

# Latter-day Saints & the Constitution

## **D&C 58:19-22: Keeping the Law of the Land**

Dated 1 August 1831

19. For verily I say unto you, my law shall be kept on this land. 20. Let no man think he is ruler; but let God rule him that judgeth, according to the counsel of his own will, or, in other words, him that counseleth or sitteth upon the judgment seat. 21. Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land. 22. Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet.

## **D&C 98:4-11: Law of the land; Seek Righteous Men; dated 6 August 1833**

4. And now, verily I say unto you concerning the laws of the land, it is my will that my people should observe to do all things whatsoever I command them. 5. And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me. 6. Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land; 7. And as pertaining to law of man, whatsoever is more or less than this, cometh of evil. 8. I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free. 9. Nevertheless, when the wicked rule the people mourn. 10. Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil.<sup>1</sup> 11. And I give unto you a

1 - "The members of Congress will be the best we can get; they will all of them derive their appointment from the States, and if the States are not wise enough to send good and suitable men, great blame, great sin will lie at their door... the grand secret of forming a good government is, to put good men into the administration: for wild, vicious, or idle men, will ever make a bad government..." Pelatiah

commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.

## **D&C 101:76-80: Constitution Established by God; dated 16 December 1833**

76. And again I say unto you, those who have been scattered by their enemies, it is my will that they should continue to importune for redress, and redemption, by the hands of those who are placed as rulers and are in authority over you - 77.

According to the laws and constitution of the people, which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles;

78. That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment. 79. Therefore, it is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another. 80. And for this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I have up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood.

## **D&C 134: Declaration Concerning**

**Governments and Law; dated 23 August 1835**

*This is a declaration of belief through the prophet Joseph Smith regarding governments and laws in general. At the time of its original adoption, it carried the following preamble: "That our belief with regard to earthly governments and laws in general may not be misinterpreted nor misunderstood, we have thought proper to present ... our opinion of the same."*

1. WE believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men

Webster, Philadelphia Packet, November 8, 1787

accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others; but we do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion; that the civil magistrate should restrain crime, but never control conscience; should punish guilt, but never suppress the freedom of the soul.

5. We believe that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside,<sup>2</sup> while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments; and that sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen thus protected, and should be punished accordingly; and that all governments have a right to enact such laws as in their own

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2 - "If we look into history, we shall find that the common avenue through which tyranny has entered in, and enslaved nations who were once free, has been their not supporting government... But still the people themselves must be the chief support of liberty. While the great body of the freeholders are aquainted with the duties which they owe to their God, to themselves, and to men, they will remain free. But if ignorance and depravity should prevail, they will inevitably lead to slavery and ruin." Samuel Huntington, Connecticut Constitution Convention, 1788, quoted here from DEBATE ON THE CONSTITUTION (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1993), page 886-87

judgments are best calculated to secure the public interest; at the same time, however, holding sacred the freedom of conscience.

6. We believe that every man should be honored in his station, rulers and magistrates as such, being placed for the protection of the innocent and the punishment of the guilty; and that to the laws all men show respect and deference, as without them peace and harmony would be supplanted by anarchy and terror; human laws being instituted for the express purpose of regulating our interests as individuals and nations, between man and man; and divine laws given of heaven, prescribing rules on spiritual concerns, for faith and worship, both to be answered by man to his Maker.

7. We believe that rulers, states, and governments have a right, and are bound to enact laws for the protection of all citizens in the free exercise of their religious belief; but we do not believe that they have a right in justice to deprive citizens of this privilege, or proscribe them in their opinions, so long as a regard and reverence are shown to the laws and such religious opinions do not justify sedition nor conspiracy.

8. We believe that the commission of crime should be punished according to the nature of the offense; that murder, treason, robbery, theft, and the breach of the general peace, in all respects, should be punished according to their criminality and their tendency to evil among men, by the laws of that government in which the offense is committed; and for the public peace and tranquility all men should step forward and use their ability in bringing offenders against good laws to punishment.

9. We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed in its spiritual privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens, denied.

