

THE BOOK OF NELSON

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THE BOOK OF NELSON

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THE FIRST BOOK OF RUSSELL M NELSON

A collection of conference talks, magazine articles and church school devotionals from 1974 thru 1989. Russell was ordained to the apostleship April 12, 1984. President Nelson has held numerous positions of responsibility in the Church. He served as stake president of the Bonneville Stake from 1964 to June, 1971, when he was called as general president of the Sunday School. Prior to his call to the Quorum of the Twelve, he was serving as a Regional Representative assigned to the Kearns Utah Region. He had previously served as Regional Representative for Brigham Young University.

CHAPTER 1

Placing Our Homes In Order - Delivered October 1968 in the Priesthood Session of General Conference. He was serving as President of the Bonneville Stake at the time.

DEAR brethren, prayerfully and humbly I respond to this request to speak about the home and the family, for I am constantly aware of the challenging responsibility in my own home to "place it in order." Those who know me best may surely say, "Physician, heal thyself," as I would treat this subject.

Importance of the Home

2 The importance of the home has been stressed continually by the Lord. Even the early Church leaders were reproved, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants: "And now a commandment I give unto you-...you shall set in order your own house, for there are many things that are not right in your house." In this day, the Prophet of God on earth, President David O. McKay, has proclaimed that "no other success can compensate for failure in the home." Brethren, as bearers of the priesthood, we know

we should, and we want to become good fathers and leaders in our homes.

3 The home itself symbolizes the temporal challenges that face us as fathers. We go into debt to acquire one. Financial prudence demands that we budget our expenditures, and our Christian concern for others dictates that we live within our means and pay our bills promptly. Yet, as we build our homes, we must remember that the home exists only to serve our family; the family does not exist to serve the home. We provide a home where our children may play and welcome their friends as we welcome ours.

4 I used to worry about the fingerprints and other marks on the furniture until one day when I visited the home of the late Elder and Sister Adam S. Bennion. I remember well how Sister Bennion said, in a reflective mood, how each dent in the woodwork brought back memories of their happy children riding their tricycles through the house. She regarded these identifying marks among the most precious items

in the home, and went on to suggest that she now wished she da shellacked the little fingerprints on eh mirror, rather than wiping them off.

Laboratory of Learning

5 The home we provide is the most important laboratory of learning, where children msut learn to share and to work. Sometimes my efforts haven't been too successful. One Saturday afternoon, a few years ago, I was working in the yard when I heard the bells of the ice cream wagon coming closer. My little black-haired daughter with dark brown eyes came running to her daddys and, in her charming way, asked for a dime.

6 Sensing this as a golden opportunity to teach her a lesson, I said, "All right, sweetheart, but why don't' you work for your money, the same as everyone else does?"

7 The tears erupted as she cried, "But Daddy - I don't like to work!"

8 Our home is a home of order when our children have learned to work, and when our storage program is adequate to tide us through the vicissitudes of life against which our prophets have warned us. Our home is in order when we are always ready for a visit from the Lord, our bishop, or our home teacher, and when there is never a word of disloyalty expressed about our Church leaders.

The Queen of Our Home

9 Brethren, our home can never be any better than our selection and care of the one to be the queen in our castle. This sweet and hopefully eternal companion needs particular attention, for she is so tender and so special. "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else."^a

10 If you really love her, you are more concerned for her welfare than for that of yourself. Do you see that she has opportunity for her self-improvement? She has the same God-given desire for perfection as you do. A regular day of diversion whereby she may pursue this goal is so vital. But do you know what she wants most from you? Your companionship, your courtesies, and your communication. At least? Your selfishness and silence. Each couple must constantly cultivate the art of communication.

11 In our own busy lives, Sister Nelson and I have found a lot of merit in the regular stroll together, which is good exercise for our bodies as well as for our souls. Exercise has become popular now. It is not uncommon to see a man jogging alone around the neighborhood, as competent medical authorities have suggest that you should "run for your life." How much better it would be for two hearts and their love affair if we could alter the slogan "Run for your life" to "Walk with your wife."

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a D&C 42:22

The Blessing of the Priesthood

12 As we honor the queen of our home, we must never underestimate the power, blessing, and authority of the priesthood that we bring to the home. President McKay said, "No man who holds that priesthood should fail to ask the blessing on his food, or to kneel with his wife and children and ask for God's guidance. A home is transformed because a man holds and honors the priesthood."^b

13 As a man magnifies his calling in the Church, his wife and children receive special blessings, for the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, as those powers are used in gentleness, love, and righteousness. ^c Family prayer under the direction of the priesthood has been a powerful influence in our home!

Training Our Children

14 Now let us consider the ultimate reason for our marriage and for our home, namely, our children. I'm so grateful that we have been blessed with the nine we have, for I am convinced, as I'm sure you are, that the youth of this generation are the choicest souls, reserved for these latter days. Brethren, we have fathered their bodies, and now we must father their faith. The training of your youth is a divine commandment. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not

depart from it."^d We have such a short time for this training, for most of their attitudes and habits are formed by the time they reach 14 years of age. Let's consider four ways in which we may father their faith:

Fathering Faith in Themselves

15 First, we should father faith in themselves and in their family. Parents need to encourage their children and build their confidence, provide them with opportunities to develop, and give them security and love. I speak with real feeling on this because I have that kind of mother and dad. Dad is here tonight, and I want all to know how grateful I am for him, and for Mother. Every son needs a dad he can be proud of and a mother selflessly giving her life to her husband and children.

16 Family love is nurtured in home evenings and vacations together. The time and money required are well spent, for love and loyalty cannot be commanded – they have to be earned! Will Rogers once said, "You can't force love on anyone, because then it isn't love anymore."

17 Educational opportunities become a prime responsibility for us as fathers. We want our youth to get all the education they can get. Yet we need to stress the balance between temporal and spiritual education, for the Lord has warned us of the foolishness

b The Instructor, October 1968, p. 378

c D&C 121:36,42

d Prov 22:6

of some men:

18 "When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

19 But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God."^e

20 With this education and faith in themselves and their family, they will know the joy of attainment as individuals in a competitive and free enterprise system.

Faith in Country

21 Second, we should father faith in the country which has given them their opportunity. We need to show them our patriotism, and then they will be patriots, too. As they practice the principles of righteousness, they will grow to leaven the governments of the world with their leadership.

Faith in God

22 Third, we should father faith in God, their Creator. Opportunities constantly await our utilization. For example, if our youth manifest an interest in a fine camera, the study of the automatic light meter mechanism may provide basis for a discussion about the human eye, with its automatic mechanism regulating how much light may

pass through the lens to reach the retina. Perhaps the gift of a watch may open the discussion to the timing mechanism that God has put in your heart, regulating faithfully its 100,000 beats each day. Or, if you have a 15-watt light globe around, let your children know that with the power output of only one-tenth of that globe, or 1.5 watts, God has enabled your heart to perform work equivalent to lift a 150-pound man to the top of the Empire State Building, or to pump enough fluid to fill a 4,000-gallon-tank car each day!

Faith in the Gospel

23 Fourth, we should father their faith in the gospel and in the future. We live in a changing world full of chaos, upheaval, and unrest. As our youth have been taught light and truth in the eternal verities that never change, they will have an anchor to steady them and a standard to reference against which all new hypotheses may be evaluated. For then each will know that if he will "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, all things shall be added" unto him.^f Then will our homes be in order! One day Christ will come again, the millennium will be ushered in, and our youth will know the destiny for which we and they have prepared.

24 Humbly I pray that we will place and keep our homes in order, to make them a little bit of heaven on earth that God's

e 2 Ne 9:28-29
f Matt 6:33

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Prophet has proclaimed they might be. I testify to the living fatherhood of God, the divine mission of his Son, and the truthfulness of his Church, his gospel, and his prophets. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Five A's of Stewardship - From a talk given at the area conference at Manchester, England, August 27, 1971.

SOME time ago, as I was officiating in the nightly ritual of getting our little children to bed, I may have seemed a bit dictatorial with the directions to "pick up your clothes, put away your toys, brush your teeth," and other such utterances. Then our five-year-old wistfully looked up and said, "Daddy, do you own me?" While she has doubtless long since forgotten her question, I have remembered it as a challenge to distinguish carefully between ownership and stewardship.

2 Often we as parents and leaders may be tempted to direct as owners rather than as stewards. In the last analysis, we own very little, but are stewards over much. This principle of stewardship is so important to workers in the Sunday School, or in any other Church organization, and especially to parents, that attention to it merits our consideration. If this message deserves

a title, it might be labeled "The Five A's of Stewardship."

One

3 The first principle of stewardship is for us to *acknowledge* that God lives, that he is our creator and provider of all that sustains life. We must understand as did Alma that "whatsoever is good cometh from God."^a

Two

4 The second "A" of stewardship comes from our recognition of the Lord as *author* of this principle. He dignified the steward in his role of service as he declared: "... he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."^b To those led by a proper steward, dignity is accorded. This is clearly illustrated by the statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who declared, "I teach the people correct principles and they govern themselves."

Three

5 Third, *accomplishment* of effective stewardship may be done in the Lord's own way through our study of the scriptures. He has stressed preparation before embarkation: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"^c

6 Then, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, we may accomplish through "persuasion,

a Alma 5:40

b Matt. 23:11

c Luke 14:28

by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By kindness, and pure knowledge. ..."^a

7 How this scripture came to life last evening as the living prophet showed how an effective steward leads! As he assembled the brethren about him, he said many things, but first and foremost was his expression of love for them and then of his desire and availability to help them in any way. As he did this, I thought how great it would be if every Sunday School superintendent with his faculty, every bishop and branch president with his Saints, every parent with his children, could say as did he: "I want you to know that I love you and want to help you in any way that I can."

Four

8 The fourth aspect of stewardship is that of *accountability*. We read: "... for it is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity."^b To assist in this preparation, auxiliary teachers report to their executives, home teachers report to priesthood leaders, and apostles report to the First Presidency.

Five

9 The fifth "A" is for *approbation* or reward for faithful stewardship. The Lord taught this as the parable of the ten talents, as

recorded in Luke 19:12–27, in which the effective steward received a greater reward and the ineffective steward was asked to yield his stewardship.

10 In this dispensation it has been declared: "And whoso is found a faithful, a just, and a wise steward shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life."^c

11 As we *acknowledge* the Lord as our creator, as the *author* of the gospel plan, then we know we may *accomplish* successful stewardships in life. We will be *accountable* in time and in eternity, but we will receive the *approbation* of the Lord for our efforts that have been lovingly and willingly performed.

12 In our families, our church, and our work, privileges for stewardship come and go. But we will always find that the greatest reward for doing is the opportunity for doing more.

CHAPTER 3

How Should We Respond? Q&A with the General Sunday School President published in the September 1973 Ensign Magazine

Question

OCCASIONALLY during Sunday School or priesthood classes I hear things preached about the gospel that I'm not certain are Church doctrine. How should

a D&C 121:41–42
b D&C 72:3
c D&C 51:19

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we respond in such situations, especially when one does not wish to challenge the respect for and testimony of the teacher?

Answer

2 The need for teaching sound doctrine is and always has been basic in the Church. The word of the Lord as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 88, verse 77, states, "And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom."^a And further^b, "Teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom."^c Meanwhile, we remember that love of our neighbor is always to be maintained.

3 It is the teacher's responsibility to build faith and conduct his class in the spirit of these scriptures, thereby avoiding speculations and personal opinions. Should this not occur, the class members should be obliged to have matters in question clarified. The manner of doing this is an area of sensitive concern, however, and should be given careful and prayerful consideration.

4 Preferably, the concerned person should evaluate the questioned doctrine by appropriate study of it as contained in the standard works. He should be able to support his differences of opinion by chapter and verse

documentation. With this evidence he should seek private audience with the involved teacher and, as the Lord has directed, "reason together."^d

5 It would be appropriate to request an opportunity to review the matter perhaps at the next class session. Should the teacher not agree to this and persist in expounding unsound doctrine, the problem should then be reported to the Sunday School presidency of the ward or the branch.

6 Sunday School teachers who have completed the teacher development program basic course and who participate in the inservice lessons will know how to avoid these problems. An open confrontation, particularly one pursued in sharp criticism or emotionalism, should be avoided at all cost. Love for God and our fellowmen should characterize all of our thoughts and actions.

CHAPTER 4

Four Lessons from One Life - Delivered May 14, 1974 as a devotional at BYU Provo.

PRESIDENT Oaks, brothers and sisters, fellow students, it is an honor to return again to the campus of Brigham Young University. I am grateful for each opportunity I have to be among you.

a D&C 88:77
b D&C 88:118
c D&C 88:118
d D&C 50:10

utes. Since these instruments have been available, doctors have been able to regulate machines to assist respiration much more accurately than was ever possible before. In each of our bodies there are two such instruments, tiny clusters of cells about the size of a sesame seed that are located in each side of the neck. These tiny organs continuously monitor the same information with respect to oxygen and carbon dioxide, make the analysis, and then send the information up a tiny nerve from these sensing devices in the neck to the brain. The brain, in turn, handles this information and sends stimuli back to the muscles of respiration to regulate when a person inhales and exhales. This is the reason one can't stay under water very long, for when he does, the information that carbon dioxide is building up is perceived by these receptors and sent to the brain, which then drives the body to breathe and thereby eliminate the excess carbon dioxide.

7 There are many other remarkable protective mechanisms in the body. Have you ever stopped to think about the protective mechanism of the blood that circulates within you? Blood flows through the arteries, veins, and capillaries at a very brisk pace. It is always there in a fluid state; yet in the event there should be some injury, such as a cut or a laceration, the liquid blood provides a sealing compound to stop the leak. Not only that, but this seal then initiates the very process of healing that wound. I

have seen a major artery snipped in two as a result of an accidental injury, with both of the previously bleeding ends sealed shut by virtue of this marvelous protective mechanism which uses the very same elements within the blood that were present in its fluid state.

8 There are so many examples of the inspiring and incredible qualities of the body to defend itself, to heal itself, that this continues to be an increasingly engrossing and fascinating study. It seems as though there is never an end to the unfolding of miraculous factors which are present in that great gift from our Heavenly Father—that mortal tabernacle that we call the human body. In the largest sense, the ultimate responsibility of the physician is to study and know those God-given defense mechanisms, those self-healing processes that are within us, and then carefully distinguish between those conditions in the body that will heal themselves from those afflictions that will not heal themselves with the passage of time. The latter are the conditions that require active intervention from medical science, while the former generally require support only.

9 To me, the essence of the study of medical sciences and the lesson I have learned, to which I testify, is that the human body is divinely created!

Reality of the Spirit

10 The second lesson is that of the reality of the spirit as a sep-

arate entity from the body. Perhaps the most obvious evidence of the distinction of the body from the spirit is that which we observe at the time of death, when the body minus the spirit seems so entirely different from the person we knew when the two were together. To me, the more difficult challenge for us as students is to sense with equal validity the distinction between the body and the spirit as they are both united in the living human soul.

11 I remember one mother who knew the distinction, however, for she was the mother of a special child. This youngster was a mentally retarded individual, a mongoloid child. She said, "You know, I have a number of children. They are all very dear to me. I love them deeply. But there's something different about the spirit in this child with physical handicaps that is even more special than the spirit in any of my other children." This mother had learned to recognize clearly the sweet and special spirit in that problem-plagued body.

12 I remember another mother. Some years ago I was called to the home of a woman who was in an iron lung. She needed medical attention, and there was no way she could come to the doctor's office or to the hospital. She had spent every waking moment in this respirator for many years. She was dependent upon this iron lung for the breath of life that she could stay out of it for only a minute or so with-

out assistance. During my visit in this home, I observed three children of this mother who conversed with her while she was in the iron lung. One came and said, "Mommy, may I have permission to go over to Mary's house and play for an hour?" The second child came over and said, "Mommy, will you help me with my arithmetic?" The third child was too small to look directly at her mother's face as it was exposed from this large tank. She caught her mother's eye only through a mirror overhead and said, "Mommy, may I have a cookie?" Tears came to my eyes because I realized that here was a body that was just as handicapped as a body can be, and yet the reality of the spirit of this mother in directing the lives and the spirits of her children was one of the most impressive things I have ever seen.

13 How helpful it would be if we would learn to distinguish clearly between the physical and spiritual components of the human soul. I've heard discouraged women say to their husbands, "How can you love me? There are many more beautiful women than I." Those women need to know that the love their husbands have for them is not corporeal love. It is a spiritual love. While it is true that the physical expression of that love is a beautiful and expressive part of that love, it is only incidental. The real love is the love of one spirit for another. I've seen this reaffirmed when I have taken a balding and rather pudgy, middle-aged man to the operating

room away from a weeping, wonderful woman by his side who says to me, "Take good care of him—I love him."

14 The reality of the spirit as an eternal entity was taught forcefully to me as I read the journal of my grandfather A.C. Nelson, whom I did not meet in this life. He died when my father was in high school. But from my reading and from discussions with my dear father and mother, who are here with us today, I have learned to love and respect Grandfather. He served as superintendent of public instruction in this state and was a close friend and protégé of Karl G. Maeser. On April 6, 1891, about three months after the death of his father, he had what he recorded as a "strange dream or vision." His deceased father appeared to him. Grandfather asked his father what he was doing. His father smiled and said, "My son, I have been traveling together with Apostle Erastus Snow ever since I died—that is, since three days after I died, when I received the commission to preach the gospel. You cannot imagine, my son how many spirits there are in the spirit world that have not yet received the gospel, but many are receiving it, and a great work is being accomplished." Much more was said as recorded in Grandfather's journal. Then he concluded by saying, "Never do anything that will displease God. Oh, what a blessing is the gospel! My son, be a good boy . . . Goodbye."

15 Only when one really senses the reality of the spirit can one realize the need for development of the spirit; it becomes as important as physical development. The gifts of the spirit—knowledge, wisdom, discernment, the gift of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, the gift of prophecy and faith—these great gifts of the spirit have nothing to do with the body, except that parts of the body may be used to acquire them. Now I know why one of the teachings of the Church is that whenever one receives a call through duly constituted priesthood authority one should accept that call, for this is a way that one may exercise the spirit and let it grow. Perfect the language of the spirit, which is prayer, and provide food for the spirit, such as music, the arts, knowledge, selfless service, and love. Those spiritual gifts which we attain will be with us, not only in this life, but in all eternity as well. I testify to the reality of the eternal spirit which resides in each of us!

The Power of Love

16 The third lesson is the power of love. There are many sources of power in the world. Recently we have been concerned with the shortages of some of those sources. But to me the greatest power of all is the power of love. I refer to love as proclaimed by the Savior in Matthew: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"^e and

e Matthew 22:37

namic, all-encompassing power!

*The Dependability and
Incontrovertibility of Divine Law*

23 The fourth lesson I would like to share with you today is that of the dependability, yes, even the incontrovertibility, of divine law. You have read and no doubt quoted that statement in the 130th section of the Doctrine and Covenants which says, "When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated".^h This is a very simple statement, as profound as it is true.

