

Come Follow Me

Exodus 18-20



Preparations

Jethro "rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel" - Ex. 18.9

"I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods!" - Ex. 18.11

Jethro, Aaron, and "all the elders of Israel" ate bread before God – Ex. 18.12

This ceremonial meal may have possessed a judicial function. In the ancient Near East, treaties and pacts were often ratified by the involved parties participating in a solemn meal. This is also seen in the narrative of Abimelech and Isaac, as seen in Genesis 26.30, and between Jacob and Laban in Genesis 31.54. This may be connected to the meal in Exodus 24.5,11 as well as the [D&C 27](#) and [Revelation 19.6-9](#), where it discusses "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb."

Jethro, Aaron,
and "all the
elders of Israel"
ate bread
before God –
Ex. 18.12



Moses “sat to judge... from morning until evening”

Ex. 18.13



“Thou wilt surely wear away” – Ex. 18.18

“We generally see the need for Moses to apply the delegation dimension, and we note how both we and those we serve—including family—can “wear away.” Moses was hearing every case! Worse still, however, this pattern kept him from his real duties, which were to “teach them ordinances and laws, and ... shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do” (Ex. 18:20). The original Twelve were counseled that they were not to “serve tables” (see Acts 6:1–4). **Actually, serving tables is easy. It is visible, measurable, and do-able—compared to opening up the nations of the world to missionary work or to keeping wolves out of the flock.** But if the Twelve were drawn away from their scriptural and constitutional duties, the whole Church would suffer. **Being drawn away can happen to all of us, almost without our knowing it.** Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “Wisdom and Order,” *Ensign*, June 1994, 41–42.

God's *segulla* -
treasure

If you obey, you will
become: a peculiar treasure,
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a holy nation – Ex. 19.5-6.



God's *segulla* - treasure

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סְגֻלָּה - *s^gullâ*. This denotes a treasure, or valued property. This is a cognate of an [Akkadian word *sikiltum*](#), meaning “acquisition,” “valued property” or “beloved.” D&C 101.3 uses the phrase “my jewels.” With this in mind, we can connect these ideas to the jewels on the breastplate of the High Priest, who represents Christ. In this way, we can see Israel as God’s *segullah*, right next to his heart. **Christ literally bore all of Israel upon his heart** while on the cross at Calvary. See: Victor Hamilton, [Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary](#), p. 303.

God invites all Israel to
be "a kingdom of priests"
- Ex. 19.5-6

The connection between this idea and the LDS temple are bountiful. In the temple, the Lord invites all into his power, his priesthood. Indeed, the sacrament of marriage is called "the order of the priesthood," something all Latter-day Saints would be wise to ponder and consider.