10. We believe that all religious societies have a right to deal with their members for disorderly conduct, according to the rules and regulations of such societies; provided that such dealings be for

fellowship and good standing; but we do not believe that any religious society has authority to try men on the right of property or life, to take from them this world's goods, or to put them in jeopardy of either life or limb, or to inflict any physical punishment upon them. They can only excommunicate them from their society, and withdraw from them their fellowship.

11. We believe that men should appeal to the civil law for redress of all wrongs and grievances, where personal abuse is inflicted or the right of property or character infringed, where such laws exist as will protect the same; but we believe that all men are justified in defending themselves, their friends, and property, and the government, from the unlawful assaults and encroachments of all persons in times of exigency, where immediate appeal cannot be made to the laws, and relief afforded.

12. We believe it just to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth, and warn the righteous to save themselves from the corruption of the world; but we do not believe it right to interfere with bondservants, neither preach the gospel to, nor baptize them contrary to the will and wish of their masters, nor to meddle with or influence them in the least to cause them to be dissatisfied with their situations in this life, thereby jeopardizing the lives of men; such interference we believe to be unlawful and unjust, and dangerous to the peace of every government allowing human beings to be held in servitude.

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**Article of Faith #12**

We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

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### **Council given by President Ezra Taft Benson**

*Ezra Taft Benson served as Secretary of Agriculture under President Eisenhower while also serving as a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He later served as President and Prophet of the Church.*

*At the time of his death one world leader made the statement:*

**"The American Constitution has lost its best friend."**

“May I urge every Latter-day Saint and all Americans in North and South America to become familiar with every part of this document. Many of the constitutions of countries in South America have been patterned in large measure after that of the United States. We should understand the Constitution as the founders meant that it should be understood. We can do this by reading their words about it, such as those contained in the Federalist Papers. Such understanding is essential if we are to preserve what God has given us.

“I reverence the Constitution of the United States as a sacred document. To me its words are akin to the revelations of God, for God has placed his stamp of approval on the Constitution of this land. I testify that the God of heaven selected and

sent some of his choicest spirits to lay the foundation of this government as a prologue to the restoration of the gospel and the second coming of our Savior.

“May God bless us to protect this sacred instrument. In the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "May those principles, which were so honorably and nobly defended, namely, the Constitution of our land, by our fathers, be established forever." (D&C 109:54.)” (Ezra Taft Benson, April 1976 General Conference)

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 “How then can we best befriend the Constitution in this critical hour and secure the blessings of liberty and ensure the protection and guidance of our Father in Heaven?

“First and foremost, we must be righteous. John Adams said,

“‘Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.’ (The Works of John Adams, ed. C.F. Adams, Boston: Little, Brown Co., 1851, 4:31).

“If the Constitution is to have continuance, this American nation, and especially the Latter-day Saints, must be virtuous.

“The Book of Mormon warns us relative to our living in this free land:

“Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever’ (2 Nephi 1:7).

“And now,’ warned Moroni, ‘we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity’ (Ether 2:9).

“Two great American Christian civilizations - the Jaredites and the Nephites - were swept off this land because they did not ‘serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ’ (Ether 2:12). What will become of our civilization?

“Second, we must learn the principles of the Constitution in the tradition of the Founding Fathers.

“Have we read the Federalist papers? Are we

reading the Constitution and pondering it? Are we aware of its principles? Are we abiding by these principles and teaching them to others? Could we defend the Constitution? Can we recognize when a law is constitutionally unsound? Do we know what the prophets have said about the Constitution and the threats to it?

“As Jefferson said, ‘If a nation expects to be ignorant and free... it expects what never was and never will be’ (Letter to Colonel Charles Yancey, 6 Jan. 1816).

“Third, we must become involved in civic affairs to see that we are properly represented.

“The Lord said that ‘he holds men accountable for their acts in relation’ to governments ‘both in making laws and administering them’ (D&C 134:1). We must follow this counsel from the Lord: ‘Honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil’ (D&C 98:10).

“Note the qualities that the Lord demands of those who are to represent us. They must be good, wise, and honest.

“Fourth, we must make our influence felt by our vote, our letters, our teaching, and our advice. We must become accurately informed and then let others know how we feel. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: ‘It is our duty to concentrate all our influence to make popular that which is sound and good, and unpopular that which is unsound. ‘Tis right, politically, for a man who has influence to use it... From henceforth I will maintain all the influence I can get’ (History of the Church, 5:286).