24 When I started medical school, we were taught that one must not touch the heart, for if one did, it would stop beating. Yet the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants tells us that "all kingdoms have a law given".ⁱ Therefore I knew that even the blessing of the heartbeat was predicated upon law and reasoned that, if those laws could be understood and controlled, then perhaps they could be utilized for the blessing of the sick. To me this meant that, if we would work, study, and ask the proper questions in our scientific experiments, we could learn the laws which govern the blessing of the heartbeat. Now, some thirty years later, having learned some of those laws, we know that we can turn the heartbeat on and off at will to perform delicate repairs on damaged valves

or vessels and then let the heart beat again—provided we obey the laws upon which that blessing has been predicated.

25 Divine law is incontrovertible! I see people who wish, who hope, who pray for health. But as a surgeon I can tell you that all of the wishes, the hopes, and the prayers of people can be overridden by lack of compliance to law. If a law cannot be obeyed, those blessings cannot come. Sometimes I am concerned as I hear people in the Church pray for "favours and blessings." Blessings cannot come by chance. If we pray for unearned favours, we will not get the blessings, nor will we deserve them. Please don't construe my remarks as an indication that wishes, prayers, and faith are not important. They too are part of the process of law, for they help healing also. All I am saying is that if one breaks the law one has to reap the consequences. This does not mean that repentance is not available if a law has been broken. Repentance is part of divine law also. But obedience to law gives freedom, mastery, and dependability.

26 The Lord said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect".^j It is only as we strive for and achieve perfection that we can master the law and control the consequences. Knowing and living the truth bring us freedom

h D&C 130:21

i D&C 88:36

j Matthew 5:48

from the bondage that disobedience to law brings. So, to each of you in whatever field or “kingdom” you may choose, learn the law. Once you know the law, apply it and then be consistent. Don’t be inconsistent. There are those who pray for safety during the day and then drive recklessly and lawlessly. There are those who pray for health and then disregard the laws governing good health. There are those who profess reverence for life and at the same time argue for abortion or euthanasia. Consistency comes from self-discipline in recognizing and revering divine law.

27 Divine law tells us to prepare for that which is yet to come. Today the world is ripening in iniquity, which will destroy civilization as we now know it. The scriptures attest that “the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth. . . . and the day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, . . . of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people”.^a “The devil shall have power over his own dominion. And also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst”.^b

28 Our duty is to raise up a generation of men and women worthy to receive the coming of the Lord. For he will come—to Jackson County, Missouri, to be sustained as King of Kings—and

he will come also to Israel to be hailed as Lord of Lords. Then his millennial reign will be ushered in.

29 You young, strong, and faithful men and women will bear the burden of the kingdom of God upon the earth as these days of destiny come. May God bless you as you prepare for them that you may know the divine creation of the human body you possess, the reality of the spirit, the power of love, and the dependability and incontrovertibility of divine law.

30 I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that this is his Church, directed by him through a living prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, whom I sustain with all of my heart. This I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Is It Acceptable? - Q&A with the General Sunday School President published in the April 1976 Ensign Magazine

Question

SOME of my friends think it is acceptable to drink water while fasting. Is this so?

Answer

2 Fasting is a very personal matter, usually done with a specific concern in mind. Therefore, the purpose of the fast and the special considerations of the in-

a D&C 1:13–14

b D&C 1:35–36

dividual involved govern the motivation and the nature of the fast.

3 Most of us fast in conjunction with our membership in the Church and its law of the fast. Generally speaking, there are three purposes for such a fast. First is to increase humility and spirituality of the individual fasting. Second is to provide assistance to the needy by contributing fast offerings equivalent to the value of the food which has not been consumed. Third, physical benefits may be derived personally.

4 In the General Handbook of Instructions^c, we read, "A proper fast day observance consists of abstaining from food and drink for two consecutive meals, attending the fast and testimony meeting, and making a generous offering to the bishop for the care of those in need." Thus, the use of water is excluded in this kind of a fast.

5 Now, a word of caution—some fallaciously reason that if a little of anything is good, a lot is better. The inadvisability of excessive fasting was explained in some detail in the June 1972 Priesthood Bulletin, "We are informed that some ... engage in rather lengthy fasting. It is not advisable that they do this. If there is a special matter for which they should fast, if they

would fast one day and then go to the Lord humbly and ask for his blessings, that should suffice." Moreover, Joseph F. Smith wisely counseled, "Many are subject to weakness, others are delicate in health, and others have nursing babies; of such it should not be required to fast. Neither should parents compel their little children to fast."^d

6 The generous offering to the bishop is understood to represent the financial equivalent of at least two meals. A liberal donation so reserved and dedicated to the poor is ennobling to the soul and helps one develop charity, one of the greatest attributes of a noble human character.^e

7 The personal benefits derived from fasting are substantial. The scriptures tell us that a certain kind of devil goes not out except by fasting and prayer.^f The supremacy of the spirit over the appetites of the body is affirmed by the mental discipline of fasting. This strength fortifies us in our combat with other temptations prompted by physical appetites that, if uncontrolled, would be destructive to our welfare. While some have physical conditions that preclude fasting, most people are not excluded on this basis. To me, a successfully completed period of fasting from food and drink on fast day brings a degree of self-confidence. Fasting is real evidence

c 1968, p. 40

d Gospel Doctrine, p. 244.

e 1 Cor. 13

f Matt. 17:21

some thoughts with you about my profession of medicine and my religion, which we share in common, I think largely. And I'm happy to do this for I don't regard the two as separate and distinct entities. But I try to meld the two, as your mind focuses two separate images transmitted by a left eye and a right eye. Those two images being fused to give you a picture that has stereoscopic depth and meaning.

7 The Prophet Nephi cautioned us and counselled us to do this in 1 Nephi 19:34 I think. He said, "Likened the scriptures unto yourselves, that it may be for your profit and learning." So in a way, I'm going to try to meld these two of my three great interests, the third one being represented here by our four year old son; the family. And give you a glimpse into some of the things that I think about from day to day.

8 I'm sure you share with those of medical background your gratitude for eyes that see and ears that hear and hands that hold the wondrous things about you. But perhaps less evident to you are some of the more important things hidden from your view that are so precious and necessary for the sustaining of life?

9 I think, first of all of your heart. This tremendous organ which pumps enough fluid every day to fill the equivalent of a 4000 gallon tank car. It has four sets of valves inside that open and close 100,000 times a day, over 36 million times a year, without any

effort or even awareness on your part in many instances. We're interested in our scientific endeavors as a medical community and the development of an artificial heart. One of the big problems is that we have not been able to develop as yet any material that can be folded and unfolded that many times a day without ultimate fatigue and fracture.

10 And my feeling of gratitude extends to my Creator for just four little valves that maintain my health and my strength. And I share my gratitude for your health and strength as well. It's a marvelous pump. It does enough mechanical work, for those of you who are inclined to think in terms of physics, to lift one-hundred-and-fifty-pound man from the street up to the top of the Empire State Building each day. And in so doing, it consumes energy equivalent to about four watts; less than the dimmest light bulb that burns in your home.

11 This is the kind of power that our creator has given to us. This great endowment helps me to understand a little bit in greater depth what is meant in that 58th section of the Doctrine and Covenants where it simply says, "the power is in them." Now, I have a greater appreciation for the kind of power that God has given to us.

12 Now the body has many other kinds of power. It has the power to reproduce, the power to auto-regulate and almost an infinite number of variables.

Your temperature is always regulated at the proper level. There is only a certain fluctuation that can occur in your blood glucose level. The white count is always held between certain sacred figures and the red count. And so many other things that are too numerous to mention and we don't even know all of them yet.

13 It has the power to adapt to different climates and to different nutrients, and it has the power to heal. I'm going to share one secret with you. I'm going to share with you what my analysis is of the ultimate responsibility of a physician.

14 For as he studies his patient, the ultimate responsibility he has, or she, is to determine whether the process going on in the patient at hand is one that is self-healing or will get better with the passage of time, or whether it is not self-healing and will indeed get worse with the passage of time. An example of the former one that gets better with the passage of time is a broken rib. There's almost no way you can keep that from healing. An example of the latter is a tumor of the rib, which will get worse with the passage of time.

15 With the former, the physician's job is only to support and to give assistance while the natural process ensues. With the latter, our responsibility becomes that of trying to convert that process, which will get worse with the passage of time into a process that will then get better with the passage of time due

to the God given powers of the body to heal.

16 Now, it's a very important thing for physicians and non-physicians alike to recognize the divine creation of the human body. Not only because it gives you the proper awareness from whence you came and from whence and to whom you will return. But if you can accept that concept, then you're more likely to accept the concept of divine direction for the care of your divine creation.

17 Two days ago, Sunday, was February the 27th. 144 years ago on February the 27th, The Lord gave by revelation to the prophet Joseph Smith, that revelation, which we all know is the word of wisdom. 89th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. In it, as you know, it states, among other things, that alcohol, tobacco and hot drinks are not good for a man.

18 Such a simple statement. Well, those who have accepted that, in faith, as divine direction for a divine creation or parenthetically, I might say, set of instructions from the manufacturer.

19 They've been blessed for their faith and for their obedience. For now, the medical data are pouring in to say the same thing. With respect to tobacco, we now know that the final link in the chain of evidence linking tobacco to the causation of heart disease has been forged. Only in the last little while has data become available, which irons this bit of

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logic down completely.

20 The final link that was forged was the finding that people who have smoked for a long period of time and then quit have a lower incidence of heart disease than those who have smoked for a long period of time and continue. Now, medical science attests to this statement that the smoking of tobacco is the single most preventable cause of coronary heart disease, of artery disease, of lung disease and of cancer. Medical science can attest to the fact that the smoking of tobacco is the single most preventable cause of coronary heart disease, of artery disease, of lung disease and of cancer.

21 I won't say anything today about the harmful effects of alcohol or the statistics pertaining thereto. I'm sure you are as aware of those effects as am I. But it may be of interest to you to know some of the recent data with respect to the drinking of coffee. We know that those people who drink from two to five cups per day have a 60 percent greater incidence of heart attack than do those who do not use coffee. Those who drink over six cups of coffee a day have an incidence of heart attack 120 percent greater than those who do not drink coffee.

22 Perhaps you'd be interested in some rather recently developed information with respect to the contraceptive pill? Well, you may say this isn't really related to the word of wisdom. Neither is my talk. So I'm just going to,

just expose your thoughts to some of my thoughts.

23 This modality was introduced a number of years ago by people and those involved chose to interfere with divinely designed and delicately balanced mechanisms in the body that were not fully appreciated and are still not fully appreciated. But now, a decade later, there are some very interesting statistics accumulating.

24 By way of background, I might say that we have no you have all known for a number of years that women have enjoyed a particular immunity, compared with men, with respect to the incidence of heart disease. The data actually are that women have enjoyed a 10 year advantage over men in the incidence of heart attack and a 20 year advantage over men with respect to sudden death from coronary heart disease or heart attack. Well, now we know, that within this last decade, that immunity has been erased. For women taking this oral contraceptive agent, now are known to have a significantly higher incidence of premature heart attack, a four times greater incidence of stroke and a five times greater incidence of thrombophlebitis and pulmonary embolism, with a projection that there that there will be continuing escalation of both morbidity and mortality among women taking the contraceptive pill.

25 I don't say this to alarm or frighten anyone. All I am saying

32 I've organized my analysis into about three different categories. And I'd like to share those with you today because I think it's important, not that these are unique to him. They are not. They're available to anyone. But I think we can learn from this great man and from other great men who have developed spiritual supremacy over their bodies.

33 The first item is that of studying the scriptures. President Kimball knows the scriptures very well. He's continuing to study them. In Doctrine and Covenants 11:21 it says, "Seek not to declare my word, but seek first to obtain my word and then show your tongue be loosed. Then if you desire, you shall have my spirit and my word, ye even the power of God to the convincing of men." So the spirit of God and the power of God are promised to you as you obtain the word of God.

34 So as Latter-day Saints, we will be the most literate people on the face of the Earth when it comes to the Word of God. That's why we study the Scriptures in Sunday school, in sacrament meeting and in our homes, especially in our own personal private study period.

35 I have to tell you a little story about my son, Russell over there, has kindly shed his coat now and getting warmer and warmer by the minute. We have a very special hour in our home at the close of the day. Regardless of when I come home, and

sometimes it's kind of late, he'll be waiting up for me. He'll have his pajamas on, and then I'll get my pajamas and we crawl into bed and read together. We read from the child's version of the Book of Mormon. Last night, we read about Samuel Lamanite. And it's amazing what a little four-year-old boy can learn.

36 We had the occasion of a visit from one of our relatives a couple of days ago. And we saw the big, as we were showing him around our house, we saw the big Book of Mormon chronology chart in our library. And I happened to spot on there the names of Teancum and Amalekiah, about whom Russell and I had read the night before. I said, Russy, do you remember about Teancum and Amelekiah? If so, what do you remember? He said, Yes, I remember. Teancum threw a javelin in Amelekiah's heart.

37 So that kind of staggered both me and my relatives. I guess parts of the Book of Mormon are challenging reading for the youngsters as well, but they do remember. To study the scriptures is a very important part of each day.

38 Well, the second point that I have observed in developing spiritual supremacy over the body is this one: to receive and respond to revelation. President Kimball learned to respond to revelation long before he became the prophet or an apostle or stake president or a clerk or even husband and father. He's

learned to receive and respond to revelation continuously. And this is a talent just as Sister Johnson's and Sister Barrus' talent that you've seen here today. The talent to know when God speaks and to speak to Him as if it were a dialogue and not a monologue.

39 In your own thoughts, think for a moment on how you pray. Is it a one way conversation or is it a two way conversation? Do you allow time for the Lord to work on your mind while you pray?

40 Revelation comes when diety deigns and not when you want it to. It may come when you want it to, but it may come at an odd hour.

41 I remember well, one year ago, when Sister Nelson and I had the great privilege of being in New Zealand with President and Sister Kimball and the others who were in attendance at the area conferences there. President and Sister Kimball had taken their turn in developing the flu that was rampant in the South Pacific at that time.

42 And this day they were very, very ill running high fevers and confined to bed. That Saturday, on which this day was, that evening, the youth of New Zealand were to put on their cultural festival for the visiting general authorities.

43 But President Kimball said to President Tanner, "Sister Kimball and I will not go. We are ill. Will you go represent us, excuse

us and see that everything goes as scheduled?" So, Sister Nelson went with President and Sister Tanner and the others over to the cultural events while I tarried with President Sister Kimball in the remote possibility that I might be of any assistance should I be needed.

44 President and Sister Kimball were in bed and have been in bed for a number of hours when President Kimball awakened and he said, "Brother Nelson, what time was that event scheduled for tonight?" I said, "seven o'clock." He said, "What time is it now?" I said, "it's about seven o'clock." He looked down at his clothing, which was drenched with perspiration, marking the breaking of his fever. He said, "I'm going to have to hurry and shower and get dressed. Tell Sister Kimball we're going."

45 Sister Kimball was in the same situation about that time, but they hurried, got dressed, and we all got in the car and went the short distance from the temple president's home over to the Church College of New Zealand, where this congregation was assembled.

46 And as we motored on the track onto that field, I heard the loudest shout I've ever heard in my life as those New Zealand saints greeted the prophet with unrestrained emotion.

47 Later on, joining my wife, I learned the rest of the story. President Tanner had dutifully excused President Kimball be-

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cause of illness and had ordered that the program go ahead as scheduled. The young New Zealander who was called upon to give the invocation, gave what she thought was a bit of a lengthy prayer.

48 But in that prayer, he supplicated the Lord in words, something like this: "3000 of US New Zealand youth have prepared for six months to put on our program for the prophet. He is ill. Heal him, deliver him here." And as his 'Amen' terminated that prayer, the prophet came in. And that was when the shout occurred. Even those in the party couldn't believe what they had seen. But I saw revelation received and responded to by a prophet.

49 Now, in the 47th section of the Doctrine and Covenants there are gifts of the spirit mentioned there and elsewhere in the scriptures. A number of gifts of the spirit: love, knowledge, healing, the gift of prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues. These gifts of the spirit come and are predicated upon prayer and fasting and exercise of spiritual opportunity.

50 This is why we don't turn down opportunities that come to serve in the church. Every opportunity comes to develop a different facet of our spirit that we may develop spiritual supremacy. You can say in a way that we are educating our conscience. President David O McKay said that the Holy Ghost works through your conscience.

So an important part of this process of receiving revelation, is to educate and then to obey one's conscience.

51 Well the third item that bears on this subject is that of applying these principles into life's actions. Now, we all have a lot of time management problems and priorities. As I think of priorities, I think of that story attributed to Sir Winston Churchill. It may be apocryphal, I don't know.

52 At any rate, he was alleged to be on a liner going from the Americas over to England and it was an Italian liner. He was being interviewed by a British journalist who said "Sir Winston how is it that you as the British Prime Minister, are on an Italian liner heading for Britain when you really ought to be on a British ship?" He said, "Well son, I'll tell you, in the first place the food is excellent. The service is impeccable. And there's none of this nonsense about women and children first." So each one needs to develop his priorities.

53 I would like to suggest this very simple idea as you frame your own priority. And that is, its not what comes first, but who comes first. Its not what comes first, but who comes first. Try this idea. Try putting Christ at the center of your life. And let everyone else come second and on down.

54 Now you may say critically and wisely, to one who loves his wife as do I, "Do you there-by subrogate or surrogate your

that makes him great.

59 And so, if you will study the scriptures, if you will learn to receive and respond to revelation, and you will put Christ at the center of your life as so beautifully summed up in this simple sentence in 6th Matthew 33rd verse, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all else will be added unto you." Then I promise you, that the appetites and the urges of the body will be subservient to the strength and supremacy of your spirit; that you will find great peace and joy.

60 The greatest miracle is not in the healing of the body; fantastic and unbelievable as those miracles are. But the greatest miracle will occur in your own soul as you feel your spirit becoming strong, as you develop that spiritual power and prepare to receive the calls that may come to you from the Lord.

61 Now you will need this strength, because the days ahead are going to be difficult for you. Reread, in your quiet time, that first section of the Doctrine and Covenants where the Lord declared that he was angered and his sword is bathed in heaven in order that the commandments of Him may be know upon earth and faith may be increased.

62 For I know that you and I among those who may be privileged to be those people about whom he spoke about in that 35th section of the Doctrine and Covenants 13th verse where he

said, "I shall call upon the weak things of the earth, those who are unlearned and despised to shake the nations by the power of my spirit."

63 For we are they, whom the Lord depends on to prepare for his second comings. For Christ will come again to Jackson County, Missouri and there he will reign as King of Kings. And he will come again to Jerusalem. He will put his foot on the Mt of Olives which shall be cleft in twain and there he will reign as Lord or Lords.

64 I testify to the truthfulness of the teachings that I have given you. And to the truthfulness of the gospel. I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Spencer W Kimball is his prophet. I know it in a very sacred and a very special way. And I pray for you that your bodies may be prepared and preserved. That your spirits may become strong. That you may be servants worthy of the very choice and sacred responsibility you have as a choice generation, a royal priesthood and an holy nation. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

CHAPTER 7

What's In A Name? - Delivered June 24, 1980 as a devotional at BYU Provo. (Transcription may contain errors.)