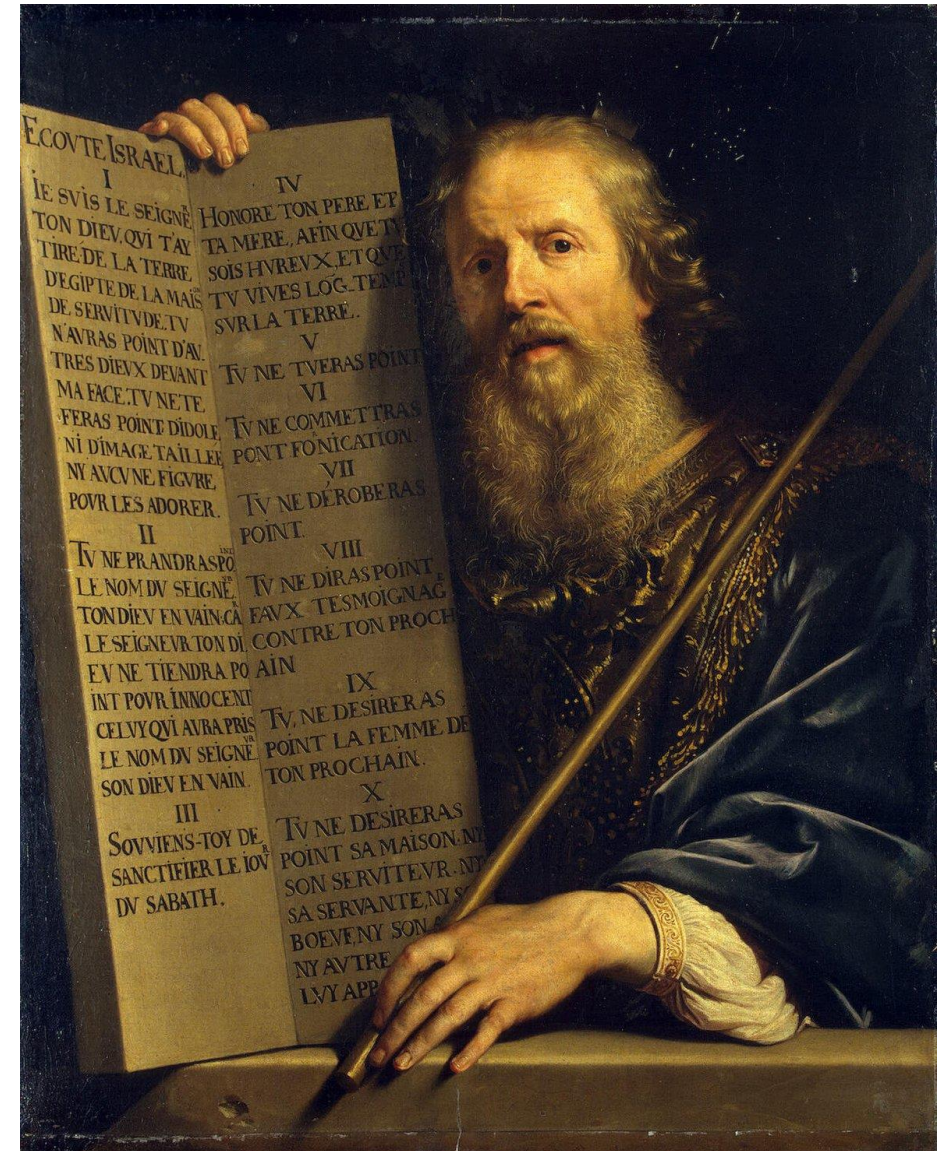


Table 1 Treaty/Covenant Pattern in the Old Testament and in Mosiah

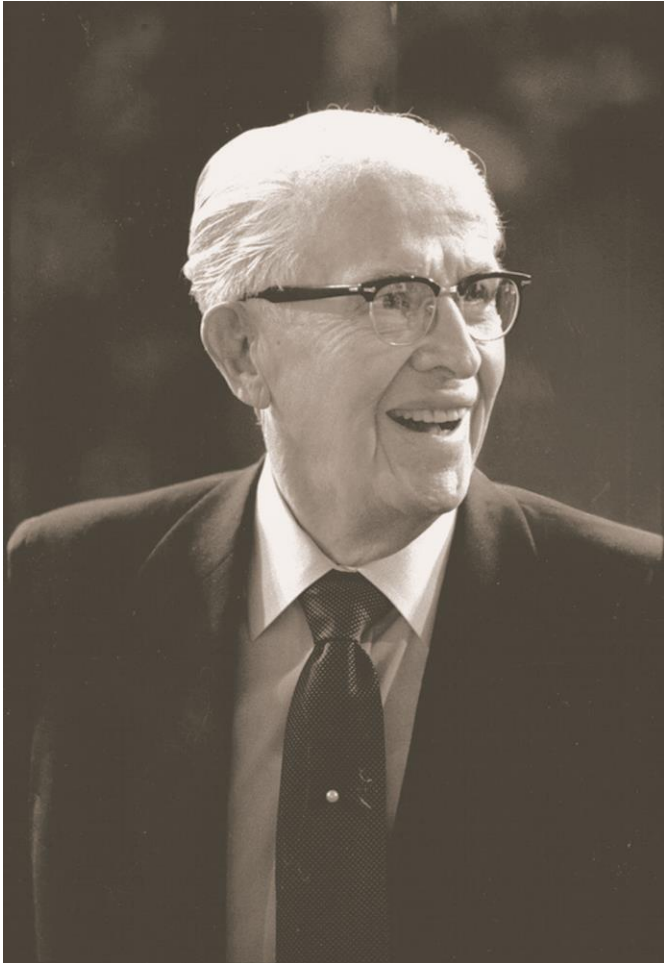
Elements	Exodus 19:3b-8	Exodus 20-24	Deuteronomy	Joshua 24	Mosiah 1-6
Preamble	19:3b	20:1	1:5 (1:1-5)	24:2a (24:1-2a)	2:9a (1:1-2:9a)
Antecedent History	19:4	20:2	1:6-3:29	24:2b-13, 16b-18a	2:9b-21, 23-24a, 25-30
Terms of the Covenant	19:5-6	20:3-23:19	chapters 4-26	24:14, 18b, 23	2:22, 24b, 31-41; 4:6-30
Formal Witness	19:8	24:3	31:19	24:16a, 19a, 21-23	5:2-8
Blessings and Curses	19:5	23:20-33	27:9-28:68	24:19b-20	5:9-15 (3:24-27)
Recital of the Covenant and Deposit of the Text	19:7	24:4-8	27:1-8; 31:9; 24-26	24:25-27	(2:8, 9a) 6:1-3, 6