“I have faith that the Constitution will be saved as prophesied by Joseph Smith. It will be saved by the righteous citizens of this nation who love and cherish freedom. It will be saved by enlightened members of this Church - among others - men and women who understand and abide the principles of the Constitution.

“I reverence the Constitution of the United States as a sacred document. To me its words are

akin to the revelations of God, for God has placed His stamp of approval upon it.

"I testify that the God of heaven sent some of His choicest spirits to lay the foundation of this government, and He has now sent other choice spirits to help preserve it.

"We, the blessed beneficiaries of the Constitution, face difficult days in America, 'a land which is choice above all other lands' (Ether 2:10).

"May God give us the faith and the courage exhibited by those patriots who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor." (Ezra Taft Benson, October 1987 General Conference)

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 "Never before has the land of Zion appeared so vulnerable to so powerful an enemy as the Americas do at present. And our vulnerability is directly attributable to our loss of active faith in the God of this land, who has decreed that we must worship Him or be swept off. Too many Americans have lost sight of the truth that God is our source of freedom - the Lawgiver - and that personal righteousness is the most important essential to preserving our freedom. So, I say with all the energy of my soul that unless we as citizens of this nation forsake our sins, political and otherwise, and return to the fundamental principles of Christianity and of constitutional government, we will lose our political liberties, our free institutions, and will stand in jeopardy before God.

"No nation which has kept the commandments of God has ever perished, but I say to you that once freedom is lost, only blood - human blood - will win it back.

"There are some things we can and must do at once if we are to stave off a holocaust of destruction.

"First: We must return to worship the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ. He has promised that the righteous will be preserved by His power (see I Ne. 22:17). But we must keep the commandments of God. We must pay our tithes and offerings, keep the Sabbath day a holy day, stay morally clean, be

honest in all our dealings, and have our family and personal prayers. We must live the gospel.

"Second: We must awaken to "a sense of [our] awful situation, because of this secret combination which [is] among [us]" (Ether 8:24). We must not tolerate accommodation with or appeasement toward the false system of Communism. We must demand of our elected officials that we not only resist Communism, but that we will take every measure to prevent its intrusion into this hemisphere. It is vital that we invoke the Monroe Doctrine.

"Then we must put our trust in Him who has promised us His protection - and pray that He will intervene to preserve our freedom just as He intervened in our obtaining it in the first place.

"Third: We must do as the Lord commanded us by revelation in 1833: "Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil" (D&C 98:10).

"Men who are wise, good, and honest, who will uphold the Constitution of the United States in the tradition of the Founding Fathers, must be sought for diligently. This is our hope to restore government to its rightful role.

"Last: We must study the inspired Constitution and become involved in the political process ourselves. I quote the First Presidency statement that was read in sacrament meetings on Sunday, 1 July 1979: "We encourage all members, as citizens of the nation, to be actively involved in the political process, and to support those measures which will strengthen the community, state, and nation - morally, economically, and culturally" (Letter from the First Presidency, 29 June 1979).

"I fully believe that we can turn things around in America if we have the determination, the morality, the patriotism, and the spirituality to do so.

"My single-minded concern is for the freedom and welfare of my countrymen and my posterity,

the freedom of all men.

“I testify to you that God's hand has been in our destiny. I testify that freedom as we know it today is being threatened as never before in our history. I further witness that this land - the Americas - must be protected, its Constitution upheld, for this is a land foreordained to be the

Zion of our God. He expects us as members of the Church and bearers of His priesthood to do all we can to preserve our liberty.

“May God bless us that, with His help, we will not fail to bring to pass His purposes on earth.”  
(Ezra Taft Benson, October 1979 General Conference)

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### Quotes from Other General Authorities of the Church:

“...let me admonish you, never to let the hand of tyranny or oppression rise in these mountains, but stand unflinchingly true by the constitution of the United States, which our fathers sealed with their blood; never suffer its provisions to be infringed upon; and if any man, or set of men form themselves into a mob in these mountains, to violate that sacred document, by taking away the civil or religious rights of any man, if he should be one of the most inferior beings that exist upon the face of the earth, be sure you crush it, or spend the last drop of blood in your veins with the words of - Truth and Liberty, Liberty and Truth, for ever!”  
George A. Smith, 1852, Journal of Discourses (JD)

vol 1

“...the principal evil is in the rulers, or those who profess to be rulers, and in the dispensers of the law, and not the Constitution, it is pure.”