BROTHERS and sisters, I know you feel, as I, that you've been well repaid for your having been here already today. Hearing that lovely prayer by Broth-

er Doll and that heart rendering sermon and music rendered by Sister Downs and her daughter, who is just wonderful. I'm glad to have President Cameron acknowledge the presence of my beloved wife and family members that are here. Some are here and present, in present form, and some are here in spirit.

2 Some people accuse me of boosting the Sunday school statistics by fathering a large family, and it helped. I'm glad also to see one of my former counselors here, President Joe J. Christiansen, who now presides at the missionary training center. Between the presidency of the Sunday school through the years where we fathered a number of children and could have had our own branch almost at any time.

3 I'm truly grateful for the privilege of being with you today, as I am for each opportunity to join with staff and students of the Brigham Young University. You are our choice representatives of a chosen generation. Earnestly, I pray for the spirit of the Lord to be with us in these moments that we share in devotion to deity.

4 Sister Nelson and I enjoyed Father's Day recently. We visited with my dear mother and father and with each of our ten children, the husbands of our married daughters and our dozen grandchildren. One of the highlights of the day was to see three of those grandchildren, Tic, Tac and Toe lined up in a row. These nicknames were affectionately designated by one of our daugh-

ters several months ago for these three yet unborn cousins, all expected about the same time. These three babies, all less than two months of age, were the center of attraction, although they have not all officially been given their names and blessings as yet, one of them who is here today. She may participate in the program before the time's up.

5 One of the important accomplishments of that day, a family gathering, was to enter their names and birthdates into our family book of records. While doing so, I sense the great care and concern that had been used by their parents in the selection of the names for these babies. For the giving of a good name is of signal importance. The responsibility for naming children well reminded me of one of the traditions of ancient Israel.

6 The Hebrews attached great importance to the meanings of their names. In many instances, a Hebrew personal name was composed of one of the names or titles of God. Two terms or roots were used chiefly in this way. The first e-l, "El" at the beginning or the end of a name and the second "Ya," j-a-h. Or sometimes that was used as "Jo" j-o or "Jeho" j-e-h-o at the beginning of the name, or the "ya" terminology used at the end of the name, took the spelling of i-a-h or j-a-h or i-a, but it was always pronounced "ya."

7 The first term E-L we see in many names such as that of the first Archangel, Michael, mean-

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ing “one who is like God” and that of the second Angel, Gabriel, meaning “Man of God” and Nathaniel, meaning “gift of God.” The names of Daniel, Ezekiel, Elizabeth and so many others bear that E-L root.

8 The other term is found in such names as Jonathan again, meaning “Gift of God.” The sacred and Holy Name of Jehovah itself bears that “jeho” prefix. These two terms you may easily remember, as you recall, our worship for Elohim, our Heavenly Father and his son Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the most important of all scriptural heroes, bears the name comprised of these two name-roots joined together. That name, Elijah, which literally means “My God, is Jehovah.” Elias means the same, for it is the Greek form of the word, of the Hebrew word, Elijah. Isn’t it fitting that one with such a noble name was the one who held the sealing power of the Melchizedek priesthood and was the last prophet to do so before Jesus Christ? He, Elijah, appeared on the Mount in company with Moses, both as translated beings and conferred the keys of the priesthood on Peter, James and John. Now, isn’t it inspiringly consistent that Elijah appeared again in company with Moses and others on April 3rd, 1836 in the Kirtland Temple to confer the same keys upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery?

9 All of this was an essential part of Elijah’s eternal mission to turn the heart of the fathers to

the children and the heart of the children to their fathers before the second coming of the Lord. Our family book of records to which I made earlier reference, and yours as well, are vital to our eternal welfare.

10 We’ve been motivated to prepare these books through the motivational efforts of Elijah, whose name bears the double significance of portions of the name Elohim and Jehovah. With these two terms or routes in mind, it’s most interesting to observe as one reads the Scriptures, how many names, both male and female, carry these important signs of devotion and dedication to deity. As one notes these names, one can begin to sense the feelings of great potential and self-perception that must have been felt by those who were so named. Even other words, common to our experience, take on new depths of meaning as we understand their derivation.

11 Consider the word hallelujah, for example. The “jah” at the end of the word pertains to the Lord Jehovah. Halael means “praise to” and is the term specifically given to a group of Psalms from 113 to 118 inclusive. The Halal has been recited by Jews at their great feast for centuries. Hall-el-oo-jah means “praise to the Lord Jehovah.” And so now when you sing in your songs Hallelujah, perhaps you can have a little greater feeling for what you’re really saying. You are singing Praise to the Lord Jehovah. Sister Downs, the best way I know

to preach a sermon is the way you did. And when we get the opportunity to sing, we should do so with the same fervor that Sister Downs did in her lovely song.

12 Now, in the English language, we encounter the plural form in such names as Williams, Richards and in the great name of our distinguished president of Brigham Young University, President Dallin H. Oaks. He could be an "oak", but he's an Oaks. As many English nouns are made plural by adding "s" at the end, so many Hebrew nouns are pluralized by adding the suffix i-m, pronounced eem. You already know some of them. Cherub becomes "cherubim." Seraph becomes "seraphim." Ur meaning "light," becomes urim. Thum, meaning "perfection" becomes thumim. Perhaps these latter two words are more familiar to you as they're pronounced in our usual way, urim and thumim, meaning "lights and perfections."

13 Special meaning was given to some Hebrew names by the use of the plural form, the Hebrew name for our Heavenly Father, Elohim is a plural form. The singular being Eloah. Note the e-l prefix and the i-m suffix in the name Elohim.

14 Now, can you think of a godly name in which the prefix and suffix in Elohim are transposed? Think of the name that Isaiah prophesied when he proclaimed, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his

name shall be called Immanuel. Immanuel literally means God (el) is with us (im).

15 Well, now, on this Father's Day recently passed, my own parents, in their typically generous way, brought some beautiful fresh fruit to be distributed to children and grandchildren. But more importantly, through the years, they have brought much more than this to the family. They have brought and they have given a good name. How proud I am to be known as the son of Edna and Marion C. Nelson. How grateful I am for their continuing good influence on my beloved Danzel and me and on our children. I'm grateful to have my sweetheart Danzel beside me. Although she is not, according to our present society, the one to transmit her name to our children, she has transmitted life and love and faith to our children.

16 My gratitude for our parents prompts my recollection of another father, the biblical Joseph. He knew that his father, Israel, was aging and ill. Joseph desired that his beloved sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, be given a blessing by their grandfather. If you would like to read that blessing with me, turn to Genesis 48th chapter and the 16th verse. While you find that passage, consider the blessing you would like to receive if you were going to get a blessing from your grandfather. Or consider the blessing you might give if you were going to bless your grandsons at the close of your life. Well, now these are

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the words that Israel spoke as he laid his hands upon their heads:

17 "Bless the lads and let my name be named upon them and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac. And let them grow into a multitude." Of all the blessings he could have given, he chose to give them his name.

18 Now turn back to Genesis, the thirty fifth chapter in the tenth verse and see how grandfather Israel received his name. You all know the story. Let's read it together. Genesis 35 and 10. "God said unto him thy name is Jacob. Thy name shall not be called anymore, Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name, and he called his name Israel."

19 By changing his name, God changed the self-perception for Jacob as well. For Jacob knew that the literal meaning of Israel was to "prevail with" or "be a soldier of God." Israel was now God's entitled representative.

20 For another divinely commissioned change of names, turn back to Genesis, the 17th chapter in the fifth verse and study with me the name of Israel's grandfather who lived with the name Abram for 99 years. A-b or Abe means "father." Abram means "exalted father." Already a name of unusual distinction in my judgment, yet God changed it.

21 From Genesis 17:5, we read: "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham for a

father of many nations have I made thee."

22 Well, what was the significance of this change to that elderly man? God had changed the name from the singular form Abram, which means "exalted father" to the plural form Abraham or Abraham, as we say it in English, meaning "father of a multitude;" the plural designation. What a powerful reminder to Abraham to signify the new destiny, divinely deigned for him.

23 At a later occasion, you may wish to read all of Genesis 17 and review the great covenants made by the Lord to Abraham and to his seed forever, for they are of supernal significance. We of the church today are also children of Abraham. We are his seed. We are natural inheritors by blood lineage, or by adoption, of all the blessings that God gave Abraham. The blessings of glory and immortality and eternal life. These blessings indeed may be yours.

24 Today, even in modern Israel, a name change may be required if an important dignitary is to represent the nation of Israel, among other nations of the world, he must bear a Hebrew name. If he didn't have one to begin with, he may adopt one. This could surely lead to some confusion in doing genealogical work. One of my Hebrew scholar friends jokingly referred to such name-switching with the remark, "in America for important people, you have a who-is-

who. In Israel we should have a who-was-who."

25 It is evident that Hebrew parents and God himself bequested names of might and significance to cause young and old alike to live up to their potential. Their great names helped to make the individuals great. Conversely, failed potential and dishonorable deeds by a single soul have brought disrepute to an otherwise perfectly good name.

26 Consider the name Absalom, for example. Ab, a-b means "father" and Shalom means "peace." Absalom, Father of peace, a perfectly good name, until it was stigmatized by this particular son of David who killed his brother and conspired against his own father. Now, many centuries later, even the area adjacent to the self-built tomb of Absalom, is shunned as undesirable by the Israelis.

27 The once proud name of Lucifer, meaning "bearer of light," was blackened by unrighteous ambition. Judas Iscariot sold his good name for 30 pieces of silver.

28 The Norwegian trader, Vidkun Quisling, became despised throughout the world because of his willingness to serve the German conquerors of his country during World War Two. The word quisling came to stand for traitor in many languages, and that word doesn't even have a capital Q.

29 Following the Civil War, a certain financial institution in-

vited General Robert E. Lee to be its president at a handsome salary. General Lee doubted that his service would merit such a salary. They explained they didn't care about his service. All they wanted was the use of his name. And the great general then replied, "Gentlemen, my name is not for sale."

30 Now for you, my beloved brothers and sisters, the past is but prologue. History and records of old are for your profit and learning. From the great and in great names of the past, we can find focus for the future. As you do that, I would like to suggest five challenges to you that your lives might be edified.

31 The first challenge: make a name for yourself. Your name can be a sterling for you as President Spencer W. Kimball's name is for him. Remember the passage from Proverbs 22:1, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Keep your name untarnished.

32 To assist you in that regard, know that you have a parade of predecessors and name sharers, both living and dead, that are praying and pulling for you. Learn to know them. Know something about the lives of those names listed on your four generation sheets. Remember who you are. Keep your and their name free from blemish. You may enjoy this quotation from Shakespeare, as I do. He said, "He who steals my purse steals trash, but he who filches from me my good name, robs

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me of that which does not enrich himself, but makes me poor indeed.”

33 Remember that the scriptures tell us that serious misdeeds could cause your names to be blotted out of the records of the church or even from the names of your fathers.

34 Second challenge: take upon yourself the name of the Lord. In so doing, you harness yourself to power beyond your comprehension. Would you turn with me to Luke 10:17,20? I’d like to review with you a conversation between the savior and his faithful.

35 “The 70 returned again with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the devil was her subject unto us through thy name.’ And he the Lord said under them, ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you.’”

36 Now, after that enormous promise, listen to this capstone, to this promise he had given, “Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

37 As you take the name of the Lord upon you, you are known of him and your name is written in heaven. You can enter your name upon the same list with the prophet.

38 The prophet of God does not need to speak a dozen languages. He does not need to be an athlete or a golden-toned orator or even to be known by popularity pollsters. He must only be known of the Lord, and respond to the promptings and revelation given by Him. That preparation, that discipline, came only to President Kimball by his first taking upon him the name of the Lord.

39 This you may also be privileged to do each Sabbath day. It is our sacred opportunity to covenant that we will be willing to take upon us the name of God’s son and always remember him and keep his commandments, which he has given, that we may always have His spirit to be with us.

40 Now, the third challenge. Honor the names of your fellow man. Whatever your conversations include, reference to names of others, let your comments bring credit to those to whom you refer. To me, it is pathetic to hear human beings using their godly gift of speech, indulge in the rough brutalities of name calling. Beware of nicknames that are uncomplimentary and offensive. Even though seemingly in jest, participants in that risky practice may originate or perpetuate ignominious names without realizing the hurt, the feelings of inferiority, and non-identity that such careless expressions can engender. Everyone appreciates the sound of his own name, correctly pronounced and honorably men-

tioned. If you wish your name to be treated fairly and remembered accurately, give that same courteous consideration to the names of others.

41 Now, the fourth challenge. Honor the names of deity. One of the many notable characteristics of students, faculty and supporters of Brigham Young University is their obedience to that first great commandment to love God. This, of course, includes obedience to the commandment given 34 centuries ago, when God thundered these words to mankind through Moses on Sinai. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God in vain. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain."

42 Profanity is not just untidy language. Profanity plummets to low and vulgar depths, the most sacred of all names. With that dissent goes to spiritual authority, power and potential for that individual. Profanity and swearing are signs of a soiled mind and a limited vocabulary. According to holy writ, those who in ancient Israel blaspheme the name of the Lord were punished by death. That is not for us. We are to rise in righteousness on his name.

43 In the church that bears the name of Jesus Christ, all things are done in his name. Prayers are offered, children blessed, testimonies borne, sermons preached, ordinances performed, sacraments administered, the infirm are anointed

and graves are dedicated in his name.

44 The example we set for all the world should reflect our reverence for God, our eternal father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

45 The fifth challenge. Prepare yourself for a new name. God may do for you what he did for Jacob and for Abram. Turn to the Book of Revelation 2:17, if you wish to read with me. "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden mana. And we'll give him a white stone. And in the stone, a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

46 For clarification of this scripture refer to D&C 130:10-11. "The white stone mentioned in Revelation 2:17 will become a urim and thumim to each individual who receives one. Whereby things pertaining to a higher order of the kingdoms will be made known. And a white stone is given to each of those who come into the celestial kingdom, whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receive with it. The new name is the key word."

47 This sacred instrument for your personal enlightenment and perfection will be yours along with your new name as you overcome the temptations and trials that beset you.

48 You know, we have a lot of interesting experiences in this life that tend to become rehearsals

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for the life hereafter. Take, for example, the fact that I have gone to church on 10 different occasions and as an earthly father, I have held my infant baby in my arms to give a name and a blessing. But I'm just an earthly father. To me, the concept that my eternal father of my spirit will give me the name that He has chosen, is worthy of our working for.

49 We must learn to live to qualify for these divine gifts. Now, my beloved brothers and sisters, the future for you in the world and in the church is bright and full of promise. I testify that as you keep the commandments of God, He will bless you beyond your present capacity to comprehend.

50 May you make a name for yourself that becomes synonymous with faith, integrity and dependability. May you take upon yourself the name of the Lord and always remember him and keep his commandments. May you honor the names of those with whom you live and work, your brothers and sisters, your fellow man. May you honor the names of deity and stay above the plague of pollution in the world that profanity provides. May you prepare to receive a new name, whatever, and whenever that divine designation is to be made by your eternal father.

51 May you know that I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that this is His church.

That President Spencer W. Kimball is God's prophet upon the earth for all mankind. I testify to the truth of these things. My love and my testimony I leave with you humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

Is It Necessary? - Q&A with a Regional Representative and former General Sunday School President. Published in the March 1983 Ensign Magazine

Question

IS it necessary to take the sacrament with one's right hand? Does it really make any difference which hand is used?

Answer

2 As Rachel lay dying in the pain of childbirth, she named her new son Ben-oni, which in Hebrew means "son of my sorrow" or "distress." But her bereaved husband, Jacob (Israel), changed the name of their newborn son, perhaps to avoid a repeated reference to her travail and death each time his son's name might be spoken. The name he chose instead was Benjamin, which in Hebrew means "son at the right (hand)."^a Israel's great love for his beloved Rachel was signified by this special designation given to Benjamin, his twelfth son.

3 That the right hand suggests symbolic favor is suggested again in the parable of the sheep and the goats. Jesus said:

a Gen. 35:16-19

4 “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

5 “And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

6 “And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

7 “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”^b

8 Numerous other scriptural references to the right hand are listed on page 433 of the Topical Guide appended to the new LDS edition of the Bible. These accounts give some background and insight into the symbolic significance of the right hand—a symbolism that appears in the language and other cultural features of the Jewish and Christian world. In Latin, for example, dexter (right) and sinister (left) not only indicated right and left but became the roots for adjectives carrying favorable and unfavorable connotations. The use of the right hand as a symbolic gesture was in time extended to the administration of governmental oaths, and to the courtroom, as witnesses were called to testify under oath.

9 With this background, we may now focus on the question of which hand to use when partaking of the sacrament.

10 The word sacrament comes from two Latin stems: sacr meaning “sacred,” and ment meaning “mind.” It implies sacred thoughts of the mind. Even more compelling is the Latin word sacramentum, which literally means “oath or solemn obligation.” Partaking of the sacrament might therefore be thought of as a renewal by oath of the covenant previously made in the waters of baptism. It is a sacred mental moment, including (1) a silent oath manifested by the use of one’s hand, symbolic of the individual’s covenant, and (2) the use of bread and water, symbolic of the great atoning sacrifice of the Savior of the world.

11 The hand used in partaking of the sacrament would logically be the same hand used in making any other sacred oath. For most of us, that would be the right hand. However, sacramental covenants—and other eternal covenants as well—can be and are made by those who have lost the use of the right hand, or who have no hands at all. Much more important than concern over which hand is used in partaking of the sacrament is that the sacrament be partaken with a deep realization of the atoning sacrifice that the sacrament represents.

12 Parents are sometimes con-

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cerned about which hand their children use to partake of the sacrament. As a means of education, preparation, and training, unbaptized children in the Church are offered the sacrament "to prefigure the covenant they will take upon themselves when they arrive at the years of accountability."^a Therefore, it is very important that they develop a good feeling and a sacred mental attitude about the symbolism and significance of the sacrament. Parents who wish to teach the importance of this sacred experience might make the topic a part of family home evening instruction. Then, if a reminder becomes necessary in a meeting, it may be given quietly, in patience and love.

13 Partaking of the sacrament is a sacred mental process, and as such it becomes a very personal one for me. I think of the covenants being made between me and Deity as the prayers are pronounced. I think of God offering his Only Begotten Son. I think of the atoning sacrifice of my Savior, Jesus Christ. The sacrament was instituted by him. For all mankind, even me, he offered his flesh and blood and designated the bread and the water as symbolic emblems. Because I have a right hand, I offer it in partaking of the sacrament as an oath, that I will always remember his atoning sacrifice, take his name upon me and remember him, and keep the commandments of God.

