Teachings Concerning

The Law of the Gospel

What is the Law of the Gospel?

Ezra Taft Benson

We covenant to live the law of the gospel. The law of the gospel embraces all laws, principles, and ordinances necessary for our exaltation. We agree to exercise faith in Jesus Christ and sincere repentance borne out of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. As we comply with the ordinances of baptism and confirmation, and continue in faith and prayer, the power of the Savior’s atoning sacrifice covers our sins and we are cleansed from all unrighteousness.

Now, this is the commandment: “Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel.” (3 Nephi 27:20-21.)

The law of the gospel is more than understanding the plan of salvation. It consists of partaking of the ordinances and the sealing powers culminating in a man being sealed up unto eternal life. “Being born again,” said the Prophet Joseph Smith, “comes by the spirit of God through ordinances” (Teachings, p.162). [Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.337; emphasis added]

Must Be Complied With in This World of the Next

John Taylor

The Savior thus becomes master of the situation—the debt is paid, the redemption made, the covenant fulfilled, justice satisfied, the will of God done, and all power is now given into the hands of the Son of God—the power of the resurrection, the power of the redemption, the power of salvation, the power to enact laws for the carrying out and accomplishment of this design. Hence life and immortality are brought to light, the gospel is introduced, and he becomes the author of eternal life and exaltation. He is the Redeemer, the Resurrector, the Savior of man and the world; and he has appointed the law of the gospel as the medium which must be complied with in this world or the next, as he complied with his Father’s law; hence “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16.) [The Gospel Kingdom, p.114]

Plainly Written So That All Can Understand

Lorenzo Snow

The Latter-day Saints have received the law of the gospel through the revelations of God, and it is so plainly written that all can understand. And if we understood and comprehended the position we assumed in subscribing to it when we entered into its covenant through baptism for the remission of sins, we must still be conscious of the fact that that law requires us to seek first the kingdom of God, and that our time, talent and ability must be held subservient to its interest. If this were not so, how could we expect hereafter, when this earth shall have been made the dwelling place of God and His Son, to inherit eternal lives and to live and reign with Him? (Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, pp.169-170)

Marriage and the Law of the Gospel

John Taylor

The gospel, when introduced and preached to Adam after the fall, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, placed him in a position not only to have victory over death, but to have within his reach and to possess the perpetuity, not only of earthly, but of heavenly life; not only of earthly, but also of heavenly dominion; and through the law of that gospel enabled him (and not him alone, but all his posterity) to obtain, not only his first estate, but a higher exaltation on earth and in the heavens, than he could have enjoyed if he had not fallen; the powers and blessings associated with the atonement
being altogether in advance of and superior to any enjoyment or privileges that he could have had in his first estate. Hence, he and his partner became the father and mother of lives -- lives temporal, lives spiritual, and lives eternal, and were placed in the position to become Gods, yea, the sons and daughters of God, and to the increase and extent of their dominion there was to be no limit; worlds without end.

But it became necessary that Adam should obey, observe, and keep the law of the gospel, and it also became necessary that his posterity, who would possess the same exaltation and blessings, should also keep and observe the same law; and if they did not, they could not obtain the blessings of celestial lives and exaltations in the eternal worlds. But, while this was the law pertaining to celestial affairs, man was not deprived of the power, the right, and the privilege, the faculties and instincts of the association of the sexes, nor of the propagation of his own species; and hence, when man had transgressed the law of God and had corrupted himself to such a degree that it is said of him that his thoughts were only evil, and that continually; and when it had become an act of justice with the Almighty, in reference to the unborn spirits, in consequence of the extreme degradation of the human family, to introduce a better race man possessing the power, while living, to propagate his own species, he could only accomplish and bring about this design by destroying that corrupt race, and appointing a selected and chosen race for the above named purpose.