Brigham Young, 1855, JD vol 2

"I say again that the constitution, and laws of the United States, and the laws of the different States, as a general thing, are just as good as we want, provided they were honored. But we find Judges who do not honor the laws, yes, officers of the law dishonor the law. Legislators and law makers are frequently the first violators of the laws they make. "When the wicked rule the people mourn," and when the corruption of a people bears down the scale in favor of wickedness, that people is nigh unto destruction."

Brigham Young, 1855, JD vol 2

"You will recollect that this is the first time that this Church can say, "We are free." Do we wish to be free from the United States Constitution? No. There is not a word in it but what we can subscribe to with all our hearts. Do we wish to be free from the laws of the United States. No. They are as good laws as we can ask for. Neither do we wish for any better laws than are the most of those enacted in Missouri and Illinois. What, then, was the difficulty with this people? Magistrates, sheriffs, constables, military officers, &c., walked those laws under their feet, and trampled upon them as a thing of naught, in order to get at this people and drive them from their hard-earned homes. I have said, and say it again, if those laws had been executed, they would have hung Governor Boggs and Governor Ford, with many others, between the heavens and the earth, or shot them as traitors to the Government. It is not the laws and the Constitution of our country that we wish to be free from, but it is from the power of those who profess to be law-makers and law-executors, but who trample every wholesome law under their feet."

Brigham Young, 1857, JD vol 5

"When will they hold the Constitution sacred and inviolable, and seek no longer to prostitute it for the destruction of the innocent? Until this is done they may expect to see sorrow and woe, which will

increase upon their heads until they shall repent....

"This is the freest people on the face of the earth. By a faithful observance of the laws and Constitution of our country, and by obedience to the principles of our holy religion, we can enjoy the greatest amount of freedom. "

George A Smith, 1865, JD vol 11

"...we regard the Constitution of our country as sacred, and the will of our Heavenly Father as supreme. That sacred instrument - the Constitution of this land..."

John Nicholson, 1881, JD vol 22

"We believe that the Constitution of the United States was given by inspiration of God. And why? Because it is one of those instruments which proclaims liberty throughout the land, and to all the inhabitants thereof. And it was because of those noble sentiments, and the promulgation of those principles which were given by God to man, we believe that it was given by the inspiration of the Almighty. We have always esteemed it in this light, and it was so declared by Joseph Smith."

John Taylor, 1882, JD vol 23

"...that great Palladium of human rights - the Constitution of the United States."

John Taylor, 1882, JD vol 23

"The Almighty, I believe, began this phase of His work when He sent Columbus across the sea to unveil this hidden hemisphere. He it was who nerved the arm and fired the soul of a Washington to fight and win freedom's battle on this chosen land, and who inspired the pen of a Jefferson to write in words of flame the declaration of American Independence. I revere the Constitution as an emanation of Divinity and, I believe, we will yet see the principles upon which this great government was founded, - principles of justice, freedom and equality, - prevail the wide world over.

"Is true freedom but to break  
Fetters for our own dear sake,  
And with leathers hearts forget  
That we owe mankind a debt?"

"No; true freedom is to share  
All the chains our brothers wear,  
And with heart and hand to be  
Earnest to make others free.

"God did not found this nation for a mere handful of his children. He founded it for all mankind. And when he bound together these United States, it was but a type, a symbol and a foreshadowing of a united world. All nations will yet join hands as these States have done, and this, in my opinion will only be the prelude to a work still greater, lifting from earth that curse which has so long rested upon it, and uniting it as a glorious link in the grand chain of redeemed worlds that circle about the throne of their Creator."

Orson F. Whitney, 1892, CD vol 3

"...the Constitution of the United States was a revelation from God, and opened the door of liberty in such form that His sons and daughters should be permitted to possess every right and every privilege that mortals should be permitted to enjoy in the flesh."