14 This is a sacred privilege for all faithful Saints each Sabbath day.

CHAPTER 9

Call to the Holy Apostleship - Delivered April 1984 in the Sunday Morning Session of General Conference

SATURDAY of April conference of 1984 has been circled on our calendar for many years, for that date was targeted as the first time in my life that our only son would be old enough to attend general priesthood meeting with me. Last night, that long awaited goal became a reality. Brothers and sisters, little did we know that on that day my name would be presented as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

2 Since we didn't know, our children didn't know either. Our married daughters telephoned us between sessions. One who was expecting a baby, said, "Daddy, I was so shocked by that announcement—I think I am going into labor."

3 That she did.

4 So, President Hinckley, your announcement from the First Presidency should get credit at least for "an assist." Our twenty-second grandchild arrived safely last evening!

5 A wide array of feelings has flashed through my heart since

^a Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 660

I heard the call that will change my life. The first feeling is that of personal inadequacy. That feeling is intensified as I think of the incomparable power of Elders LeGrand Richards and Mark E. Petersen, whose absence we keenly sense. They were, to me, dear friends as well as esteemed leaders. Then, as I look about and see the strength of those more qualified and able than I, I truly am humbled by this calling.

6 Fortunately, these feelings are blanketed by feelings of faith, for I know the words of Nephi are true: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."^b I have implicit faith in the Lord and in His prophets. I have learned not to put question marks but to use exclamation points when calls are issued through inspired channels of priesthood government.

7 About twenty years ago, two members of the Quorum of the Twelve were assigned to select a new president of the Bonneville stake in which we lived. They were Elders Spencer W. Kimball and LeGrand Richards. That call they extended to me. Now, I am to be ordained an Apostle under the hand of President Spencer W. Kimball, to fill a chair vacated by the passing

of Elder LeGrand Richards.

8 Feelings of commitment well up from the depths of my soul. My sweetheart, Dantzel, and I first made those covenants in the temple of the Lord over thirty-eight years ago, to consecrate our lives to the service of the Lord. Today, I reaffirm that promise, to give all I have to the building of the kingdom of God on the earth. In accepting this call, knowing that challenges, charges, and keys will be conferred and that buffetings will likewise come, I commit my effort, my energy, and my all.

9 Feelings of gratitude emerge as I acknowledge the goodness of my parents, and of all eight of my pioneer great-grandparents who were converted to the Church in the populous nations of Europe. All eight of them ultimately immigrated to the little town of Ephraim, Utah. I know they are watching the events of this day from their celestial windows.

10 To my dear Dantzel, I acknowledge my debt, as well as my eternal love. She is the fountain from whom flows the nourishing love in our home. Her sacrifices to bring our ten wonderful children into this world, teaching and training them, while always supporting me without a murmur through my responsibilities in the Church and in my profession, are monumental. We love our eight sons-in-law as our own, and are so

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b 1 Ne 3:7

grateful for an unbroken string of temple marriages that link them to us forever. For those precious grandchildren already here and for the others on the way, we express our gratitude.

11 While nominally I come to you from the science of surgery and its mother of medicine, in a truer sense, I have been forged from the stern discipline of law—not the laws of men, as mastered by our brethren of the legal profession, but the eternal and unchanging laws of our Divine Creator. The surgeon soon learns the incontrovertibility of divine law. He knows that hopes and wishes are sometimes simply powerless sham. Desired blessings come only by obedience to divine law, and in no other way. My lifetime thus far has been focused on learning those laws. Only as the laws are known, and then obeyed, can the blessings we desire be earned. To this extent, there will be little difference for me in the activities of the past and those of the future. The endless laws of the Lord are the doctrines taught by His Apostles.

12 I am grateful to my colleagues in the medical profession who have permitted me to assist them in the care of their patients and who now will continue to care for them. Their selfless service satisfies the two great commandments, to love God and neighbor. They have learned that one loves best who serves best.

13 I sustain the servants of the Lord, from Isaiah and Ezekiel to Joseph Smith and Spencer W. Kimball. For their confidence in me, I am deeply appreciative. To them and all mankind they serve, I express my love.

14 Now, I understand fully that the call to the Holy Apostleship is one of witness to the world of the divinity of the Lord Jesus the Christ. I know that salvation is centered in Him! Said the angel to King Benjamin: “Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.”^c

15 The Prophet Joseph Smith was asked, “What are the fundamental principles of your religion?” He answered: “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”^d

16 The creation of the earth and all that dwell therein, the necessary fall that enabled man to be, and the atonement of the Lord are three fundamental components of God’s eternal plan. Without that atoning sacrifice, there would be neither immortality nor eternal life.

17 His message is the restored

c Mosiah 3:18

d History of the Church, 3:30.

gospel of Jesus Christ; and it is administered by the Church that bears His name. He directs the affairs of His church by the power of the priesthood and by revelation through prophets who proclaim His doctrine to all people of the world.

18 The testimony that I bear is but an echo of the resounding testimonies of the eighty-four who previously have received this call to the Twelve since the spring of 1820. I know that God the Father and the Son appeared to usher in this last great dispensation of eternal truth. I testify that we are of the house of Israel, specifically of the lineage of Joseph, bearing the birthright and charged with the irrevocable responsibility to prepare the world for the second coming of the Savior. Then, numberless multitudes among every nation, kindred, tongue, and people will eventually join in proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. So I solemnly testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 10

What Are You Doing With Your Life? - Delivered September 11, 1984 as a devotional at Ricks College (Transcription may contain errors.)

MY beloved brothers and sisters, fellow students, President and Sister Hafen, and my sweetheart. I'm very pleased to be with you here today. Actually we're both pleased. It reminds us of when we were, where you

now are in your educational pursuits. When we first met, we had three goals when we were going to college, the first was to get married. And then once married, our next goal was to get by financially. And then our third goal was to get through.

2 We got married when Sister Nelson was an undergraduate student and I was a sophomore in medical school. I was a minor at that time and required parental consent. My father was very amused when I had to call him away from his work to come and sign for me. So I could get a marriage certificate. But with Sister Nelson's help, we were able to make it through medical school. After we each received the baccalaureate degree, I then informed her that it was customary to go for a year of internship training. Following that I was determined to specialize and let her know that that would require just a little additional training. I confess there was a little subterfuge. I only know, let her know about those plans year by year.

3 If I told her in the beginning that there would be a 12 and a half year period and five children between getting the doctor's degree and sending our first statement for patient services, she might not have been quite as enthused as she otherwise was. I've paid great tribute to her though, and asked her specifically to come with me today so that you could see us together, that you might understand that we are a partnership. I owe so much to her.

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4 I pray for the Lord to be with me now, as I try to leave something with you, that would be of value. I would suggest that you clearly define your goals. Now you hear much about setting goals. Some of this becomes a little repetitious. To help you define your goals, I would ask you this simple question. What would you like said about you when your life comes to a close? Or, If you were to write your own eulogy and you could have only three sentences, not a big flowery speech, only three sentences, what would you say about yourself at your own funeral service?

5 Well, if it's fair for me to ask that of you, it's fair for you to ask that of me. If I were to write what I would hope might be said about me, I would hope these three sentences might include: first, I was able to render service of worth to my fellow men. And second, that I have a strong family. And third, that my life gave full evidence to my unshakeable faith in God; that I had lived a good Christian life.

6 Now many of you have already defined your priorities in life and know where your interests and responsibilities lie and in what order. And I think that's just wonderful. I applaud the discipline, but I think it's a little artificial. Each one of you is one individual and you have one life to live. Although you have many interests, it's somewhat arbitrary to compartmentalize those interests. In my experience, I preferred to synergize those interests. I've tried not to separate

them, but to merge them.

7 Now, let me explain what I mean. Nephi said, "I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning." He was telling us to take the body of knowledge contained in the scriptures and weave it into the fabric of our own being, of our actions and our decision-making. Let me cite another scripture. King Benjamin proclaimed this truth, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God." As I ponder people serving God through service to fellow man, I recognize that I cannot serve or honor God without first serving the children that he has brought to bless our family.

8 And as I ponder service to our children, I recognize that I cannot serve them to the fullest without first honoring and serving my wife; the mother of those children. So if there is a highest priority in my life, she is it. She and I took a vow when we were married, that we would seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, knowing that all things shall be added thereon. Now you see how these goals and prior priorities are all indelibly intertwined. To say that you will have your highest priority to your partner or to God or your family or to your occupation is really much more difficult than to synergize all those strengths into one and pursue those interests in parallel.

9 The remarkable thing about

these three objectives is that they all require one thing in common. That requirement is education. The educational process is crucial for success for each objective and is never ending.

10 First with regard to service to mankind. President Hafen indicated that I was a heart surgeon, but that doesn't really tell you the story. When I started medical school, we were taught that one must not touch the heart; for if you did, it would stop beating. But I also pondered the scripture that tells us that all kingdoms have a law given and unto every kingdom is given a law. Unto every law there are certain bounds and conditions.

11 I also know that scripture, that certifies that whenever one obtains a blessing from God, it is by obedience to the laws upon which that blessing was predicated. Knowing these scriptures and concentrating on the kingdom of, and blessing of the heartbeat, I knew that even that was predicated upon law.

12 The reasoned that if those laws could be understood and controlled, perhaps they could be utilized for the blessing of the sick. To me, this meant that if we would work, study, and ask the proper questions in our scientific experiments, we could learn the laws that govern the heartbeat. Now, as you know, some years later having learned many of those laws, we can turn the heartbeat off, perform delicate repairs on the valves and the vessels, and then let the heart beat

again, provided that we obey the laws on which that blessing is predicated. In 1949, our group of researchers presented at the American College of Surgeons, the report of the first successful use of the artificial heart-lung machine and sustaining the life of an animal for a 30 minute period of time, while his heart was not contributing to the power of the circulation.

13 In the decade of the 1950s, the successes in the animal laboratory were extended to human beings. And now this year there will be over 200,000 open-heart operations done in this country and many more worldwide. But I want you to know that it was through the understanding of the scriptures and the application of them to the area of our particular interest, that the great field of heart surgery, as we know it today was facilitated.

14 Now the second sentence that I hope may be said of me at my funeral would be that we had a strong family. That's really a subject near and dear to my heart. And I won't try to treat it broadly except to say that Sister Nelson has selflessly brought into our family, those 10 beautiful children and some at the peril of her life. We have tried to rear them continent with important scriptures. Honor, thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

15 The importance of honoring parents goes beyond the glorious privilege of honoring your

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own mother and father. That scripture implies that we honor the father and the mother of the children that might yet be born to us. We considered that in our dating period. And in the early years of our marriage. I fully understood that concept only later, as I watched Sister Nelson cradle those children in her arms, as they arrived one by one. And I watched her reassure herself and her newborn child that no blessing was ever withheld from that child because of any act of impurity or indiscretion in her life that could in any way deprive that infant of its full potential.

16 To honor father and mother means to honor fatherhood and motherhood and the divine provision for procreation and all that pertains to it. As we honor mortal parents and parenthood, we also honor our heavenly parents. This is succinctly summarized in the sentence from Jesus, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

17 After honoring earthly and heavenly parents and parenthood, we honor our children. There's a great temptation to believe that our children are our possessions. They are not. Their spirits are eternal and everlasting as are ours. This is brought forcibly to my attention many years ago when our youngest was about four years of age. I came home from work one night to find my sweetheart very weary. As she had a full day with then nine children under foot. I had had a hard day also, but I

offered to get the children ready for bed for her.

18 So with our little four year old daughter, I began to give the orders, "Take your clothes off, hang them up, brush your teeth, say your prayers, get into bed." She stopped me along this course. And she said, "Daddy, do you own me?" With her wistful eyes adding expression to this comment, I realized that I was using coercive methods on this little sweet spirit. And that to rule children by command or force is the technique of Satan, not the savior who would have led in love. She taught me this important lesson. We don't own our children. We have them for a brief season. As parents, it is our privilege to love them, to lead them and let them go.

19 The Lord said, I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth. This we've tried to do. One other facet of our parental responsibility has been to be faithful to the duty we were called to perform in the church. Does this seem a little paradoxical? It isn't; A cardinal guide, as we have raised our family, is this passage: "Wherefore, thy duty is unto the church forever. And this because of thy family." We have recognized that the finest thing we can do to our children, for our children, is to be faithful and obedient to whatever call we've received in the church. For God gives no commandment under the children of men, except that he will open the way for them to accomplish that, which has been

asked. And he will bless them beyond their fondest hopes. All this to the benefit and blessing of family and posterity.

20 The final sentence that I hope I may merit at my funeral services, is that my faith in God was unshakeable. I have a deep and abiding faith in God and his Son, Jesus Christ. That faith increases as my education increases. As I have spent 40 years of my life in the study of one of God's greatest creations, the human body. I know that this marvelous instrument endowed to us is of divine origin. The anatomy, the physiology, the protective mechanisms, the healing powers, all are so beautifully constructed and function so well. It is as evident to me that they are the products of a divine creator, as it must be for an astronomer to reach the same conclusion as he studies the stars in the heavens.

21 Furthering your education need not challenge your faith, but should increase your faith. In fact, we have a divine commission to educate our minds and increase our learning. The glory of God is intelligence. We have a divine injunction to obtain a knowledge of history and of countries and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man. In an effort to be obedient to this commandment Sister Nelson and I have labored in 64 nations of the earth. Now with this Apostolic calling, it's very likely that number will increase.

22 The scriptures admonish, "Learn wisdom in thy youth."

The prophet Joseph taught us, "Ye shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach ye diligently, and my grace shall attend you." Having stressed the importance of education and achieving the desirable goals of service, of worth to mankind, a strong family and faith in God, perhaps we should now focus on a formula for learning. You might ask, "What's the best way to pursue my studies? To this I would reply:

23 There are four steps to facilitate this learning process. The first is to have a great desire to know the truth. As a teacher of surgery, for many years, I've observed the difference in the desire of individuals to learn. Before every operation, we have an interval in which we scrub our hands for a measured period of time. Some trainees have either been silent have passed this time with some trivial conversations that had no substance. But those with a deep desire to learn, fill that time with questions. I can tell the students with great desire. They know what they don't know. I would suggest that formula for you. Concentrate on what you don't know, first and foremost.

24 The second step in the formula for learning would be to study with an inquiring mind. I, again, take this pattern from the scriptures. You remember when the brother of Jared was preparing for their transoceanic migration and he realized that there was no provision for light in their vessels. He asked the Lord,

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“Shall we cross this great water in darkness?” It’s an interesting reply the Lord gave, “What will ye that I should do, that ye may have light in your vessels? You can’t have windows. They will be dashed in pieces. Neither shall you take fire with you. You will be as a whale in the sea.” The Lord could have told the brother of Jared what to do, but he let the brother of Jared study it in his own mind. And then he proffered the solution that he provide 16 stones and asked the Lord to touch them that they might be illuminators for their travel.

25 That same concept was again stressed in latter-day revelation. When the Lord told his servant, “You have not understood. You have supposed that I would give it (meaning the answer) to you when you took no thought, save it was to ask me. But behold I say unto you that you must study it out in your mind. Then you must ask me if it’d be right.” It’s interesting to me as I review the Doctrine and Covenants, and find that a significant portion of the revelations given to the prophet came after profound study and thoughtful, focused inquiry of the Lord.

26 Consider the Word of Wisdom. Consider the last revelations, appended to the Doctrine and Covenants. Consider the revelation given to president Spencer W Kimball in 1978, pertaining to the priesthood. Similarly, you must study diligently with the spirit of inquiry.

27 The third step is to apply or practice your learning in your daily lives. Any of you who’ve learned a foreign language, know how important that is. Even with great desire and a lots of study, mastery of the language comes only as you apply it to the daily situations of life. The same principle was illustrated to me in the operating room one day by a young trainee who, when invited by me to perform a certain maneuver, said, “Okay, I can see what needs to be done, but I can’t make my hands do it.”

28 The fourth, an important step in the learning process, is to pray for help. I did not hesitate to communicate with the Lord in great detail; even about the technical steps in an operative procedure that was to be performed. Often just the process of rehearsing the steps of the procedure in my mind, while engaging in prayer, helped me to see that there was a better way.

29 I’ve emphasized the importance of education to help you serve your fellow man, and to strengthen your family and to develop faith in God. Is it possible to use your education erroneously to destroy any of these laudable goals? And sadly, the answer is yes. Your faith must be nourished. As a cautionary note, your spirit needs nourishment just as your body does. Nourish that faith every day with scriptural study, with exposure to the arts, such as fine music, such as Sister Johnson has sung for us today. My, I love that rendition

of Bach that she and Brother Parkinson did so well. Exercise the spiritual gifts on a daily basis, just as you feed your physical body on a daily basis.

30 Choose your role model wisely. Before you endorse all the teachings of any teacher, ask yourself if his or her faith is strong enough to be worthy of emulation. If it isn't, be very selective in that what you learn from such an individual. Avoid poisons of faith. You know what they are: sin, pornography, contending with a letter of the law, rather than the spirit of the law. These can be poisonous. Beware of the attitude that just one minor transgression won't really matter. If I pray today, I'll pray twice tomorrow. Or if I don't pay my tithing this month, I'll make it up next month. Or if I have one cigarette, it certainly won't shorten my life significantly. Or one skirmish with sexual transgression or temptation even, I can handle safely.

31 No, it's a matter of faith, brothers and sisters. If your faith is strong, then you won't allow your thoughts to entertain these ideas that are poisonous. If you focus on the letter of the law, you may be close to the truth, but if you focus on the spirit of the law, you'll be on safer grounds. Avoid the mysteries and the doctrinal hobby horses.

32 If we will be obedient to the revealed word, we can be patient on the unrevealed. That's why we don't use the terms "orthodox" and "unorthodox" in

the church. Revealed truth: we either believe, or we don't believe.

33 Occasionally, we hear allegations that the church is anti-intellectual. I suppose that's a matter of definition. If you define intellectualism as the idea that, knowledge is based solely on the product of pure reason, there may be some truth to it. Because we don't depend only on man's ability to reason. We embrace all truth, whether it comes from the scientific laboratory or from the revealed word of the Lord. Truth, never contradicts truth. One of the greatest philosophers of all was Socrates. And he determined that he would question everything. He says the unexamined life is not worth living. But on three things, he stood fast. One was faith in God. One was freedom. And the other was immortality. In fact, so much did he believe immortality that he willingly accepted the death decree of an Athenian court rather than having his mortal life prolonged, which could have been done through exile.

34 So I would implore you to seek light and truth. Edify yourselves with education for the eternities. Search the scriptures. Liken them unto you. Know the laws of the kingdom in your own activity. Use the standard works as standards of reference. Measure every thought indeed, by these immutable standards of eternal excellence. Remember that just as every member is a missionary, so every member is to be a defender of the faith.

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Shielded with the armor of God, each one of us must stand on the power of testimony acquired as an individual, through prayer, study and faith.

35 I testify of the truth of these things and give my apostolic witness to the fact that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that this is his church, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that president Spencer W Kimball is a prophet. And I bestow upon you an apostolic blessing that you may have the peace of God with you as you journey through your education for eternity. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

CHAPTER 11

Begin with the End in Mind - Delivered September 30, 1984 as a devotional at BYU Provo

OUR being here reminds us of those days when we were where you are now in your schooling. We had three important goals. One was to get married. Then, once married, our next goal was to get by financially. Then our goal was to get through. We got married when Sister Nelson was an undergraduate student and I was in my second year of medical school.