The law before referred to was the law of the gospel. When the gospel is lived up to and enjoyed, its powers and blessings are also enjoyed, pertaining both to time and eternity; but when the law of the gospel is not lived up to, yet the principle of procreation and the association of the sexes still continues as a principle separate and distinct from that of the gospel [law]; and the nearer we can approach pure and correct principles, whereby the chastity of the race may be preserved, in our marital relations, the more will our actions be acceptable to our Heavenly Father. Hence, it has always been considered, among all intelligent and right thinking people in the nations, both in a social and political capacity, that it is in the interests of humanity that the marital relations should be sustained, that virtue and chastity should be preserved, and that in proportion as these principles are disregarded has the elevation or degradation of the race been manifested. (The Gospel Kingdom, pp.278-279)

Exalts Man in the Celestial Kingdom

Wilford Woodruff

- Virtuous and godly principles the principles of the gospel will, in the end, come off triumphant; and they will sustain and preserve any people who practice them, whether they are popular or not in the estimation of the world. All who embrace the principles of the gospel of Christ will be saved by them. He that abides a law will be saved and receive exaltation and glory by it. (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, pp.21-22)

- “What shall we do to be saved” was the cry of the people who heard the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost, and the same may be said to be applicable to all men in every generation. The answer would be, obey the law of the gospel. This is the safe means given for the salvation of the human family. (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, p.22)

Joseph Fielding Smith

If a man will enter into life, then he must abide in the law of the gospel, keeping all of the commandments to the end of his mortal life. This is the doctrine of the Prophet Joseph Smith. “I . . . spoke to the people,” he says, “showing them that to get salvation we must not only do some things, but everything which God has commanded. Men may preach and practice everything except those things which God commands us to do, and will be damned at last. We may tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and still not obey the commandments of God.” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:34)
The Law of the Gospel is the Celestial Law

Joseph Fielding Smith

Moreover, the revelation is very clear in the statement that all who cannot abide the celestial law, or the law of the Gospel, must abide another kingdom. (Church History and Modern Revelation, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-1949], 2: 130 - 131.)

Bruce R. McConkie

- Telestial law is the law of evil, carnality, and corruption. Those who so live develop telestial bodies, which can stand telestial glory, which is found in a telestial kingdom. Terrestrial law is the law of decency and uprightness from a worldly standpoint. Those who conform to this higher order thereby create for themselves terrestrial bodies, which in turn can stand terrestrial glory and go to a terrestrial kingdom. Celestial law is the law of the gospel; it is the law of Christ. It calls upon men to forsake the world and rise above every carnal and evil thing. It calls upon men to repent and be baptized and receive the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit of God. It requires that they become new creatures of the Holy Ghost. Only those who so live acquire thereby celestial bodies; only such bodies can stand celestial glory, and this glory is found only in a celestial kingdom. Since the final destiny of this earth is to become a celestial globe, it thereby becomes the ultimate and highest heaven for all the faithful who have lived on its surface. (The Millennial Messiah, pp.697-698)

- That law by obedience to which men gain an inheritance in the kingdom of God in eternity is called celestial law. It is the law of the gospel, the law of Christ, and it qualifies men for admission to the celestial kingdom because in and through it men are “sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost,” thus becoming clean, pure, and spotless. (3 Ne. 27:19-21.) [Mormon Doctrine, p.117]

Commanded to Teach Our Children the Law of the Gospel

Joseph Fielding Smith

The second commandment of the decalogue of necessity is most emphatic. It is the duty of every man to worship the Living God. He has called upon all men everywhere to worship him. From the very beginning he has revealed his divine law to men through his servants the prophets. In the very beginning he commanded Adam to teach his children the law of the gospel. We read that Adam did so, but then came Satan and said to them: “Believe it not; and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God.” (Moses 5:13.) Then after the earth was cleansed by water, Noah received the same commandment, but Satan came again, and it was not many years after the flood when the great majority of mankind were following Satan again, and so it has been from the beginning. (Answers to Gospel Questions, 3: 120)