John Henry Smith, Conf Report, April 1898

"The more I study and understand the Constitution of the United States, the more I revere it. I am something like Bishop Edward Hunter, who said, "Too good, too good, for a bad people." It is a glorious document, and one that we are under obligation to sustain. Every American citizen promises to sustain the Constitution of the United States. Every officer in the country makes that oath and covenant. That is done for the protection of the weak and to prevent religious persecution. It was so in the beginning, and wo unto those who trample upon that Constitution."

George Teasdale, Conf Report, October 1899

"A patriot is a man who sustains the Constitution of the United States and believes in religious liberty. There are hypocrites among professed patriots, as well as other classes of people. I say God bless the patriots. God bless our government, and give them wisdom, strength of character and moral courage to stand by the principles of the Constitution, and not be cowards. I would plead for this with all my heart."

George Teasdale, Conf Report, April 1900

"We love the Constitution; we love this nation; we love its flag."

L. A. Kelch, Conf Report, October 1902

"Now, these are the commandments of God, the principles contained in these commandments of the great Eternal are the principles that underly the Constitution of our country and all just laws. Joseph Smith, the prophet, was inspired to affirm and ratify this truth, and he further predicted that the time would come, when the Constitution of our country would hang as it were by a thread, and that the Latter-day Saints above all other people in the world would come to the rescue of that great and glorious palladium of our liberty. We cannot brook the thought of it being torn into shreds, or destroyed, or trampled under foot and ignored by men. We cannot tolerate the sentiment, at one time expressed by a man, high in authority in the nation. He said: "The Constitution be damned; the popular sentiment of the people is the constitution!" That is the sentiment of anarchism that has spread to a certain extent, and is spreading over "the land of liberty and home of the brave." We do not tolerate it. Latter-day Saints cannot tolerate such a spirit as this. It is anarchy. It means destruction. It is the spirit of mobocracy, and the Lord knows we have suffered enough from mobocracy, and we do not want any more of it. Our people from Mexico are suffering from the effects of that same spirit. We do not want any more of it, and we cannot afford to

yield to that spirit or contribute to it in the least degree. We should stand with a front like flint against every spirit or species of contempt or disrespect for the Constitution of our country and the constitutional laws of our land."

Joseph F. Smith, Conf Report, October 1912

"I say that the one thing that will lift us up educationally and morally to higher standards in a general way throughout all this land, will be to teach our children the majesty, the greatness, the divinity, and the power of the Ten Commandments, and the beauty, the justice and the grandeur and the greatness of the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States, together with the belief in God, and Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world. These three things I think are needed in our American schools. They are needed by men, women and children. We have never yet learned to live up to the Ten Commandments, and politically the Constitution of the United States is so far ahead of us that it will take ages to see its greatness and its power prevail.

"... I hope the day may come when in every schoolroom throughout this land, at least whenever we come into that schoolroom, there shall be placed in gold letters first, "I believe in God the Eternal Father and in His Son Jesus Christ," on the right the Ten Commandments, the greatest moral law of the human race; and on the left the Preamble of the greatest document ever given to the world, for the government of nations, the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States. When we do this we will raise our standard of thought. our standard of living, and we will approach what the Prophet Joseph Smith once said we must do, the higher soul, the higher life that naturally lies within."

Levi Edgar Young, Conf Report, October 1912

"President Abraham Lincoln, in one of his important messages, gives to us this remarkable advice:

*"Let every American, every lover of*



*liberty, least particular, the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of '76 did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor. Let every man remember that to violate the laws is to trample on the blood of his fathers and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap. Let it be taught in schools, in seminaries and in colleges. Let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in the legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice -- in short, let it become the political religion of this nation."*

"That was the voice of him now stilled in death, who gave his life because of his desire for the perpetuation of the liberty that was guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. He was unafraid. When the duty was placed upon him to battle for the liberties of mankind, he dedicated his life to that purpose, and in due time, our Father in heaven accepted his offering, and his name is emblazoned upon the pages of history as a great and noble man who dared to do right, and his praises will be sung and his virtues extolled throughout all time."