2 Because I was under legal age, parental consent was required. My father was very amused when I called him away from his work to sign for me so I could get a marriage certificate. With Sister Nelson's (and parental) help, we were able to make it through medical school after we

each received our baccalaureate degree. I then informed her that it was customary to have a year internship. Following that I was determined to specialize, and I let her know that it would require additional training.

3 I'll confess to a bit of naivete. If we had known that the interval between my getting my doctor's degree and our finally going into practice would be twelve and a half years with six children added, we might not have been quite as enthusiastic in the beginning. So I pay great tribute to her for her role in our partnership. I owe so much to her.

4 Now I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to direct our discussion tonight.

5 I have entitled my remarks "Begin with the End in Mind." I suppose some of this comes from my surgical background. An elective incision is never made without planning to close it. The same principle is generally applicable in all fields, however. Track stars don't begin a race without knowing the location of the finish line.

6 So, in your important race, I would plead for you to begin with the end in mind. To assist you in defining that end, I would ask you this simple question: What would you like said about you at your funeral? Or, if you were to write your own eulogy and you could have only three sentences (no big flowery speeches, please), what would you want to say?

ical school, we were taught that one must not touch the heart, for if one did, it would stop beating. But I also pondered the scripture that tells us that “all kingdoms have a law given. . . . And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions”.^d I believed sincerely the scripture that certifies:

16 When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.^e

17 Knowing these scriptures while concentrating on the “kingdom” of and the blessing of the beating heart, I knew that even the function of this vital organ was predicated upon law.

18 I reasoned that if those laws could be understood and controlled, perhaps they could be utilized for the blessing of the sick. To me this meant that if we would work, study, and ask the proper questions in our scientific experiments, we could learn the laws that govern the heartbeat.

19 In 1949 our group of researchers presented at the American College of Surgeons the report of the first successful use of the artificial heart-lung machine in sustaining the life of an animal for a thirty-minute period of time, without its own heart powering its circulation.

20 In the decade of the 1950s, successes in the animal laboratory were extended to human beings. Now, with many of those laws learned, the heartbeat can be turned off while performing delicate repairs on the damaged valves or vessels, and then turned on again—provided the laws are obeyed upon which that blessing is predicated. Over 200,000 open-heart operations are performed in this country annually, and many more worldwide, thereby extending life for many. But you should know that it was through the understanding of the scriptures and “likening” them to this area of interest, that the great field of heart surgery as we know it today was facilitated for me.

Family

21 Turning now from service of worth to my fellowmen, the second sentence that I hope may be said of me at my funeral would be that I had a fine family. That’s really a subject near and dear to my heart, and I won’t try to treat it broadly except to say that Sister Nelson has brought into our family ten beautiful children. We have tried to treat them consonantly with important scriptures: “Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee”.^f The importance of honoring parents extends beyond your own father and mother. This scripture implies that we honor the father

d D&C 88:36, 38

e D&C 130:21

f Exodus 20:12

and the mother of children that might yet be born to us. We considered this implication while dating and in the early years of our marriage. But I fully understood that concept only later as I watched Sister Nelson cradle those children in her arms as they arrived one by one. Each time she reassured herself and her newborn baby that no blessing was ever withheld from that child because of any act of impurity in her life that could have deprived that infant of its full potential in any way. To honor father and mother means to honor fatherhood and motherhood and the divine provision for procreation and all that pertains to it.

22 Part of honoring parenthood is honoring children. There is a great temptation to believe erroneously that our children are our possessions. They are not. They are sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. Their spirits are eternal as are ours. This was brought forcibly to my attention many years ago when our youngest was about four years of age. I came home from work one night to find my sweetheart very weary from a full day with nine children underfoot. My day had been heavy also, but I offered to get the children ready for bed. I began to give the orders to our little four-year-old daughter: take your clothes off, hang them up, brush your teeth, get your pajamas on, say your prayers,

etc.—commanding in a manner befitting a tough sergeant in the army. She then cocked her little head to one side, looked at me with her wistful eyes, and said, “Daddy, do you own me?”

23 Then I realized that I was using coercive methods on this sweet spirit and that to rule children by command or force is the technique of Satan, not of the Savior. She taught me this important lesson: We don’t own our children; we have them for a brief season. As parents, it is our privilege to love them, to lead them, and then to let them go.

24 The Lord said, “I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth”.^g This we have tried to do.

25 Another aspect of our parental responsibility has been to be faithful to the duty we were called to perform in the Church. Is this a paradox in priorities? No, it isn’t. A scripture states: “Wherefore thy duty is unto the church forever, and this *because of thy family*”.^h We have recognized that among the fine things we can do for our children is to be faithful to any call we have received in the Church. Experience gained in the Church strengthens our capacity to serve the public and our family.

Faith in God

26 The third sentence that I hope I may merit at my funeral ser-

g D&C 93:40

h D&C 23:3; emphasis added

vice is that my faith in God was unshakable. I do have a deep and abiding faith in him and his son, Jesus Christ. Education has increased that faith. As I have spent forty years of my life in the study of one of God's greatest creations, the human body, I know that this marvelous instrument is of divine origin. The anatomy, the physiology, the protective mechanisms, the healing powers—all are so well constructed and function so beautifully. It is as evident to me that they are the products of a divine creator as it must be for an astronomer to reach the same conclusion as he studies the endless phenomenon of the stars in the heavens.

27 Furthering education need not challenge, but should increase your faith. In fact, we have a religious responsibility to educate our minds. "The glory of God is intelligence".ⁱ We have a divine command to "obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man".^j Similarly, the Lord exhorted us to "study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people".^k

28 The scriptures further admonish, "Learn wisdom in thy youth".^l "Teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach

ye diligently and my grace shall attend you".^m

Steps in Learning

29 We all understand the importance of education. Perhaps now we should consider how to learn. May I suggest four steps to facilitate the learning process.

Desire

30 The first is to have a great desire to know the truth. As a teacher of surgery for many years, I have observed the differences in desires of individuals to learn. Before every operation there is an interval for scrubbing hands for a measured period of time. Some trainees have either been silent or have passed this time with trivial conversations that had no substance. Those with desire filled that time with questions. I observed that students with great desire know what they don't know and seek to fill those voids.

Inquire

31 The second step would be to study with an inquiring mind. Again I take this pattern from the scriptures. You remember that when the brother of Jared was preparing for a transoceanic migration, he realized there was no provision for light in the ships. So he asked the Lord, "Shall we cross this great water in darkness?"

i D&C 93:36

j D&C 93:53

k D&C 90:15

l Alma 37:35, see also Proverbs 29:3

m D&C 88:77-78

32 The Lord gave an interesting reply: "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels? . . . Ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you. . . . Ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea".ⁿ

33 The Lord could have told the brother of Jared what to do, but he was left to study this out in his own mind before proffering the solution. As a result, he selected sixteen stones and then asked the Lord to touch them that they might provide the light for their travel.

34 That same concept was again stressed in latter-day revelation, when the Lord told his servant, "You have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right".^o

35 Many of the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants were given to the prophets only after profound study and thoughtful, focused inquiry of the Lord. So it was with the Word of Wisdom and the revelation on the priesthood given to President Spencer W. Kimball in 1978. Similarly, you will learn best with the spirit of inquiry.

Apply

36 The third step is to apply or practice your learning in your daily lives. Those who have learned another language know how important that is. Even with great desire and study, mastery of a language comes only as it is applied to the daily situations of life.

Pray

37 The fourth and very important step in the learning process is to pray for help. I did not hesitate to communicate with the Lord in great detail, even about the technical steps in a new operative procedure that was to be performed. Often just the process of rehearsing it in my mind while engaged in prayer allowed divine direction for me to see a better way.

A Warning

38 Now may I offer important words of warning: Learning, if misused, can destroy your goals. Let us consider some safeguards to protect you from such an undesirable end.

Nourishment

39 Your faith must be nourished. You are blessed at this university to do this by enrolling in religion classes. Enrich that faith additionally with private scriptural study and with exposure to other fine books, art, or music. Nourish the gifts of the Spirit on the same daily basis that you feed your physical body.

n Ether 2:22-24
o D&C 9:7-8

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Role Model

40 Choose your role model wisely. Before you endorse all of the teachings of any teacher, ask yourself if his or her faith is strong enough to be worthy of emulation. If it isn't, be very discriminating in what you learn from such an individual. Remember that the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price are the standards by which you should measure all doctrine.

Avoid Pitfalls

41 Avoid poisons of faith such as sin, pornography, or barely abiding the letter of the law instead of embracing the ennobling spirit of the law. Remember, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life".^p

Prepare for Challenges

42 Many challenges will be put in your way. You will hear allegations that the Church is "anti-intellectual." When people make that statement, I am reminded of a common sight in the jungles of Africa. A bird, like the critic, will often perch on the uppermost part of an elephant. This bird pecks away at the hide of the stately animal, achieving temporary nourishment and position of eminence by virtue of this association. While the elephant doesn't need the bird, the bird needs the elephant for its place of prominence. Though the bird may peck, squawk, and smear, the elephant steadily pursues its course in seeming oblivion to its parasitic passenger.

43 To the charge that the Church is "anti-intellectual," you are the greatest evidence to refute such an erroneous statement. Individually, you have been encouraged to learn and to seek knowledge from any dependable source. In the Church, we embrace all truth, whether it comes from the scientific laboratory or from the revealed word of the Lord. We accept all truth as being part of the gospel. One truth does not contradict another.

44 Some of the greatest "intellectuals" have been those with the strongest faith. Socrates felt that the unexamined life is not worth living, so nothing was exempt from his questioning. But he, with Immanuel Kant, had unwavering faith in God, freedom, and immortality. Socrates never doubted the will of his personal God. He believed so much in freedom that he tied his own self-responsibility to that freedom. So deeply did he believe in the doctrine of immortality of the soul that although he might have prolonged his biological life by choosing exile, he submitted with complete serenity to the death sentence of the Athenian court.

45 Louis Pasteur made this statement on his reception into the French Academy:

46 The Greeks have given us one of the most beautiful words in our language, the word enthusiasm, which means "a God within." The grandeur of the acts of

experience. I was at work with my electric clippers and long extension cord. I had done this often, each time reminding myself of the need to use these clippers with great care in order to avoid cutting things that I shouldn't.

2 Suddenly the blades became jammed. Caught between them was the power cord itself. Because I had not seen it in the thicket I was trimming, I had cut into the very line that was providing the power to work.

3 "Isn't that one of life's great lessons?" I thought. "Power, if misused, can cut into the very source of that power."

4 Just as the careless use of electrical power can sever the source of that power, so is it possible to misuse spiritual power to sever our spiritual power line. We would then lose that which enables us to generate success in our lives. Proper use of our spiritual power line allows us to learn, to labor, to be obedient to law, and to love. While these capabilities lead to fulfillment, at the same time they also carry risk.

Power to Learn

5 Consider the power to learn. How essential it is for progress, whether one's career is professional or that of a salesman, a farmer, or a homemaker.

6 But learning can be misused! A sharp mind, misdirected, can cut into that line of spiritual power.

Some "learned" souls delight in leading others astray, all in the so-called name of learning. Years later their victims may realize that they have climbed their ladder of learning, only to find it leaning against the wrong wall. A prophet of the Lord has counseled us on this point:

7 "O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

8 "But to be learned is good *if* they hearken unto the counsels of God."^a

9 What happens without spiritual learning? What happens to the pilot of a glider when he is cut loose from the power of his tow plane? There may be banks and turns, but ultimately there is only one direction he can go, and that is down!

10 We must gain learning, but we must apply it wisely. Otherwise, we have politics without principle, industry without morality, knowledge without wisdom, science without humanity!

Power to Labor

11 Consider the power of labor. Labor well spent increases our capacity to do. President Heber

a 2 Ne. 9:28-29; italics added

J. Grant often said, "That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the nature of the thing itself is changed, but that our power to do is increased."^b

12 The Lord, through his prophet Lehi, said, "It must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things."^c So, in reality, competition forces us to improve. It deserves our praise and our gratitude. Without it we could not reach the heights that are otherwise ours to achieve.

13 But our labor can be misdirected. One can be anxiously engaged in a meaningless cause. Or one can do something wrong a hundred times and call it experience! Some would avoid labor while pursuing the goals of wealth without working for it, or an honored position without preparing for it. The converted Lamanites taught this lesson: "Rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives; and rather than take away from a brother they would give unto him; and rather than spend their days in idleness they would labor abundantly with their hands."^d

Power of Obedience to Law

14 Next, consider the power of obedience to law. One of the great applications of spiritual power is obeying the laws of both God and man. Freedom to

act and mastery of our actions both emanate from law. "When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."^e

15 I relearned that so well from President Kimball. On one occasion when he needed an operation that I was to perform, he first asked me for a priesthood blessing. Following that, he said, "Now you may proceed to do that which must be done in order to make that blessing possible."

16 He knew, and I knew, that not even for God's prophet can anyone be exempted from law. Not even for God's Son could divine law be broken!

Power to Love

17 Consider the power to love. I remember a mother I met once as I made a professional house call. This woman was confined in an iron lung. The ravages of polio had effectively destroyed all the breathing muscles so that her life was completely dependent upon this large metal tank and the electrical motor that powered its noisy bellows.

18 While there, I watched her three children as they related to their mother. The oldest interrupted our work to ask permission to go to a friend's house for an hour. Later the second child

b Conference Report, Apr. 1901, p. 63.
c 2 Ne. 2:11
d Alma 24:18
e D&C 130:21

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asked her mother for help with arithmetic. Finally the youngest child, so small that she couldn't see her mother's face directly, looked up at her image in a mirror that had been placed over the mother's head and asked, "Mommy, may I have a cookie?" I've never forgotten that lesson on the power of love. This woman, virtually disabled and certainly incapable of any degree of physical enforcement of parental authority, sweetly influenced that home solely with the power to love!

19 The power of love between a man and a woman is special. The love shared with my beloved companion, Dantzel, has increased the power of love for both of us. That love brought us to the altar in the temple of the Lord. Her love for me motivated her to teach school during the early years of our marriage. When things were tight, she held a second job at night. Once when things were exceptionally tight, she even sold her blood in between her two jobs to keep us solvent. (Her dear parents may have wondered what kind of a son-in-law they had on that occasion!) I thought of that many years later when she needed a transfusion urgently and her blood couldn't be matched readily with donor blood from the blood bank. What a privilege it was for me to donate mine directly to her.

20 Can the power to love be misused? Sadly, yes. The illegit-

imate union of the sexes has, in my observation, been one of the greatest causes of grief. In some instances, the improper use of this sacred physical endowment has even destroyed its use in later years.

21 Misused, the power of love can cut off spiritual power. The abuse of the power to love can result in no love at all. Only its cheap facsimiles of lewdness and lust remain in the wake of pleasure without conscience. Instead of feasting at the banquet table of bounteous love with his own posterity, one is left with scraps from the table—only the refuse from what might have been.

22 The ashes of burned "love" smolder with the smoke of sadness. Yet the embers of evil still burn. But as loud voices argue on, let us remember that those who advocate abortion have already been born! Those who freely deny God with their amoral and agnostic practices will one day find that He may just as freely deny them!^f

Source of Spiritual Power

23 The source of our spiritual power is the Lord! The ultimate source of spiritual power is God our Father. The messenger of this power is the Holy Ghost. This power differs from electrical power. An electrical appliance consumes power. The use of His spiritual power replenishes our power. While electrical power can be used only for measured periods of time, spiritual

f 3 Ne. 28:34

power can be used for time and eternity!

24 Our spiritual power line is strengthened through prayer. As we counsel with God in all our doings, he will direct us for good.^g Prayer is available whenever we ask for it!

25 But the Lord places the initiative upon us. He expects us to reach for his power, just as we must insert the plug in the outlet for electricity. He said, "If thou shalt *ask*, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal."^h Personal worthiness and scripture study enable us to do more with this power.

26 Rewards result from the righteous use of the spiritual power belonging to the priesthood! And they are so great that they are almost beyond human comprehension. To those couples who bear and share that priesthood worthily and remain faithful to the law of the everlasting covenant of eternal marriage, enduring the congested years and trials of diapers and dishes, crowded kitchen and thin pocketbook, service in the Church, education and the burning of the midnight oil, the Lord makes this promise: "Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; ... and shall inherit thrones, king-

doms, principalities, and *powers*, dominions, ... [and there] shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever."ⁱ

27 The spiritual power line conveys revelation. Revelation is given to the President for the Church, and to leaders and teachers in their respective callings. Personal revelation is provided for the glorification of individual members and families in the Church. These lines are well insulated, and they are not scrambled! Our Father is a God of order! No one else receives revelation to govern the Church; that will be delivered only to the President of the Church. The father in the home next door will not receive revelation for his neighbor's family.

28 It is possible to disregard or even misuse spiritual power. Some have misused the power of prayer by making that sacred communication trivial. Some well-meaning Saints even do the right things for the wrong reasons, if they narrowly center on the percentages they report rather than on the precious people they serve.

29 Like cutting the cord with clippers, it is possible to use spiritual power so carelessly as to destroy one's very connection to that power. I know a husband who dominates his wife as though she were his possession. He seems to regard her about

g Alma 37:37
h D&C 42:61; italics added
i D&C 132:19; italics added

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as he does his automobile or his suitcase, which he uses for his own purposes. And I know a wife who dominates her husband to the point that he has lost all feelings of worth.

30 Remember, "The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and ... the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled *only* upon the principles of righteousness."^a

31 The unrighteous use of priesthood authority surely severs the connection to the Source of that authority.^b

32 Worship strengthens our power line to deity. There can be no true worship without sacrifice, and there can be no true sacrifice without a cause. The cause that earns our love and priority is the cause of Jesus Christ.

33 Speaking of his own atonement, the Savior proclaimed, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world."^c His example of worship, sacrifice, and commitment to cause becomes ours! His is the ultimate source of all our power to do good.

34 As we carefully and prayerfully protect the spiritual power line that links us to the Savior, we become more like him!

35 Of his sacred name and mission I solemnly bear special

witness. Of his divine sonship I proclaim sacred testimony. That this is his church I fervently declare, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 13

Reverence for Life - Delivered April 1985 in the Saturday Morning Session of General Conference

UNITEDLY we thank the Almighty for the wondrous prolongation of the life of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, enabling him to preach that powerful sermon. Our gratitude is profound!

2 I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to help me communicate his mind and will on a very vital and sensitive subject. I apologize for the use of words repugnant to me and ill-suited to this hallowed pulpit. I do so only for clarity of communication regarding reverence for human life.

3 As sons and daughters of God, we cherish life as a gift from him.

4 A heavy toll on life is included among the evils of war. Data from all nations are appalling. For the United States of America, one hundred thousand were killed in World War I; over four hundred thousand died in World War II. In the first two hundred years as a nation, the lives of over one million Americans were lost due to war.

a D&C 121:36; italics added

b D&C 121:37

c John 18:37

5 Regrettable as is the loss of loved ones from war, these figures are dwarfed by the toll of a new war that annually claims more casualties than the total number of fatalities from all the wars of this nation.

