

# Doctrine and Covenants 41–44

“MY LAW TO GOVERN MY CHURCH”

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**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.*

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**Supplemental  
Jewish and  
Holy Land  
Insights**

**What  
“concentration” is  
required to live the  
law of  
“consecration?”**

There is a significant difference between the "United Order" and the "Law of Consecration." The United Order is more like the modern version of the Jewish Kibbutz. Modern Jewish communities reflect some similar cooperative efforts as was done anciently. One such community structure is called the *Kibbutz*. "Zionism in its modern sense began in 1897, when Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) founded the World Zionist Organization. Herzl's objective was to 'secure for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secured home in Palestine.' His ambitious efforts captured the imagination of his fellow Jews and soon the initial settlers were joined by new groups of Zionists as the Second Aliyah (1904) and continuous waves of immigrants after that made their way to Israel. These groups established agricultural settlements all over the country, revived the Hebrew language, and created their own Watchman Society to guard their members from Arab attack. In 1909, on land purchased by the Jewish National Fund, the first kibbutz, Deganyah, was established. By 1914, the *yishuv*, as the Jewish community was called, numbered some 85,000." *Kibbutzim* with similar ways of thinking often group together in federations, which save their member-villages money by purchasing for them all in bulk, and arranging from one central office to sell all their crops. In addition, many *kibbutzim* cooperate with other *kibbutzim* in the same region, whether they share the same ideas or not, and together they are able to build central silos and arrange heavy transport. Likewise, the *kibbutz* associations have

their own adult education courses, choirs, amateur orchestras, art collections, bulletins, publishing houses, and even their own teachers' training college. Thousands of members of certain older *kibbutzim*, after completing their three-year army service, volunteer a year's labor-unpaid, of course-in newer kibbutzim, in order to help them stand on their own feet." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) Just prior to Jesus' time, a legislated, cooperative community arose that used similar governance. The *Essenes* wrote about their disciplines. The best preserved of these Qumran scrolls is called The Manual of Discipline, a sort of doctrine and covenants of these religious people. It describes their organization that included a Teacher of Righteousness and two assistants. There was also a council of twelve overseers. Their priestly system included two castes: One of a higher authority that connected with an order of the *Melech Zedek* (righteous king), and another of lesser authority that connected with the Levitical, or order of *Aaron*. They were bound by a strict order of unity. An *Essene's* membership in a kibbutz-like united order came into effect only after a two-year trial period. The *Essenes* kept copies of the scriptures, interpretations of the scriptures, and their own scrolls of doctrines and covenants.

**To whom does everything belong to,  
anyway?**

A similar unity and community bond can be seen in the scriptures. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and

singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:44-47) "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts 4:32) "And they taught, and did minister one to another; and they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly, one with another." (3 Nephi 26:19) The valuable lesson that we can learn is that unity represented in the scriptures is always connected with a central belief and faith in the Lord. That focus assures a unity because His directive powers are the same for everyone. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:6) "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you." (1 Thessalonians 3:11) "Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day." (Alma 37:37) "And now, behold, I give unto you a commandment, that when ye are assembled together ye shall instruct and edify each other, that ye may know how to act and direct my church, how to act upon the points of my law and commandments, which I have given." (Doctrine and Covenants 43:8) "... you would not criticize a group of people who sought the same high ground in the midst of a flood; you would not see their presence in one place as an unintelligent act, for they came together in order to be saved. So it is here. Life here is life in a large, affectionate, and unified family. Love in a family does not diminish the freedom of each member thereof; our unity does not jeopardize our individuality.

Undivided, we are multiplied. Being of one heart and one mind permits no divorce between knowing and feeling in the City of Enoch." (Neal A. Maxwell, *Of One Heart*, p.51)

### **How has Jewish unity been fostered?**

A beautiful principle of Jewish unity can be sensed in the repeated prayers said when a "prayer circle" (*minyan*) is formed in Jewish ritual. The request for forgiveness should include all. "The rabbis placed great emphasis on the relationship of the individual to the community during prayer. Almost all prayer, for example, was written in the first person plural- 'Forgive us,' 'Teach us, 'Bring us to our Land.' Although private prayer was certainly permitted, the individual was urged to join a congregation (*minyan*) when he prays and to incorporate the needs of the *minyan* in his prayers."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The Latter-day Saints' concept of focusing on the Lord has promoted a unified way of community life that can still be expressed individually. The modern *Kibbutz* system in Israel is a lesser derivation of the principle of holding things in common and working for the common good of the entire community. "There is no private wealth whatever. Once a new member is accepted after a year's trial period, he gives everything he owns (apart from personal possessions) to the kibbutz. In addition, he is expected to put in his honest day's work in whatever field the kibbutz planning committee finds most useful for the *kibbutz* as a whole." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **How can I live the Law of Consecration now?**