George Albert Smith, Conf Report, October 1922

"Others may desert the constitution of this country, but the Latter-day Saints will do it never. This great government will endure indefinitely if we, its citizens, give a proper value to that liberty which in those early days was purchased with the splendid blood of our glorious fathers."

Richard R. Lyman, Conf Report, October 1922

"The faith of the Latter-day Saints and the teaching that I have had since I was a child at my mother's knee, as well as from this stand, is that the Constitution of our country was written by men inspired of the Lord God Almighty. Therefore we, as Latter-day Saints, more than any other people, ought to be supporters of the Constitution, and all constitutional law."

Heber J. Grant, Conf Report, April 1926

"We Latter-day Saints believe in the sacredness of the Mayflower compact, and we hold very reverently in our hearts the Constitution of the United States, This document is the greatest expression of government that has come forth in all history, and its principles, if lived up to, will change the political and civic life of the world. The beautiful thing about the American government is that it is an expression of the lives of the people, and if the people live magnanimous and Christian-like lives, so will our Government become greater and greater."

David O. McKay, Conf Report, April 1926

"The Constitution of this government was written by men who accepted Jesus Christ as the Savior of mankind. Let men and women in these United States then continue to keep their eyes centered upon Him who ever shines as a Light to all the world. Men and women who live in America, "the land of Zion," have a responsibility greater than that yet borne by any other people. Theirs the duty, the obligation to preserve not only the Constitution of the land but the Christian principles from which sprang that immortal document."

David O. McKay, Conf Report, October 1942

"This country was given to us of the Lord. The constitution and laws of the country were given to us of the Lord. Our liberty and our freedom came from the Lord, and, where it is necessary, we must fight to maintain that freedom, and liberty, and peace. It is only reasonable to believe that the Lord

intends that these things be preserved unto us, if only we will be worthy and keep His commandments."

George F. Richards, Conf Report, April 1943

"You remember that you are to be true to the Constitution of the United States. I appeal to you to accept as the word of God, the declaration that appears in the revelation in section one hundred one of the D&C, wherein the Lord says he did raise up men and inspired them to write the Constitution. I appeal to you, every one, to be true to the trust that God has placed in you, to preach the gospel throughout the world, as has been declared here today. But remember that you cannot preach that gospel without freedom of speech, and you cannot publish that gospel without freedom of the press, and you cannot gather together in congregations without freedom of assembly, and you cannot worship the Lord your God according to the dictates of your own conscience without freedom of religion. And remember that every time you give up any of your freedoms, whether it be to some economic or political group, or to any other group, you jeopardize these four freedoms of which I have spoken."

Mark E. Peterson, Conf Report, April 1946

"Several weeks ago there appeared in our local newspaper an account of an interview with an elderly statesman who seems to wield great influence today in American politics. This elderly statesman, in explaining the reason for his determination and zeal told of an interview or rather a statement his own father - now long since dead - had made to his four sons just before he died. This is what the father said:

"America, with its government and constitution, is the greatest institution invented by the mind of man. If you let them touch a stick or stone of it, I will come back and haunt you.' "

"I would that all American fathers and mothers would lay this charge on all their sons and

daughters."

Harold B. Lee, April 1948 General Conference

"Now, brethren, I again pray, as I have always, that we will be united. The Lord has laid down with sufficient clearness that none of us needs have any doubt about it as to what his will is. He set up this government under his divine guidance, and so far as I am concerned, as I have said before so I say now, this government of ours under the Constitution, being thus set up by the Lord, is a part of my religion, and we shall not succeed, and we shall not preserve our independence, our free institutions, our liberties, unless we safeguard our rights under the Constitution."

J. Rueben Clark, Conf Report, Oct 1950

"Our duty is to keep the commandments of the Lord, to walk uprightly, to defend every principle of truth, to sustain and uphold the Constitution of this great country, to remember the Declaration of Independence, for, as we heard this morning from our President, upon these principles our country was based. They stand at the foundation, the cornerstones of the liberty that our fathers fought for, and which brought to pass according to the word of the Lord, the redemption of this land by the shedding of blood."