6 It is a war on the defenseless—and the voiceless. It is a war on the unborn.

7 This war, labeled “abortion,” is of epidemic proportion and is waged globally. Over fifty-five million abortions were reported worldwide in the year 1974 alone.^d Sixty-four percent of the world’s population now live in countries that legally sanction this practice.^e In the United States of America, over 1.5 million abortions are performed annually.^f About 25–30 percent of all pregnancies now end in abortion.^g In some metropolitan areas, there are more abortions performed than live births.^h Comparable data also come from other nations.

8 Yet society professes reverence for human life. We weep for

those who die, pray and work for those whose lives are in jeopardy. For years I have labored with other doctors here and abroad, struggling to prolong life. It is impossible to describe the grief a physician feels when the life of a patient is lost. Can anyone imagine how we feel when life is destroyed at its roots, as though it were a thing of naught?

9 What sense of inconsistency can allow people to grieve for their dead, yet be calloused to this baleful war being waged on life at the time of its silent development? What logic would encourage efforts to preserve the life of a critically ill twelve-week-old infant, but countenance the termination of another life twelve weeks after inception? More attention is seemingly focused on the fate of a life at some penitentiary’s death row than on the millions totally deprived of life’s opportunity through such odious carnage before birth.

10 The Lord has repeatedly declared this divine imperative: “Thou shalt not kill.”ⁱ Recent-

d Christopher Tietze, *Induced Abortion: A World Review*, 4th ed. (New York: Population Council, 1981), p. 19.

e *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 19–37.

f See Stanley K. Henshaw, Jacqueline Darroch Forrest, Ellen Sullivan, and Christopher Tietze, “Abortion Services in the United States, 1979 and 1980,” *Family Planning Perspective*, Jan./Feb. 1982, pp. 1, 7.

g *Ibid.*, p. 6.

h See Center for Disease Control, *Annual Summary: Abortion Surveillance, 1979–80*, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, p. 130.

i See Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17; Matt. 5:21; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom. 13:9; James 2:11; Mosiah 13:21; 3 Ne. 12:21; D&C 42:18–19; D&C 132:36.

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ly he added, "Nor do anything like unto it."^j Even before the fulness of the gospel was restored, the enlightened understood the sanctity of life. John Calvin, the sixteenth-century reformer, wrote: "If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light."^k

11 But what impropriety could now legalize that which has been forbidden by the laws of God from the dawn of time? What twisted reasoning has transformed mythical concepts into contorted slogans assenting to a practice which is consummately wrong?

12 These slogans begin with proper concern for the health of the mother. Infrequently, instances may occur in which the continuation of pregnancy could be life-threatening to the mother. When deemed by competent medical authorities that the life of one must be terminated in order to save the life of the other, many agree that it is better to spare the mother. But these circumstances are rare, particularly where modern medical care is available.

13 Another sympathetic concern applies to pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. The tragedy of this despoilment is compounded because, in such relationships, freedom of choice is denied the woman who is innocently involved.

14 But less than 3 percent of all abortions are performed for these two reasons.^l The other 97 percent are performed for what may be termed "reasons of convenience."

15 Some argue for abortion because a malformed child may result. The harmful effects of certain infectious or toxic agents in the first trimester of pregnancy are real.

16 The experience of a couple whom I shall identify as Brother and Sister Brown (fictitious names) is instructive. Sister Brown was only twenty-one years old at the time, a beautiful woman and a devoted wife. In her first trimester, she contracted the dreaded German measles.

17 Abortion was advised because the developing baby would almost surely be damaged. Some members of her family, out of loving concern, applied additional pressure for an abortion. "Don't burden yourself finan-

j D&C 59:6

k John Calvin, Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony, 24 vols., trans. Charles William Bingham (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), 3:42 (Ex. 21:22).

l See U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, The Human Life Bill: Hearings on S. 158, 97th Congress, 1st session, 1981.

cially with a handicapped child," they argued. "You are too young and too poor."

18 Devotedly Brother and Sister Brown consulted their bishop. He referred them to their stake president, who listened to their serious concern and counseled them not to terminate the life of this baby, even though the child might have a problem. He quoted this scripture:

19 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."^m

20 They chose to follow that counsel and permit their child to be born—a beautiful little girl, normal in every respect, except for a hearing loss, that became evident later. After an evaluation at a school for the deaf, Brother and Sister Brown were advised that this child had the intellect of a genius. Now, some twenty years later, she attends a major university on a scholarship.

21 When recently asked how they felt about their once-weighty decision, the mother quickly responded, "She is one of the great joys of my life! She is such a choice spirit! Though she lost the sense of hearing, she has compensated with augmented ability otherwise. Her eyes are alive with constant attention. She excels in dancing, even though she perceives the sounds of music from vibrations.

She has served as an officer in school. But most significant is her guileless spirit, her unconditional love. She has taught us to serve and to share. Her spiritual insights have helped us to know God and his purposes. My husband and I are so grateful that she is one of our children."

22 Consider another individual weighing the consequences of her pregnancy. She was beyond the normal age for bearing children. She announced to her doctor that her husband was an alcoholic with a syphilitic infection. One of her children had been born dead. Another child was blind. Another had tuberculosis. Her family had a history of deafness. Finally she confessed that she was living in abject poverty. If this true historical situation were posed today, many would recommend abortion. The child born from that pregnancy became the renowned composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

23 But the principle involved extends beyond those who may become great. If one is to be deprived of life because of potential for developing physical problems, consistency would dictate that those who already have such deficiencies should likewise be terminated. Continuing, then, those who are either infirm, incompetent, or inconvenient should be eliminated by those in power. Such irreverence for life is unthinkable!

24 Another contention raised is

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that a woman is free to choose what she does with her own body. To a certain extent this is true for all of us. We are free to think. We are free to plan. And then we are free to do. But once an action has been taken, we are never free from its consequences. Those considering abortion have already exercised certain choices.

25 To clarify this concept, we can learn from the astronaut. Any time during the selection process, planning, and preparation, he is free to withdraw. But once the powerful rocket fuel is ignited, he is no longer free to choose. Now he is bound by the consequences of his choice. Even if difficulties develop and he might wish otherwise, the choice made was sealed by action.

26 So it is with those who would tamper with the God-given power of procreation. They are free to think and plan otherwise, but their choice is sealed by action.

27 The woman's choice for her own body does not validate choice for the body of another. The expression "terminate the pregnancy" applies literally only to the woman. The consequence of terminating the fetus therein involves the body and very life of another. These two individuals have separate brains, separate hearts, and separate circu-

latory systems. To pretend that there is no child and no life there is to deny reality.

28 It is not a question of when "meaningful life" begins or when the spirit "quicken" the body. In the biological sciences, it is known that life begins when two germ cells unite to become one cell, bringing together twenty-three chromosomes from both the father and from the mother. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes. In a marvelous process involving a combination of genetic coding by which all the basic human characteristics of the unborn person are established, a new DNA complex is formed. A continuum of growth results in a new human being. The onset of life is not a debatable issue, but a fact of science.

29 Approximately twenty-two days after the two cells have united, a little heart begins to beat. At twenty-six days the circulation of blood begins.ⁿ

30 Scripture declares that the "life of the flesh is in the blood."^o Abortion sheds that innocent blood.

31 Another excuse some use to justify abortion relates to population control. Many in developing nations unknowingly ascribe their lack of prosperity to overpopulation. While they grovel in

n See J. Willis Hurst, R. Bruce Logue, Robert C. Schlant, and Nanette Kass Wenger, *The Heart*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), p. 7.

o Lev. 17:11

ignorance of God and his commandments, they may worship objects of their own creation (or nothing at all), while unsuccessfully attempting to limit their population by the rampant practice of abortion. They live in squalor, oblivious to the divine teaching—stated in the scriptures not once, but thirty-four times—that people will prosper in the land only if they obey the commandments of God.^p

32 How can God fulfill his promise to prosper his children in obedience if they worship idols or destroy life created by him—destined to be in his very image?

33 They will prosper only when their education includes faith in and obedience to the God of this world, who said,

34 “I, the Lord, ... built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine. And it is my purpose to provide. ... *But it must needs be done in mine own way.* ... For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare.”^q

35 Now, as a servant of the Lord, I dutifully warn those who ad-

vocate and practice abortion that they incur the wrath of Almighty God, who declared, “If men ... hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, ... he shall be surely punished.”^r

36 Of those who shed innocent blood, a prophet declared: “The judgments which [God] shall exercise ... in his wrath [shall] be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day.”^s

37 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has consistently opposed the practice of abortion. One hundred years ago the First Presidency wrote: “And we again take this opportunity of warning the Latter-day Saints against those ... practices of foeticide and infanticide.”^t

38 Early in his presidency, our beloved President Spencer W. Kimball said, “We decry abortions and ask our people to refrain from this serious transgression.”^u

39 Why destroy a life that could

p See Lev. 26:3–15; Josh. 1:7–8; 1 Kgs. 2:3; 2 Kgs. 18:7; 2 Chr. 24:20; 2 Chr. 26:5; 2 Chr. 31:21; Ezra 6:14; Job 36:11; 1 Ne. 2:20; 1 Ne. 4:14; 2 Ne. 1:9, 20, 31; 2 Ne. 4:4; 2 Ne. 5:10–11; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7; Mosiah 2:22, 31; Alma 9:13; Alma 36:1, 30; Alma 37:13; Alma 38:1; Alma 45:6–8; Alma 48:15, 25; Alma 50:20; Hel. 3:20; 3 Ne. 5:22; D&C 9:13.

q D&C 104:14–17; italics added

r Ex. 21:22

s Alma 14:11

t In James R. Clark, comp., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 3:11.

u Ensign, Nov. 1975, p. 6.

bring such joy to others?

40 Now, is there hope for those who have so sinned without full understanding, who now suffer heartbreak? Yes. So far as is known, the Lord does not regard this transgression as murder. And "as far as has been revealed, a person may repent and be forgiven for the sin of abortion."^a Gratefully, we know the Lord will help all who are truly repentant.

41 Yes, life is precious! No one can cuddle a cherished newborn baby, look into those beautiful eyes, feel the little fingers, and caress that miraculous creation without deepening reverence for life and for our Creator.

42 Life comes from life. It is a gift from our Heavenly Father. It is eternal, as he is eternal. Innocent life is not sent by him to be destroyed! This doctrine is not of me, but is that of the living God and of his divine Son, which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 14

Truth...and More - Delivered August 1, 1985 as a devotional at BYU Provo. (Transcription may contain errors.)

A few nights ago, I was at the airport to meet a good friend coming here from the people's Republic of China. There to meet incoming guests, also from China, were members of the BYU

department of linguistics. As we all joined hands on that happy occasion, once again I realized the broad outlook expressed in the motto: The world is our campus. As your traveling groups or performers have warmed hearts and a scholarly interest has grown in brotherly kindness around the globe, you are modern pioneers plowing the ground toward world peace and understanding. I deeply thank you for your vision of what can happen through your efforts.

2 Those privileged to work in a university have a bond of brotherhood denoted by the very name, uni-versity. The prefix "uni" implies unity; to be one. The stem of the word "vers" comes from the Latin word meaning: to turn. All of us are literally turned as one, toward a mutual goal; sharing a commitment to truth and to its omniscient author. An international brotherhood bind scholars together, even across political boundaries. Rising majestically above the babbling sea of European languages, one word has emerged unaltered as a symbol of that unity: university. At least in Latin, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish, the prefix and the stem of the word are the same. Only the grammatical ending differs among these languages.

3 From varying backgrounds and disciplines, we are joined tonight in one common goal:

a General Handbook of Instructions, 1983, p. 78.

to turn as one to the truth and to the other noble purposes for which is such a great university stands. Now, if my message on this occasion deserves a title, I would choose "Truth...and more," inviting you to consider the deficiency of the notion that simple truth alone, somehow confers immunity from any other thoughtful consideration of its use and its power.

4 The mission of the university is indelibly intertwined with a glory of truth. It's researchers discover the truth. Its teachers proclaim the truth. And its service to society applies the truth. When I was in medical school, I was taught that one must never touch the human heart for if it did, it would stop beating. That was the limit of our knowledge of the truth then. I remember our first experiments on animals during which we tenderly dared to incise the chest and open the pericardium, only after injecting Novocaine to anesthetize the heart so that it might not know that we were coming. It worked!

5 Subsequently, we found that the heart continued to function, even if we didn't anesthetize it. It beat merrily on its way if we touched it or held it or stitched it. As a result of these early, and later more detailed experiments, and the work of many others, of course, all designed to find more of the truth. Safe surgery on the heart has now become routine in most nations of the earth. That background, drawn from my own personal experience may serve to distinguish relative

from absolute truth. In fact, early in my professional training, one instructor said that everything taught in medical school should have a sign posted on it: "This is our present understanding of the truth until it is later shown to be false."

6 Of course, the truth isn't relative. It's man's understanding of the truth, that is really relative. Researchers realized that only a small sample of the totality of absolute truth is already known. Therein lies the allurements of research. There are a few rewards as exciting as the discovery of truth through research well performed. But truth proclaimed by deity is as absolute as deity. And defined as knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come. The glory of truth is revealed in these words of the Master, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Truth literally frees us from the bondage that ignorance brings. All assembled here are impelled to truth, many other great people have also been imbued with such passion for truth.

7 One of those was John Jakes; born in England, January 7th, 1827, the son of Wesleyan Methodist parents. His father must have been rather stern with the boy, because the record of his childhood memories includes notation of his being hidden by his mother in the merciful folds of her apron when his father wanted to whip the land.

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8 As a boy, John gathered horse manure along the road and sold it to farmers for fertilizer. A good cart load brought four shillings. In his youth, he recorded that he was earnestly seeking the true religion. After intensive study with missionaries who taught him the gospel, he was baptized at age 18 and became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1845.

9 John's austere father, upon hearing this wrote, "I wished you to attend the Wesleyan chapel. The Mormons do not teach you to honor and obey your parents. I hope that you will give up the idea of belonging to such a party. It is fiction."

10 John's reply written March 14th, 1847 when he was about 20 years of age included these words, "Dear father, I would pray that I may be led and guided into all truth. That I may understand the things of the kingdom of God and carry my ideas to you and be enabled to understand truth. Before I conclude, I will bear humble testimony to the truth of the work, which the Lord has commenced. Since I joined the church, my eyes have been opened and I have been able to understand the truth. I can bear testimony to the truth of the doctrines in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

11 John then likened the truth of the gospel to a diamond, while comparing the low smattering of education of religions to a rivulet's common pebble. At age 23,

John Jakes wrote these immortal lines that we sang together tonight under brothers Staley's direction.

*Oh say, what is truth? 'Tis the fairest gem
That the riches of worlds can produce,
And priceless the value of truth will be when
The proud monarch's costliest diadem
Is counted but dross and refuse.*

*Yes, say, what is truth? 'Tis the brightest prize
To which mortals or Gods can aspire.
Go search in the depths where it glittering lies,
Or ascend in pursuit to the loftiest skies:
'Tis an aim for the noblest desire.*

*The sceptre may fall from the despot's grasp
When with winds of stern justice he copes.
But the pillar of truth will endure to the last,
And its firm-rooted bulwarks outstand the rude blast
And the wreck of the fell tyrant's hopes.*

*Then say, what is truth? 'Tis the last and the first,
For the limits of time it steps o'er.
Tho the heavens depart and the earth's fountains burst,
Truth, the sum of existence, will weather the worst,
Eternal, unchanged, evermore.*

12 Brother Jakes spent his last years in the historian's office of the church where he labored

as an assistant to the historian from 1889 until his death June 1st, 1900. It's of interest at earlier as an elder, he became an active missionary affiliated with a branch at Stratford upon Avon, the home of William Shakespeare. Speaking of the Bard, we recall his pension for truth. This statement was made through his character, Polonius. "This above all, to the unknown self, be true." Perhaps less well known, are these lines spoken by Isabella from act five of Shakespeare's Measure For Measure, "This is all that's true as it is strange. Nay, it is ten times true. For truth is truth to the end of reckoning." That expression closely mirrors the teaching of the Lord, "My truth, abideth and hath no end."

13 Now it's a special privilege to serve at a university where the truths of man and the truths of God can be merged. There is no need here to partition truth. But we're not alone.

14 From the charter of Duke University in North Carolina we read, "The aims of Duke University are to assert a faith in the eternal union of knowledge and religion set forth in the teachings and character of Jesus Christ, the son of God, to advance learning and all likeness of truth, to defend scholarship against all faults, notions, and ideals, to develop a Christian love of freedom and truth, to promote a sincere spirit of tolerance, to discourage all partisan and sectarian strife and to render the largest permanent service to the individual, the state, the nation,

and the church. Unto these ends shall the affairs of this university always be administered." It's my understanding that they still strive to be true to that trust at Duke University. But the search for truth is not only institutional, it's individual.

15 Thirty years ago, as we were embarking on that unchartered sea, to which president Holland has made reference, early in the development of human open-heart surgery. I scheduled only one such operation a month. Each operation was a skirmish with terror. Usually bringing us face to face with death, with the unknown and with limitations imposed by our own ignorance. That confrontation forced us to return to the laboratory, to overcome the inadequacies encountered during the previous experience. Then when four-to-five and prepared by solving a specific problem, we would enter again, the whirlpool of another experience. Learning little by little, some of the truth upon which the principles of safe open-heart surgery one day could stand.

16 Truth was there all the time. It was absolute; part of the incontrovertibility of divine law that we had to know if we were to succeed. As we moved toward that light, we found truth: to give reproducibility and safety where once there in darkness lurked, the specters of fear, chance, and disaster. I learned the remarkable potential for truth. It is a powerful sword. An instrument that can be wielded, just like a surgeon's knife. It can be guid-

ed well; to bless. But it can also be crudely applied; to wound, to cripple, to damage or even destroy.

17 May I give you a little illustration that's probably happened in some of your families? Imagine a surgeon who's just operated upon a patient with cancer. Found it invading the vital organs of the body. Widespread beyond cure. With this knowledge, the surgeon approaches the family and patient. Coldly announces that the patient has advanced cancer that is beyond hope and he's doomed to die. While discharging his duty to share that information, the surgeon has told the truth. But with utter abandon has then walked away from the turmoil that truth has left in its wake.

18 Another surgeon with that same information and with compassion approaches the family with truth...and more. He speaks the truth and then mercifully indicates that even though the road ahead will be difficult and challenging, the patient and the family will not be forsaken. They will be supported with all the resources available to him as their caring physician. Important as truth is, often we need truth...and more.

19 Emily Dickinson expressed this concept so poignantly, "The truth must dazzle gradually, or every man be blind." As a slogan, that encourages truth and more, I like the four-way test of Rotary International. First, is it the truth? Second, is it fair to all

concerned? Three, will it build goodwill and better friendships. Four, will it be beneficial to all?