Source: Stephen D. Ricks, Kingship, Coronation, and Covenant in Mosiah 1-6, *King Benjamin's Speech Made Simple*, 1999.

The Law is contained within a treaty-covenant pattern that has existed since ancient times

Treaty-Covenant Pattern in the Old Testament and Benjamin's Speech

Elements	Exodus 19:3b-8	Exodus 20-24	Deuteronomy	Joshua 24	Mosiah 1-6
Preamble	19:3b	20:1	1:1-5	24:1-2a	1:1-2:9a
Antecedent History	19:4	20:2	1:6-3:29	24:2b-13, 16b-18a	2:9b-21, 23-30
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President Benson's counsel

President Benson stated, “I would urge you to heed strictly the commandments of God, particularly the Ten Commandments. As long as we regard God as our Sovereign and uphold His laws, we shall be free from bondage and be protected from external danger. **God has not left us alone to flounder over right and wrong in the area of personal ethics and morality. His laws are circumscribed in the Decalogue—the Ten Commandments.** These laws embody our relationships with God, family, and fellowmen. Yes, the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are the foundation principles upon “which our personal happiness is predicated. To disregard them will lead to inevitable personal character loss and ruin.” *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 353.

No other gods "before me" - Ex. 20.3

The text literally reads as follows: לֹא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פְּנֵי My literal translation: "To you will be no elohim (gods/divine beings), no other above/to/upon my face." The preposition 'al has some flexibility here.

Other translations: "You shall have no other gods beside me" (Robert Alter & N. Sarna's translations). "You may worship no other god than me" (Living Bible). "You shall not have other gods instead of me" (New Catholic Bible).

This verses helps us understand how the ancients acknowledged other gods, but Israel was to put Jehovah first. Later interpreters would see the gods of other nations as powers of darkness. See: [Monolatry in the Old Testament](#).

“I am a jealous God!”

Ex. 20.5

Jealous: קַנָּן *qannā'*, “jealous,” this word is used only of God. See: *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Hendrickson, 2020, p. 888. N. Sarna relates, “The Hebrew stem *k-n'*, in its primitive meaning, seems to have denoted **“to become intensely red.”**”

Because extreme and intense emotions affect facial coloration, the term came, by extension, to express ardor, zeal, rage, and jealousy. It is used in a variety of contexts, even with God as the referent.” Sarna seems okay with using the idea “an impassioned God,” and relates this to the idea that through the **covenant Israel is in a “marriage bond”** state with God. Nahum Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*, p. 110.