Joseph Fielding Smith, Conf Report, April 1952

"Brethren and sisters, I love this great nation in which we live. To me it is not just another nation. It is my firm belief that the God of heaven raised up the founding fathers and inspired them to establish the Constitution of this land, and I believe that is Mormon doctrine. This is a part of my religious faith as it is of yours. This is a great and glorious nation, with a God-given, divine mission to perform for liberty-loving people everywhere. This mission cannot be performed unless America is kept strong and virile, unless this people adheres to those eternal principles embodied in the gospel and in the Constitution of our land."

Ezra Taft Benson, Conf Report, April 1953

"The Prophet Joseph Smith declared it will be the elders of Israel who will step forward to help save the Constitution, not the Church. And have we elders been warned? Yes, we have. And have we elders been given the guide lines? Yes indeed, we have. And besides, if the Church should ever inaugurate a program, who do you think would be in the forefront to get it moving? It would not be those who were sitting on the sidelines prior to that time or those who were appeasing the enemy. It would be those choice spirits who, not waiting to be "commanded in all things," used their own free will, the counsel of the prophets and the Spirit of the Lord as guidelines and who entered the battle "in a good cause" and brought to pass much righteousness in freedom's cause."

Ezra Taft Benson, Conf Report, April 1965

"But even a divine constitution requires something further; it demands a kind of people who will, by their very natures, receive and respect such a constitution and function well within the conditions it establishes. Where indeed shall we find such people today?"

'Oh Beautiful For Patriot Dream', Elder Paul H. Dunn (October 1975)

"We are the nation's watchmen - no other people

collectively love the Constitution and honor it and hold it as a divinely inspired document as do the Latter-day Saints. The duty of the watchman is to watch over and safe-guard his people. And remember the thought-provoking question by President Harold B. Lee, "But watchman, what of the night?" As a generation of those who love this glorious country, we must ask ourselves, "But watchman, what of the night?" Have our youth enough of the fires of freedom kindled in them to withstand the darkness? We must teach them in our homes, churches, and schools. The sound must go across this land from one end to the other."

'But Watchman, What Of The Night?' Bishop Vaughn J. Featherstone (October 1975)

"We run the risk of losing both our domestic freedom and eternal salvation if we circumvent by greed and avarice the ethical and moral strictures inherent in the Constitution of this land and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The continued survival of a free and open society is dependent upon a high degree of divinely inspired values and moral conduct, as stated by the Founding Fathers. People must have trust in their institutions and in their leaders. A great need today is for leadership that exemplifies truth, honesty, and decency in both public and private life."

'Ethics and Honesty', Elder David B. Haight (October 1987)

## President Wilford Woodruff's experience as President of the Saint George Temple

"...two weeks before I left St. George, the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, "You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God." These were the signers of the Declaration of

Independence, and they waited on me for two days and two nights. I thought it very singular, that notwithstanding so much work had been done, and yet nothing had been done for them. The thought never entered my heart, from the fact, I suppose, that heretofore our minds were reaching after our more immediate friends and relatives. I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon brother McCallister to baptize me for the signers of

the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others; I then baptized him for every President of the United States, except three; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them." (Wilford Woodruff, September 16, 1877; Journal of Discourses Vol 19, pg 229)

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"Brother [George Q.] Cannon has been laying before you something with regard to the nation in which we live, and what has been said concerning it. I am going to bear my testimony to this assembly, if I never do it again in my life, that the men who laid the foundation of this American government, and signed the Declaration of Independence, were the best spirits the God of Heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits, not wicked men. General Washington and all the men that labored for that purpose were inspired of the Lord. Another thing I

am going to say here, because I have a right to say it, every one of those men that signed the Declaration of Independence, with General Washington, called upon me, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the temple at St. George, two consecutive nights, and demanded at my hands that I should go forth and attend to the ordinances of the House of God for them. Men are here, I believe, that know of this, Brother J. D. T. McAllister, David H. Cannon and James S. Black. Brother McAllister baptized me for all those men, and then I told these brethren that it was their duty to go into the temple and labor until they had got endowments for all of them. They did it. Would those spirits have called upon me as an elder of Israel, to perform that work, if they had not been noble spirits before God? They would not. I bear this testimony because it is true. The Spirit of God bore record to myself and the brethren while we were laboring in that way." (Wilford Woodruff, General Conference, April 10, 1898)