20 Now in holy writ, the word "truth" is coupled with expressions of mercy in the same verse scripture, 47 times. Truth is joined with forms of "right" or "righteousness" in 42 passages of scripture. The Psalmist wrote, for example, "Mercy and truth are met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." This verse is then followed by the prophecy of the coming of the Book of Mormon. "Truth shall spring out of the earth and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

21 We all might measure truth with a standard of mercy. If obedient to these passages from Proverbs. "Do they not err that devise evil, but mercy and truth shall be to them that devised good. By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged." Otherwise the sort of truth, cutting and sharp as a surgeon scalpel, might not be governed by righteousness or by mercy. But might be misused carelessly to embarrass, debase or deceive others.

22 Let me share a personal experience that you may find somewhat amusing. I was serving, at some personal sacrifice, as a consultant to the United States government at its national center for disease control in Atlanta, Georgia. Once, while awaiting a taxi to take me to the airport after our meetings were over, I stretched out on the lawn to soak in a few welcome rays of sunshine before

purpose, I," President Richards continued, "would be inclined to doubt them. Much more inclined to believe that their writings were prompted by a desire to make money out of sensational unsavory disclosures."

26 President Richard's statement reminds me that extortion by threat of disclosing truth, we label blackmail, is sordid disclosure for personal attention or gain, not closely related? Paul perceived the wise judgment needed in wielding the powerful sword of truth, as he taught, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth." Rightly dividing the word of truth, portends responsibility to apportion it wisely. Taking care not to injure nor destroy. Hence so many scriptures caution the need to join truth together with righteousness.

27 One of them pertains to the second coming of the Savior. "Thus sayeth the Lord of hosts. They shall be my people. I will be their God in truth and in righteousness." Now don't misunderstand. I do not decry the revealing of negative information per se. A prosecutor who uncovers embezzlement combines both truth and justice. A journalist who rightly reports betrayal of official trust, combines truth with righteousness. Physicians who determined that old fashioned bloodletting did more harm than good strengthened truth with light.

28 But any here who are tempt-

ed to rake through the annals of history to combine truth with unrighteousness or truth with the intent to defame or destroy should harken to this warning voice of scripture. "The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith and as it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

29 May I repeat, "The wrath of God is against all who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Now to anyone here who, because of truth, may be tempted to become a dissenter against the Lord and his anointed, weight carefully your action as you hear this sacred scripture. "These dissenters having the same instruction and the same information, yea, having been instructed in the same knowledge of the Lord, nevertheless, it is strange to relate. Not long after their dissensions, they became more hardened and impenitent and wicked, entirely forgetting the Lord their God."

30 When teachers and writers leave the lofty ethics of their honored professions, passing from legitimate reporting to feasting on sensational and pointless disclosures that have appeal temporarily to a flattering few, their work slants more toward gossip than gospel. Even worse, "If they lift up their heel against mine anointed," saith the Lord, "Their basket shall not be full. Their houses and their barns shall perish. And they

themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them." Scriptures teach us that the pleasures of prosperity, if tainted by the seeds of selfishness and distinction against the Lord or his anointed, comprise a dangerous combination.

31 These verses are a solemn warning to us all. "The very time when he doth prosperous people ye, and the increase of their fields, their flocks, and their herds and their gold and silver and all manner of precious things for the welfare and happiness of his people. Then is the time that they do harden their hearts and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet, the Holy One. And this because of their ease and their exceedingly great prosperity. How quick to be lifted up in pride. Yay, how quick to boast and to do all manner of that which is iniquity. And how slow they are to remember the Lord, their God, and to give ear unto his counsels, how slow to walk in wisdom's paths. They do not desire that the Lord, their God who hath created them should rule and reign over them. They do set at naught his counsels and they will not that he should be their guide."

32 Now in this country, academic freedom is something each of us prizes highly. Those in other countries, envy this opportunity enjoyed in our great nation. It's a privilege that will be fostered by keeping our university healthy, strong, and in favor with God. Each member of the BYU facul-

ty and staff bears the weight of responsibility to consider the instrument of truth and more. If truth is used by anyone in any degree of unrighteousness, others here, in the spirit of unity, must act bearing a responsibility to turn, to help enlarge that person's perspective. For if the true and righteous people are silent those who use truth in unrighteousness will prevail. Speaking from his viewpoint in history, Winston Churchill observed how the malice of the wicked was reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous. How the middle course adopted from desires for safety and a quiet life, may be found to lead direct to the bullseye of disaster.

33 We must realize that we are at war. The war began before the world was and will continue. The forces of the adversary or extended upon the earth. All of our virtuous motives, if transmitted only by inertia and timidity, are no match for the resolute wickedness of those who oppose us. Every individual associated with this university should think, speak and write throughout the world in consonance with this Proverb, "For my mouth shall speak truth. And wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness. There is nothing perverse in them."

34 The word truth is used 435 times in the scriptures. I have studied each one of them. In 374 of those instances, truth is coupled in the same verse with some strengthening term such

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as: spirit, mercy, righteousness, judgment, love, peace and so on. The vast majority of scriptural references to this weighty word exemplify the importance of truth and more.

35 What do these figures tell us? Truth and more, bring more than truth alone. Just as oxen may be equally yoked together to accomplish what one could not do alone. So the power of truth is augmented if equally yoked together with righteousness or with mercy, or with a spirit of love. This concept extends beyond the walls of the university.

36 It applies to our companions and our children at home as well, where truth can really be even bitter at times. If truth is considered alone, it's focus can be on the tube of toothpaste squeezed at the top. It can cry out from the dust and cobwebs of work yet undone. Truth can ferment from fingerprints on glass or from hand tools, misplaced.

37 Truth, like justice, can be harsh and unforgiving when not tempered by mercy. But when truth is magnified by mercy or rectified by righteousness, it can be converted from a force to destroy, to a force to bless; whether at home at church or in our work. Ours is the glorious privilege of searching for the truth, teaching the truth and applying it righteously in the service of others. We are sons and daughters of God engaged in His work.

38 Now, as you embark on a new school year, I would invoke a

blessing upon you. That success and joy may be yours. May you in unity turn toward the purpose that binds us all together, a commitment to truth and more; here in your homes and where'er you walk. May the deserve peace of heaven, crown your efforts. To this blessing, I add my deep feelings of personal gratitude and love for each of you. As I testify to the truth of the restored gospel and the glory of God and his work. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

CHAPTER 15

Self Mastery - Delivered October 1985 in the Saturday Afternoon Session of General Conference

IF our faith be united in prayer that we may be edified together, I should like to speak about our quest for self-mastery. In so doing, I would converse as a loving father counseling one of my own children.

2 Before you can master yourself, my precious one, you need to know who you are. You consist of two parts—your physical body, and your spirit which lives within your body. You may have heard the expression “mind over matter.” That’s what I would like to talk about—but phrase it a little differently: “spirit over body.” That is self-mastery.

3 When you arrived as a newborn baby, your little body was master. You had what I call the “I-want-what-I-want-when-I-want-it” philosophy. No amount of discussion could postpone

“bright recollection”^f and “perfect remembrance”^g at that day of decision.

10 Since thoughts precede deeds, you must first learn to control your thoughts. “As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he.”^h

11 In your quest for self-mastery, full participation in the activities of the Church will help. I’ll mention but a few. A first step comes as we learn together to keep the Sabbath day holy. This is one of the Ten Commandments.ⁱ We honor the Sabbath “to pay [our] devotions unto the Most High”^j, and because the Lord declared: “It is a sign between me and you ... that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.”^k

12 Another step toward self-mastery comes when you are old enough to observe the law of the fast. As funds are contributed from meals missed, the needs of the poor may be met. But meanwhile, through your spirit, you develop personal power over your body’s drives of hunger and thirst. Fasting gives you confidence to know that your spirit can master appetite.

13 Some time ago your mother and I visited a third-world country where sanitary conditions

were much poorer than ours. We joined with a delegation of other doctors from all over the world. The president of our group, an experienced traveler, warned of risks. In order to avoid water that might be contaminated, we were even counseled to brush our teeth with an alcoholic beverage. We chose not to follow that counsel, but simply did what we had learned to do once a month. We fasted that first day, thinking we could introduce simple food and fluids gradually thereafter. Later, we were the only ones in our group without disabling illness.

14 Fasting fortifies discipline over appetite and helps to protect against later uncontrolled cravings and gnawing habits.

15 Another step toward self-mastery comes from obedience to the Word of Wisdom. Remember, it contains a “promise, adapted to the capacity of ... the weakest of all saints.”^l It was given “in consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days.”^m Indeed, as you develop courage to say no to alcohol, tobacco, and other stimulants, you gain additional strength. You can then refuse conspiring men—those seditious solicitors of harmful substances

f Alma 11:43

g Alma 5:18

h Prov. 23:7

i Ex. 20:8; Deut. 5:15

j D&C 59:10

k Ex. 31:13; see also Ezek. 20:20

l D&C 89:3

m D&C 89:4

or smut. You can reject their evil enticements to your body.

16 If you yield to anything that can addict, and thus defy the Word of Wisdom, your spirit surrenders to the body. The flesh then enslaves the spirit. This is contrary to the purpose of your mortal existence. And in the process of such addiction, your life span is likely to be shortened, thereby reducing the time available for repentance by which your spirit might attain self-mastery over your body.

17 Other physical appeals come during your courtship period. In your youth, you may be challenged by restraints of parents hoping to guide you through this wonderful period of life.

18 Because the adversary is keenly aware of the power of physical temptation, Alma instructed his son and all of us: "See that ye bridle all your passions."ⁿ

19 When you marry, you and your eternal companion may then invoke the power of procreation, that you may have joy and rejoicing in your posterity. This divine endowment is guarded by your Creator's law of chastity. All through the years, remember: chastity is the powerful protector of virile manhood and the crown of beautiful womanhood.

20 In courtship and marriage, virtue seems to come under at-

tack first. Mental turmoil that trails in the wake of weakness from lust has evoked many a tear from innocent loved ones. Without repentance, tumult within self does not quit either.

21 Shakespeare expressed such self-conflict as one of his characters contemplating conquest in lust spoke these lines:

*What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.
Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?
Or sells eternity to get a toy?
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?*

22 Prophets have repeatedly cautioned about moral sin. One, for example, warned: "O, my beloved brethren, remember the awfulness in transgressing against that Holy God, and also the awfulness of yielding to the enticings of that cunning one. Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal."^o

23 Now don't misunderstand me. I would not want you to neglect your body. It deserves daily care. Physical conditioning through regular exercise requires self-mastery too. I marvel at Elder Joseph Anderson, now in his ninety-sixth year. For decades, the strength of his spirit over his body has induced him

n Alma 38:12
o 2 Ne. 9:39; see also Rom. 8:6; Alma 36:4; D&C 29:35; D&C 67:10

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to swim regularly. But his motivation has never been to attain physical longevity. That has come only incidentally. His desire has been to serve God and His anointed. Elder Anderson has followed what I label as the Lord's prescription for a long and useful life. Those faithful in "magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become ... the elect of God."^p

24 Elder Anderson's exercise program agrees with the perspective of Paul, who said: "Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."^q

25 Handsome and fit, Elder Anderson personifies this scripture: "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."^r

26 As you work during the productive years of life, whether at home or in the field, in the factory or at a workbench, reputation is built and character is forged as you develop self-mastery. Faithful payment of tithing is part of that process. It defends you against dishonesty or shabby temptations. Courageous accountability for your own actions becomes a cherished prize.

27 It really matters what you listen to, what you look at, what

you think, say, and do. Select music that will strengthen your spirit. Control your speech; keep it free from profanity and vulgarity. Follow the teachings of this proverb: "My mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

"All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing ... perverse in them."^s

28 As you approach old age, you will face new challenges to self-mastery. Symptoms of the deteriorating body can be painful, even disabling. Deep aches of sadness are caused by the departing of loved ones. For some, these deepening trials come early in life. But when yours are thrust upon you, remember a concept expressed by my father some time after my mother had passed away. Your grandparents had been married for sixty-four years. When someone asked how he was doing, my father simply stated, "I'm lonely, but I'm not lonesome." Do you know what he meant? Though he was now without his sweetheart, he was so busy assisting family and friends, he had replaced sorrow with service and had displaced self-pity with selfless love. He had found joy in following the timeless example of the Master.

29 Jesus, our Savior, was born in the lowliest of circumstances. For his baptism he was immersed in

p D&C 84:33-34
 q 1 Tim. 4:8
 r 1 Cor. 6:20
 s Prov. 8:7-8

the lowest body of fresh water upon the planet. In service and suffering, he also “descended below” all things^t, that he could rise above all things. Near the end of his life, he triumphantly declared, “I have overcome the world.”^u “Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.”^v Scriptures tutor us at least twenty-six times* to endure to the end to attain eternal life. Then we will obtain a resurrected body—one that is incorruptible, glorified, and prepared to live in the presence of God.

30 To reach your highest destiny, emulate the Savior. He proclaimed, “What manner of men ought ye to be? ... Even as I am.”^w Our loftiest hope is to grow in spirit and attain “the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children.”^x

31 You will then be well prepared for that pending day of judgment when, as taught by President Spencer W. Kimball, “the soul, composed of the res-

urrected body and the eternal spirit, ... will come before the great judge to receive its final assignment for the eternity”^y

32 Remember, my dear one, not an age in life passes without temptation, trial, or torment experienced through your physical body. But as you prayerfully develop self-mastery, desires of the flesh may be subdued. And when that has been achieved, you may have the strength to submit to your Heavenly Father, as did Jesus, who said, “Not my will, but thine, be done.”^z

33 When deepening trials come your way, remember this glorious promise of the Savior: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”^{aa}

34 Christ is our great Exemplar. I declare, as a special witness, that he is the Son of God and “is the life and the light of the world.”^{ab} We develop self-mastery as we become like him, I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.^{ac}

t D&C 122:8

u John 16:33

v 3 Ne. 15:9

w 3 Ne. 27:27

x Eph. 4:13–14

y The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982, p. 46.

z Luke 22:42

aa Rev. 3:21

ab Alma 38:9; D&C 11:28

ac Additional footnotes for talk: Matt. 10:22; Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13; 1 Ne. 13:37; 1 Ne. 22:31; 2 Ne. 9:24; 2 Ne. 31:15–16, 20; 2 Ne. 33:4; Omni 1:26; Alma 32:13, 15;; Alma 38:2; 3 Ne. 15:9; 3 Ne. 27:6, 16–17; Morm. 9:29; Moro. 8:26; D&C 10:69; D&C 14:7; D&C 18:22; D&C 20:25; D&C 20:29; D&C 53:7.

CHAPTER 16

*In the Lord's Own Way - Delivered
April 1986 in the Saturday After-
noon Session of General Conference*

SINCE my previous medical work took Sister Nelson and me to a number of developing nations, we have been exposed to many challenging scenes. In one country, so many people were sleeping in the streets and on sidewalks that we literally had to step over them as we walked. In another nation, our compassion was stretched almost to the breaking point as we yearned to help countless people in need. Young mothers with babies bundled on their backs begged for money while paddling their little sampan boats, which served both as their shelter and as their mode of transportation. And, oh, how our hearts ached for young men and women of another country who, one by one, were strapped as beasts of burden to wooden-wheeled carts heavily laden with weighty cargo. As far as our eyes could see, the endless caravan of vehicles continued, pulled by dint of human toil.

2 Although reasons vary according to time and place, the poor and the needy have nearly always been present. Regardless of cause, our Heavenly Father is concerned for them. They are all his children. He loves and cares for them.

3 Lessons from the Old Testament remind us that when the Lord sent prophets to call Israel back from apostasy, in almost every instance, one of the first charges made was that the poor had been neglected.

4 Scriptures teach us that the poor—especially widows, orphans, and strangers—have long been the concern of God and the godly. The poor have been especially favored by the law. Old Testament teachings authorized poor persons at harvest time to glean after the reapers. At fruit-picking time, what was left hanging on branches belonged to the poor. In the sabbatical seventh year, and in the jubilee fiftieth year, land was not planted nor tilled, and what grew of itself was free for the hungry.

5 To those who cared for the poor, blessings were promised. The Lord would deliver them in time of trouble.^a Truths were taught by these proverbs: “He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.”^b “The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.”^c

6 During the Savior’s earthly ministry, he reemphasized his timeless concern for the poor. Remember the reply the Lord gave to the question of the rich man: “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell [all] that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt

a See Ps. 41:1
b Prov. 14:21
c Prov. 29:7

have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”^d

7 In one of the Master’s precious parables, he illustrated this doctrine with the story of one who was hungry and was given meat, another who was thirsty and was given drink, and a stranger who was welcomed. The Lord related those as favors to him when he taught, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”^e And when they were not ministered unto, he admonished, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to one of the least of these, ye did it *not* to me.”^f

8 Indeed, the Church in New Testament times also had a binding obligation to care for the poor.^g

9 The Book of Mormon repeatedly declares this doctrine. From it we learn that care of the poor is an obligation that we take upon ourselves at the time of baptism. The prophet Alma so taught:

10 “Ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

11 “Yea, and [ye] are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, ... even until death.

12 “Serve him and keep his commandments.”^h

13 Every person so baptized who receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, which seals the ordinance, is under solemn covenant with the Lord to obey his commandments. Caring for the poor is one of those commandments. Surely, in Book of Mormon times, members of the Church had a sacred obligation to care for the poor.ⁱ

14 Few, if any, of the Lord’s instructions are stated more often, or given greater emphasis, than the commandment to care for the poor and the needy. Our dispensation is no exception.

15 In December 1830, the very year in which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, the Lord declared that “the poor and the meek shall have the gospel preached unto them, and they shall be looking forth for the time of my coming, for it is nigh at hand.”^j

d Matt. 19:21; see also Luke 18:22

e Matt. 25:40

f Matt. 25:45; italics added

g Luke 14:12–14, 16; Luke 19–31; Acts 2:44–45, Acts 4:32, Acts 6:1–6, Acts 11:27–30; Rom. 15:26; Gal. 2:10; James 2:1–9

h Mosiah 18:8–10

i 2 Ne. 9:30; Mosiah 4:16–27; Alma 1:29–31, Alma 32:2–6, Alma 34:28; Hel. 4:11–12; Morm. 8:35–39

j D&C 35:15

16 Bishops were designated and their duties defined: “They shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief that they shall not suffer.”^k

17 In 1831, the Lord said: “Remember the poor. ... Inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me.”^l A little later, he again declared, “Visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief.”^m Later the same year, he warned: “Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls.”ⁿ

18 With these teachings throbbing in our ears, stated and restated in accounts to all people in all days of recorded scripture, let our thoughts return to the homeless, beggars in boats, human beasts of burden, and to multitudes stricken with poverty.

19 Is it possible to be faithful to our solemn obligation to care for the poor and needy, to lift them and to love them—worldwide?