Taking the Lord's name in vain – Ex. 20.7

“You shall not take the name of the Lord
in vain... Do not hasten to take a false
oath and let not an oath be habitual in
your mouth, for great is the punishment
thereof.” – Midrash of the Ten
Commandments



Taking the Lord's name in vain – Ex. 20.7

Martin Luther interpreted Ex. 20.7 in this way:

It is misusing God's name when we call upon the Lord God no matter in what way, for purposes of falsehood or wrong of any kind. Therefore this commandment enjoins this much, that God's name must not be appealed to falsely, or taken upon the lips while the heart knows well enough, or should know, differently; as among those who take oaths in court, where one side lies against the other. For God's name cannot be misused worse than for the support of falsehood and deceit.

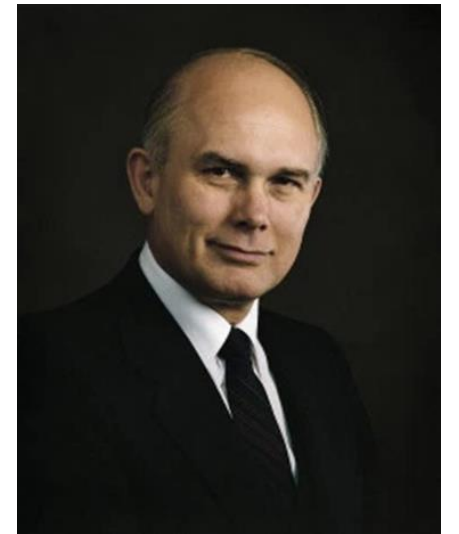
(The Large Catechism by Martin Luther, trans. By F. Bente, Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, Concordia Publishing, 1921, p. 565.)



Exodus 20:8-11 Sabbath Day

How do we apply this commandment?

Teachers who are commanded to teach “the principles of [the] gospel” and “the doctrine of the kingdom” (D&C 88:77) **should generally forgo teaching specific rules or applications.** For example, they would not teach any rules for determining what is a full tithing, and they would not provide a list of do’s and don’ts for keeping the Sabbath day holy.



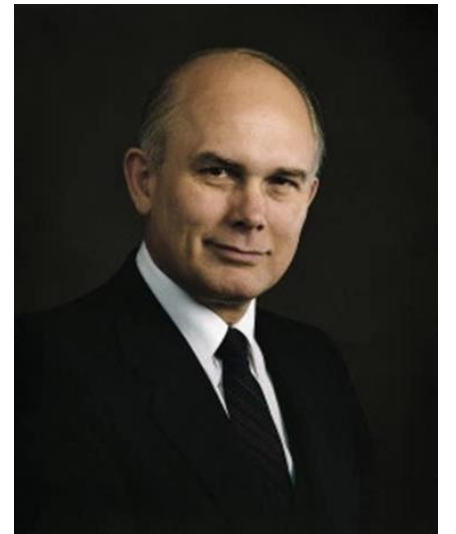
Exodus 20:8-11 Sabbath Day

How do we apply this commandment?

Once a teacher has taught the doctrine and the associated principles from the scriptures and the living prophets, such specific applications or rules are generally the responsibility of individuals and families.

Well-taught doctrines and principles have a more powerful influence on behavior than rules. When we teach gospel doctrine and principles, we can qualify for the witness and guidance of the Spirit to reinforce our teaching, and we enlist the faith of our students in seeking the guidance of that same Spirit in applying those teachings in their personal lives

(Dallin H. Oaks, "Gospel Teaching," Ensign, Nov. 1999, 78-80).



Modern Ten Commandments

Do not kill – D&C 42.18

Do not steal – D&C 42.20

Do not lie – D&C 42.21

Love your wife – D&C 42.22-26

Do not speak evil of your neighbor, nor do him harm – D&C 42.27

Remember the poor, and consecrate your property for their support – D&C 42.30

Do not be proud – D&C 42.40

Do not be idle – D&C 42.42

Live the truth in love – D&C 42.45

Thank the Lord in all things – D&C 59.5-6

Cleave unto your spouse

“When the Lord says all thy heart, it allows for no sharing nor dividing nor depriving. And, to the woman it is paraphrased: "Thou shalt love thy husband with all thy heart and shalt cleave unto him and none else." The words none else eliminate everyone and everything. The spouse then becomes preeminent in the life of the husband or wife, and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any other interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse. The Lord says: "Thou shalt cleave unto him and none else." Marriage presupposes total allegiance and total fidelity. Each spouse takes the partner with the understanding that he or she gives totally to the spouse all the heart, strength, loyalty, honor, and affection, with all dignity. Any divergence is sin; any sharing of the heart is transgression”

