

Preserving Our Divine Constitution

a prophetic excerpt from “Our Divine Constitution”
as spoken by President Ezra Taft Benson on 1987 Oct 03
to a General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
(published in *The Ensign* in 1987 Nov)

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Unfortunately, we as a nation have apostatized in various degrees from different Constitutional principles as proclaimed by the inspired founders. We are fast approaching that moment prophesied by Joseph Smith when he said: “Even this nation will be on the very verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground, and when the Constitution is upon the brink of ruin, this people will be the staff upon which the nation shall lean, and they shall bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction” (1840 Jul 19, as recorded by Martha Jane Knowlton Coray; manuscript in Church Historian’s Office, Salt Lake City).

For centuries our forefathers suffered and sacrificed that we might be the recipients of the blessings of freedom. If they were willing to sacrifice so much to establish us as a free people, should we not be willing to do the same to maintain that freedom for ourselves and for future generations?

Only in this foreordained land, under its God-inspired Constitution and the resulting environment of freedom, was it possible to have established the restored church. It is our responsibility to see that this freedom is perpetuated so that the Church may more easily flourish in the future.

The Lord said, “Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land” (D&C 98:6).

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, 1816 Jan 06).

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.

May we be equally as valiant and as free, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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Will you accept this prophetic challenge
to understand and save our divine Constitution?

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