The law of consecration, in a celestial sense, is a stewardship of doing without being instructed to do so. Those that have to ask, "What must I do to inherit life?" must grasp the opportunity to reach higher so that the spirit can dictate the

"Law of Consecration." In the days of the Savior, all believing members committed their time, talent and even their lives to "the kingdom." I participated in an archaeological survey close to Jericho where we were discussing the odd nature of a beautiful synagogue floor of the first century. What was odd about it was the signature. Almost every ancient mosaic floor found in Israel has the signature of the donor with his family name and title. This one simply had an inscription that indicated that the "entire community" had done this work. I had the distinct feeling we were standing on the remains of a worship center used by early saints, "former-day Saints," people who committed themselves first to the building of the Kingdom of God. As a discipline and behavioral structure, the early Saints gave everything to the Lord. By consecrating their resources to the Kingdom of God, they were learning stewardship instead of ownership. Stewardship is an eternal principle also given before Jesus' time. "For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." (**Exodus 32:29**)

### **What must I do to gain Eternal Life?**

In Jesus' day, two men asked what they should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus gave each one an answer that applied to him because each had to learn a principle he needed most. The rich young man was told to keep the commandments and when he answered that he observed them all, he was told to sell what he had and give to the poor. On the other hand, a lawyer was asked a question and when he answered correctly Jesus told him to follow his own answer. In other words, "Do it."

### **Rich Man**

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? . . . Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. . ." (**Mark 10:17-20**)

### **Lawyer**

"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readeest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. (**Luke 10:25-28**)

The Law of Consecration includes more than a guidelines on riches, wealth or worldly aspects. It is a guideline in stewardship, humility, and a fervent purpose of service to others guided by mercy, piety, wisdom, humility, gentility and understanding.

## How similar are ancient and restoration guidelines about “Laws of the Land?”

Respect for Laws of the Land is biblical. Roots of this idea come from the Prophet Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylonian: "Seek the peace of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in the peace thereof you shall have peace" (**Jeremiah 29:7**). Some scholars suggest that the submission to gentile rulers by Jews in their lands was viewed more as a "pragmatic recognition of brute force" than anything else. (See: **Menachem, Lorberbaum, ed. (2000). *The Jewish Political Tradition. Vol. 1 – Authority. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 431–434.***) "The principle of *dina d'malkhuta dina* (civil laws of a country are binding on Jewish citizens) means that, for Jews, obedience to the civil law of the country in which they live is viewed as a religiously mandated obligation and disobedience is a transgression, according to Jewish law. This general principle is subject, however, to the qualifications that the government enacting the law must be one which is recognized by Jewish law as having legitimacy; the law must apply equitably to all the inhabitants, Jewish and non-Jewish alike; and the law must not contravene the spirit of the laws derived from the *Torah* (Bible law) even if a particular regulation may be contrary to a provision of Jewish law. (**Galas, Yechiel (1979). "Halacha and the Law of the Land". *Halacha: a guide to its understanding in theory and practice, based on the Meforshim (Expositors) and Posekim (Decisors) of the past and present. New York: Judaica Press. ISBN 9780910818131***) The efforts of the modern State of Israel bring biblical theocracy together with democracy giving some noteworthy comparisons.

## Who anticipates a “Theocracy?”

Nowadays, the religious Jews, Bahais and Latter-day Saints anticipate an eventual theocracy. This is in stark contrast to

secularism and materialism so prevalent in modern society. "Following the Six-Day War of June 1967 and the reunification of Jerusalem, all of the holy sites in the Land of Israel came under Israeli administration, and freedom of access was guaranteed to all religions. The Israel government resolved to safeguard all sacred sites and gave the head of each religious community management of its own holy places." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The underlying considerations in establishing the modern State of Israel and its legal system go back to ancient times and the biblical system while embracing the principles of democracy. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. That probably justifies the government of the United States of America to be as protective and supportive of Israel as it is. A discussion of how the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints views the “Laws of the Land” follow later. For now, consider the revelation: “We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society. “We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life. “We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people if a republic, or the will of the sovereign.” (**Doctrine and Covenants 134:1–3.**) A “because” is stated: “That your enemies may not have power over you; that you may be preserved in all things; that you may be enabled to keep my laws . . .” (**Doctrine and Covenants 44:5**)