Spencer W. Kimball, Faith Precedes the Miracle, 142- 143

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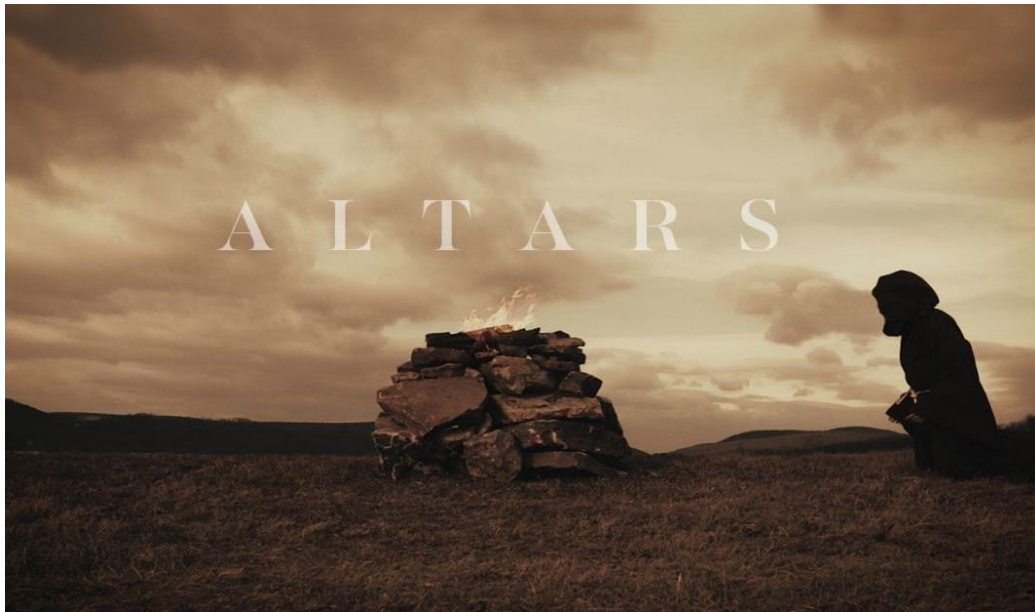
Do not be idle

“In our friendly neighbor city of St. Augustine great flocks of sea gulls are starving amid plenty. Fishing is still good, but the gulls don’t know how to fish. For generations they have depended on the shrimp fleet to toss them scraps from the nets. Now the fleet has moved. ...“The shrimpers had created a Welfare State for the ... sea gulls. **The big birds never bothered to learn how to fish for themselves and they never taught their children to fish.** Instead they led their little ones to the shrimp nets. “

Do not be idle

Now the sea gulls, the fine free birds that almost symbolize liberty itself, are starving to death because they gave in to the **'something for nothing' lure!** They sacrificed their independence for a handout. "A lot of people are like that, too. They see nothing wrong in picking delectable scraps from the tax nets of the U.S. Government's 'shrimp fleet.' But what will happen when the Government runs out of goods? What about our children of generations to come? **"Let's not be gullible gulls.** We ... must preserve our talents of self-sufficiency, our genius for creating things for ourselves, our sense of thrift and our true love of independence." ("Fable of the Gullible Gull," Reader's Digest, Oct. 1950, p. 32. See: Marion G. Romney, The Celestial Nature of SelfReliance, October 1982 Conference)

Make altars, but not with tools! - Ex. 20.24-25



Rashi (1040-1105 CE), seeing that **הָרָבֶּה** *hereb* “tool” can be also read as “sword,” and since a sword shortens life, and these altars are all about extending life, thus increasing atonement, therefore the sword, or tool, should not be used. See Rashi’s commentary on this verse [here](#).