

## Summary Handout

# Being Good Citizens

Lesson

44

Summary

### Scripture Summary:

*Doctrine and Covenants 58:21–22, 26–28; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, August 1, 1831. HC 1: 190—195. On the first Sabbath after the arrival of the Prophet and party in Jackson County, Missouri, a religious service was held and two members were received by baptism. During that week, members of the Colesville saints from the Thompson Branch and others arrived. Many were eager to learn the will of the Lord concerning them in the new place of gathering. 19—23, The saints are to obey the laws of the land; 24—29, Men should use their agency to do good.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 98:4–10; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, August 6, 1833. HC 1: 403—406. This revelation came in consequence of the persecution upon the saints in Missouri. It is natural that the saints in Missouri, having suffered physically and also having lost property, should feel an inclination toward retaliation and revenge. Therefore the Lord gave this revelation. Although some news of the problems in Missouri had no doubt reached the Prophet in Kirtland (nine hundred miles away), the seriousness of the situation could have been known to him at this date only by revelation. 4—8, The saints are to befriend the constitutional law of the land; 9—10, Honest, wise, and good men should be supported for secular offices.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 134; A declaration of belief regarding governments and laws in general, adopted by unanimous vote at a general assembly of the Church held at Kirtland, Ohio, August 17, 1835. HC 2: 247—249. The occasion was a meeting of Church leaders, brought together to consider the proposed contents of the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. At that time this declaration was given 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 at the close of this volume our opinion concerning the same." 1—4, Governments should preserve freedom of conscience and worship; 5—8, All men should uphold their governments, and owe respect and deference to the law; 9—10, Religious societies should not exercise civil powers; 11—12, Men are justified in defending themselves and their property.*

*Articles of Faith 1:12; We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.*

### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**Two Reasons for Involvement:** One of the traditional aspects of Judaism is to be involved in community and governmental affairs. This may have a two-fold purpose, one to serve the community and another to preserve its own rights and identity. "Va'ad Le'ummi ('National Committee'), (is) the National Council of Jews of Palestine, which functioned from October 10, 1920 until the establishment of the provisional government of the State of Israel in May 1948.

"The Va'ad Le'ummi represented the Jewish community in its relations with the Mandatory government and the Arab leaders, and dealt with internal affairs (such as the school system)." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Kibbutz:** As the State of Israel was being established, modern Jewish communities began to reflect some of the similar cooperative efforts as was done anciently. "Kibbutzim (plural) 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.*)

**Scriptural Community Bond:** As mentioned in Lesson 14, "The Law of Consecration," 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 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*)

**Ethics:** Whether establishing themselves within or part of a community, Jewish ethics and hospitality are an important life style. "Ethics are the principles by which man can live a good life in relation to his fellow man. The ethical life is basic to Jewish religious observance: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord' (Leviticus 19:18). Love of God is incomplete without love of man. This precept underlies the rules of conduct which the Torah prescribes . . ." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Hospitality:** “Hospitality is considered by Judaism to be one of the most important virtues that a person can develop. This has been true since the time of ancient Israel, when hospitality was not merely a question of good manners, but a moral institution which grew out of the harsh desert and nomadic existence of the people of Israel. The biblical customs of welcoming the weary traveler and receiving the stranger in one's midst developed into an important Jewish virtue. Isaiah states that one of the duties of the pious is to ‘deal thy bread to the hungry’ and to ‘bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.’ (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Combatting Evil:** “A.J. Heschel (1907-1972) based his views on a Midrash stating that holiness is the only way to combat evil . . . learning and obeying the precepts of Torah is the only way to gain holiness. The simplest advice in combating evil: ‘Turn from evil and do good’ is from the Book of Psalms (34:15).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Jews Opposed to Modern Israeli State:** Some self-proclaimed Jewish leaders contend that gathering to Israel or being “assimilated” in governmental communities was not part of Jewish life because the system was not established by the Messiah. Such a disputation came from the “Satmar Rabbi.” He argued that the Aliyah to the Land of Israel was an evil trick and thus against God’s will. He felt that the establishment of Israel as a modern nation was wrong. “Satmar (is the) name of a small, contemporary Hasidic sect, distinguished by its fanatical opposition to Zionism and the State of Israel. It takes its name from the hometown of its leader, Joel Teitelbaum of Satmar (1888–1979), and most of its adherents reside in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Hebrew Opposed:** “Teitelbaum was an exceedingly sharp polemicist who combined extreme fanaticism with a forceful personality . . . he regarded the Holocaust of European Jews as a direct punishment for secular Zionism . . . Teitelbaum opposed the use of Hebrew as a spoken language, since he believed that it secularized and profaned the holy tongue. He forbade the Hasidim living in his community to cooperate with State institutions and he ordered those living in Israel not to take the oath of loyalty to the State, not to take part in elections, and not to make use of its law courts or legal system.

**Kingships:** “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.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Anticipated Theocracy:** The efforts of the modern Jewish state to bring biblical theocracy together with democracy gives some noteworthy comparisons. Nowadays, the religious Jews, Bahais and Latter-day Saints anticipate an eventual theocracy. This is in stark contrast to the secularism and materialism so prevalent in modern society.

**Government Safeguards for All Religions:** “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.*)

**Israel Is the Only Mideast Democracy:** 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.

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