Sabbath is the most important of all the laws of the Torah and that by itself it is equal to all the rest. One statement is that “if Israel keeps one Sabbath as it should be kept, the Messiah will come.” They saw Shabbat as a special privilege; a gift that God gave His people Israel and as a foretaste of the world-to-come.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **How are animals and workers treated on a Sabbath?**

“Other biblical laws repeatedly show concern for the well being of animals. Man must rest on the Sabbath and may not work his animals either. “Thou shalt not do any manner of work, neither thy son . . . nor thy servant . . . nor thy cattle” (Exodus 20:10).” “The Sabbath and the festivals are particularly times of joy, and indeed it is a positive commandment, often difficult to observe, to be happy on them. The joy required is not frivolity but, contradictory though it may sound, a serious happiness. The highest level of joy according to the rabbis is the *simhah shel mitzvah*, the joy felt at performing a commandment or doing a good deed.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **What are some other Jewish memorable practices of Sabbath?**

“Women usher in the Sabbath each week by lighting candles and blessing God “who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light.” On Saturday night, traditional Jewish families light a *havdalah* candle made of several wicks braided together, raise a cup of wine and sniff fragrant spices, thus bidding farewell to the Sabbath peace and beginning a new week. “On the Sabbath, a special bread called *hallah* is used. The *hallah* is baked sweeter than regular bread because the Sabbath is a “sweeter” day. “Funerals may not take place on the Sabbath or on the Day of Atonement.” “In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Fasting is an integral part of Jewish life, yet never on a Sabbath unless it is Yom Kippur. There is a monthly *Yom Kippur Katan* (lesser), a day before the beginning of every month. It is a fast day, again, never on a Sabbath, because Sabbath should be a joyous event, and fasting may be miserable to some!