20 Where shall we begin? When? How?

21 Hear the answer of Almighty God:

22 “I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my

very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

23 “And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

24 “But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

25 “For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

26 “Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.”^o

27 I repeat the Lord’s prescription: “But it must needs be done in mine own way”! We begin where we are, now, and work according to his plan. His “own way” includes these principles:

28 “Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance. ... [And] all children have claim upon their parents. ... And after that, they have claim upon the church, or ... upon the Lord’s

k D&C 38:35

l D&C 42:30–31

m D&C 44:6

n D&C 56:16

o D&C 104:14–18

39 Limitations do exist. Measures of relief are at best temporary. Storehouses can provide only for some temporal needs. All people cannot be brought to the same living standards. And all needed things cannot be achieved by goods or gold.

40 To care fully for the poor, we must help the poor to change. As they are taught and abide doctrines of Deity, spiritual strength will come that enlightens the mind and liberates the soul from the yoke of bondage. When people of the earth accept the gospel of Christ, their attitudes change. Their understanding and capabilities increase.

41 A poet sensed the great power of the Spirit of the Lord to lift an individual when he wrote:

*The chief of all thy wondrous works,
Supreme of all thy plan;
Thou hast put an upward reach
Within the heart of man.*

42 That upward reach, drawn from a knowledge of divine doctrines, transforms souls! May I share an illustration with you? Once, Sister Nelson and I were invited to the humble home of Polynesian Saints who had relatively recently joined the Church. By walking carefully on wooden planks, we approached their house, built on wooden piles emerging from the floor of the sea. We climbed a ladder to enter their little one-room dwelling. As we were invited to be seated

on freshly woven grass mats, we could peek through holes in the floor and view sea water below. That home was starkly devoid of furniture, except for a used sewing machine provided by sisters of the Relief Society. But the love and warmth of this special family were apparent as our visit continued.

43 "We would like to sing for you," the father said through an interpreter. He put one arm about his wife and the other about the children, as did his wife. Five little ones, dressed in newly sewn clothing, joined their parents in singing songs the father had composed.

44 Concluding, he said: "These songs express our feelings of deep gratitude. Before we joined the Church, we had so little. Now we have so much!"

45 While wiping tears from our moistened cheeks, Sister Nelson and I looked at each other, comprehending that the gospel brings spiritual wealth which may bear little relation, at first, to tangible abundance. Conversely, people with plenty can be spiritually poor. Yet the Lord is concerned for them all!

46 Missionary work throughout the world is part of his plan. It brings the light of the gospel to those who embrace the truth. Then, as Saints learn and obey the commandments of God, they will prosper. This promise has been recorded by prophets

throughout time and in diverse places.^a

47 Working with a will, Saints gain a new appreciation of who they are and of their eternal worth. Righteousness, independence, thrift, industry, and self-reliance become personal goals. These qualities transform lives. In time, in the Lord’s “own way,” the poor will no longer be poor.

48 The Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth. The power of God is among men. Angelic ministrants communicate to legal administrators once again. A living prophet, the everlasting priesthood, covenant people, and the Lord’s “own way” are upon the earth to bless mankind, all races, in every clime—yes, all people, young and old, wealthy and poor, now and forevermore. This I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 17

Forces In Life: A Daddy-Daughter Dialogue - Published in the May 1986 New Era Magazine. Reprinted in the March 1987 Tambuli Magazine.

It was one of those memorable moments—one of those special times when a wonderful daughter comes to her loving father with an honest question that deserves a careful answer. The

question of this attractive teenage daughter was, “How far can I go with boys and still maintain acceptable standards with you and with my Father in Heaven?”

2 Sensing the opportunity to teach a vital lesson, the father philosophically replied, “There are two important forces in the world—centrifugal forces and centripetal forces. The term centrifugal force comes from Latin roots meaning ‘fleeing from the center’. Centripetal force is ‘a force directed toward the center’.”

3 “Oh, Dad,” she interrupted, “I ask a simple question and you give me a complicated answer! Can’t you just give me a simple answer?”

4 “What was your question again?”

5 “The question, Dad, was ‘Just how far can I go and still be proper?’”

6 “Well, my dear daughter, it all depends on where you want to go!” the father answered as he gently led her by the arm over to mother’s nearby quilting project. “Let’s take a little tuft of this cotton upstairs to your room and put it on the turntable of your record player.” He molded the cotton with his fingers into a small ball as they entered her room and walked over to the re-

a Josh. 1:7; 1 Kgs. 2:3; 2 Chr. 24:20, 2 Chr. 31:21; Ezra 6:14; 1 Ne. 2:20, 1 Ne. 4:14; 2 Ne. 1:9, 20, 2 Ne. 4:4; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7, Mosiah 2:22, 31; Alma 9:13, Alma 36:1, 30, Alma 37:13, Alma 38:1, Alma 48:15, 25.

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cord player. Then he placed the ball on the very edge of the turntable and said, "Now turn it on."

7 She did so, and after three or four revolutions the little cotton ball went flying out into the room.

8 "Turn the record player off," the father directed, "and put the cotton at the center of the disc. Now turn it on again."

9 She did as she was told, and round and round the turntable went. But this time the tuft of cotton did not move.

10 "That is what I mean by centrifugal and centripetal forces," the father continued. "One force causes an object to flee from the center, and the other directs an object toward the center."

11 He smiled as he reminded his daughter of one of her favorite rides at the amusement park when she was younger. "Remember how much time you used to spend on that large spinning turntable in the fun house? You and all the other children would scramble toward the center and try to hold your places as the huge wheel spun."

12 "Oh, yes," the daughter replied. "Once that wheel started spinning, the kids closest to the edge went sliding off just like that cotton ball, and the ones who managed to hold their position near the center stayed on."

13 Her eyes sparkled as she remembered how she would slip

and slide on the big wheel. "I tried my best to work my way from the edge toward the center, but it was a real struggle. I had to crawl and apply great traction with my hands to pull myself up toward the center. And if that weren't hard enough, I always had to be on guard for those who didn't make it, because they usually grabbed someone else as they spun off and tried to take them with them."

14 "In a way, life is like that," her father explained. "There are struggles, and people going downward sometimes tend to drag those nearby down with them. We, on the other hand, are trying to climb against those forces that are pulling us down."

15 "Now back to your question. How far you can go as you enjoy the companionship of your friends depends on where you want to go. If you want to go up and onward, you behave one way. If you want to go down and out, you behave another way."

16 "I want to go up, Dad," she replied without hesitation. "I want to reach my goals."

17 Since his daughter had recently attended a lecture by a member of a team that tried to conquer Mt. Everest, the father could not resist another comparison. "If that's the direction you want to go, let's take some lessons from those expert mountain climbers you met. What do you remember most about their experiences?"

18 "Oh, I learned a lot, but the most important thing I remember is their advance planning. They anticipated everything that could possibly happen and were prepared with decisions made well in advance in response to whatever they might encounter.

19 "Their teamwork was really impressive to me too. As they had tremendous hardships to overcome and heights to climb, they linked themselves together with ropes. The ropes were attached to something solid above as they pulled themselves up. Occasionally even the other people to whom they were linked became their anchors. We saw photographs showing one person dangling in midair while being tethered to people he trusted both above and below. Yet he didn't fall because of his ties to other people!

20 "They also maintained excellent communications. Even though they might have been temporarily separated, they were always in good communication. It seemed that the closer they were to potential danger, the more they leaned toward the center."

21 After hearing his daughter's report, the father responded, "Did anyone ever ask the question 'How close to the edge can I come?'"

22 "No! Quite the contrary. Their emphasis always seemed to be 'How close to the center can I stay!'" Then, with a look of enlightenment, she replied, "Dad,

now I am beginning to understand."

23 The father continued, "Let's apply these lessons to your question. One of the most important things you can do as you face the challenging climb of life is to plan in advance. You must know what pitfalls might befall you. No matter what your problem may be, you must decide in advance how you will react—what actions you will take—just like the mountain climbers on Mt. Everest.

24 "Remember you are part of a team that is pulling for you. You are connected by unseen tethers of love to people who pray and pull for you daily, even though those ties are not as visible as the ropes of the mountain climbers. Your teammates even extend into the world beyond. Your ancestors are concerned for you and supporting you. Relatives, teachers in school and in church, and good friends always try to lift. If you ever have acquaintances who are trying to pull you with them on their downward drift, know that these people are not truly your friends at all. Real friends never pull you down; they always lift!

25 "Communication in your life is as important to you as it is for mountain climbers. That's why I think you are so special for wanting to communicate with your father when you have such an important question. Just as receptive is your Heavenly Father, who appreciates your communications with him in prayer.

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26 “Finally, when dangers do come, always look toward the center. Remember, your record player would not produce very good music if it were not for that rod in the center that anchors the record to the spinning disc. If you allow the world in which your activities revolve to be anchored centrally to the iron rod of the gospel, life’s music will be sweet for you.

27 “On this or any other important question you have, cling to the center. Know what your loved ones would do in a similar circumstance. Think what the Lord would counsel you to do. If you are firmly and securely anchored to the iron rod, which is the word of God, you’ll be safe in your activities. The wiles of your whirling world and the winds of temptation will not spin you off but will find you safely rooted centrally toward your quest for salvation and exaltation.

28 “God has great blessings in store for you. You will attain the heights that he has placed within your grasp. Ultimately he will reward you through your obedience. Listen to his promise: If you are faithful, you ‘shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, ... and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever’.^a This, my daughter, is what I want for you.”

29 The lovely daughter thanked her father with a warm hug, grateful for his love and under-

standing. She now knew that she no longer was really interested in the answer to her question. She didn’t want to know how close to the edge she could go. She was now determined to stay close to the center, where the great rewards of fulfillment in life are found.

CHAPTER 18

I’ll Go, I’ll Do, I’ll Be: Three Steps Toward a Monumental Life - Delivered August 19, 1986 as a devotional at BYU Provo

MY dear fellow students, I am thrilled to be with you on this memorable occasion and to share it with my sweet companion, Dantzel, my father, Marion C. Nelson, and other members of our family. I should like to pay tribute to you and to those unseen who are similarly sacrificing that you might be here. All are here to learn. Some may also be happy for a temporary escape from diapers and dishes. But batteries do need to be recharged, and such regeneration comes from all that goes on in such a marvelous week as you have before you.

2 Last month a major focus of attention was the Statue of Liberty for her one hundredth anniversary and the celebration of her remodeling. While most monuments are erected to people or specific events, this one is indeed unique. Lady Liberty commemorates an ideal. But this and other monuments can teach

a D&C 132:19

us very important lessons about life.

3 Those lessons are linked to your theme of the week, “The Process of Becoming.” They are also embraced in the words of the song we have sung, “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go”.^b Within its text are several powerful commitments to action, including I’ll go (where you want me to go), I’ll do (thy will with a heart sincere), and I’ll be (what you want me to be).

4 By applying these concepts to personal development, each one of us here today can help build a monumental life. Through the process of becoming, you may go, do, and be a living monument. A monument requires a base to support the vertical shaft of its statement. The Statue of Liberty has a splendid 89-foot pedestal erected on a 65-foot star-shaped base.

5 A monumental life also begins with a broad base of understanding. This is one reason you are here today—to learn and acquire information and inspiration that will strengthen your pedestal of preparation. But you know that knowledge itself is rarely monumental. Just as pancake batter cannot make pancakes until exposed to heat, more than knowledge is required to mold a monumental life.

6 Three steps in the process of forging a monumental life from its base are neatly tucked in

the verses of our song—I’ll go, I’ll do, I’ll be. These three statements constitute the outline of my message.

I’ll Go

7 Step one is “I’ll go.” But before we go anywhere, it is good to consider where we have been. Life’s journey did not start with our first mortal breath. Prior to our birth, we were with God as his spirit children. We walked with him, talked with him, and knew him. We shouted for joy with the prospects of a journey to planet Earth to gain a physical body and to experience unique challenges here. I suspect we were terrified, at first, when told we would forget Father, friends, and facts we formerly knew so well. I can believe we were calmed when informed our Father in Heaven would provide prophets and scriptures to guide us and would provide a means whereby we could communicate with him through prayer and the spirit of revelation. But still we may have been a bit insecure when we learned that faith—faith to believe the intangible—was the key to success in our journey. Faith was to be the critical component in our safe return to our Father in Heaven. Few have had better insight than did Abraham, who recorded,

8 Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

9 And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

10 And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

11 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.^c

12 Once here, the journey through life for each of us may include other travels in order to meet our personal rendezvous with destiny. Father Lehi and Mother Sariah departed from the wealth and security of Jerusalem to trek for many days across hot desert sands to the eastern shores of the Red Sea. Then Lehi asked his sons to return to Jerusalem to get the brass plates of Laban. What did that assignment entail?

13 If we were to compare that trip to our own area, we would have walked a distance nigh equivalent to that from Provo to St. George, across scorching

sand with no freeways, no air conditioning, no cold drinks. Then how would you like to be asked to walk all the way back to Provo, tackle a tough assignment, and then walk back to St. George? No wonder Laman and Lemuel murmured! That was the setting for this matchless statement by Nephi:

14 I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.^d

15 You know the story. They eventually returned with the brass plates. Even Mother Sariah had complained when her sons were required to make this long, hazardous journey. Shortly thereafter, they were told by their father to return once again to Jerusalem, this time to get Ishmael and his family. Perhaps each young man felt a bit better about it this time, knowing there was the possibility he might be rewarded with one of the daughters of Ishmael to become his wife. This rugged discipline was but prologue to their going subsequently all the way across what we now know as the Saudi Arabian Peninsula to its southeastern shore, where ships were to be built. And this challenge was but prelude to their ultimate destiny—to go across ocean waters to the promised land.

c Abraham 3:22–25

d 1 Nephi 3:7

enough. Even today, a few very knowledgeable physicians still smoke cigarettes. They know better. Some Latter-day Saints know about such divine laws as chastity, tithing, or honesty, but experience difficulty in doing what the law requires.

22 There are more things to do in life than there is time available in which to do them. That means choices need to be made. Choices are often facilitated by asking well-focused questions. Some may be thoughtfully tendered in prayer.

23 Joseph Smith recorded his question: "My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join".ⁱ The unexpected answer: "Join none of them".^j

24 Such a question, asked with determination beforehand to do whatever is learned, will bring heavenly direction.

25 For example, near the end of the Book of Mormon is this challenge: "If ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent [meaning you intend to do], . . . he will manifest the truth of it unto you".^k Intent is an important part of the formula that preceded testimony, which brought many of us into the Church.

26 How did we get the Word of Wisdom? Joseph first asked an important question. In answer to fervent prayer with intent to do the revealed will of the Lord, section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants was received by revelation.

27 What preceded the vision of the redemption of the dead? President Joseph F. Smith pondered (not just read) the writings of Peter.^l Pondering the scriptures is done with an inquiring mind.

28 What predated the revelation on the priesthood received by President Spencer W. Kimball in 1978? Extended meditation and intelligent inquiry, prayerfully posed in the holy temple.

29 Now, I notice your Campus Education Week program lists over eleven hundred offerings, and before you can start to do, you must ask, "What do I want to do?" Then you may properly select those classes that will help you do those things that are uniquely yours to do. That question involves your purpose and your destiny.

30 Can you summarize the goal of your life and state it in a simple sentence as did the Savior? He said, "My work and my glory—[is] to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man".^m

i JSH 1:18

j JSH 1:19

k Moroni 10:4

l D&C 138:1-5

m Moses 1:39

31 Counsel from President Joseph F. Smith was concisely stated: "The important consideration is. . . how well we can. . . discharge our duties and obligations to God and to one another".ⁿ

32 Should that concept not be part of your greatest goal, if you truly believe in God and believe you are one of his children preparing to return to him? And if it truly is your objective, can there be any action appropriate for you to do other than to keep his commandments?

33 This was the plea of the Savior, who reported, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven".^o Another writer so recorded this inquiry: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?".^p James admonished: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only".^q King Benjamin also confirmed this concept. He said, "If you believe all these things see that ye do them".^r

34 One of life's interesting challenges is that while you are doing one thing, you are not doing other things. So while you are here at Campus Education Week, you are not elsewhere, thereby assuming some risks.

Partners, children, and other interests are among those at risk. Sister Nelson and I have occasionally taken leave from an engagement saying, "It's time for us to go home now and see what our children are doing and tell them to stop."

35 There is also a risk of discouragement when you return to your usual routines. During this week you will meet many wonderful people who are all on their best behavior. You will meet skilled teachers who have prepared well for countless hours and who successfully make it seem as though their lesson simply rolls out with such apparent ease. But don't forget, their lives' efforts are represented in that service. When you return home to cobwebs and dust and your own pile of problems that haven't gone away during your absence, don't be dejected because you were not sufficiently braced for the reality of your reentry.

36 Remember, educational opportunity is not confined to time or place. There is nothing magic about an institution, be it Harvard, Stanford, MIT, BYU, or any other. Personal motivation is more essential to education than campus setting. Fortunately, those of you here this week have both, and I admire you. But exciting, entertaining, charis-

n GD, p. 270
o Matthew 7:21
p Luke 6:46
q James 1:22
r Mosiah 4:10

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matic teachers are not nearly as fundamental to the attainment of your goals as are your desire and your determination.

37 If the most important things in life are to know God and to keep his commandments, then to heed his prophets and abide their teachings should be among our most important educational objectives. In a way, the very repetition of the teachings of prophets may have sounded monotonous through the years. The pleadings of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Abinadi have not differed significantly from those of President Lee, President Kimball, or President Benson. Surely, when measured by eternal standards, teachings of the prophets are more important and enduring than the latest findings of competent researchers, even if these findings were both discovered and taught by use of modern technology and teaching aids.

38 Success at the end of this week will be determined largely by individual desire to learn. When you crave learning as much as you want to satisfy pangs of hunger, you will achieve your desired objective. When you return home, you will want to continue to satisfy your hunger and thirst for righteousness and the word of God on your own.

39 I was with Elder Mark E. Petersen in the Holy Land in October 1983, during his last mortal journey. Elder Petersen

was not well. Evidences of his consuming malignancy were so painfully real to him, yet he derived strength from the Savior he served. Following a night of intense suffering, aggravated by pangs of his progressive inability to eat or to drink, Elder Petersen addressed throngs assembled at the Mount of Beatitudes to hear his discourse on the "Sermon on the Mount." After he recited "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," he departed from the biblical text and pleaded this question: "Do you know what it is to be really hungry? Do you know what it is to really be thirsty? Do you desire righteousness as you would desire food or drink under extreme conditions? [The Savior] expects us to literally hunger and thirst after righteousness and seek it with all our hearts!"

40 I was one of the few present on that occasion who knew how hungry and thirsty Elder Petersen really was. His encroaching cancer had deprived him of relief from physical hunger and thirst. So he understood that doctrine. He withstood the trial. He thanked the Lord who lent him power to preach his last major sermon at the sacred site where his Lord Jesus had preached.

41 Counsel was given by another prophet who said, "Feast upon that which perisheth not, neither can be corrupted".^s Nephi added: "If ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of

Christ, and endure to the end. . . : Ye shall have eternal life".^t Even though Elder Petersen was deprived of full physical feeding, he continued to feast upon the words of his Savior. He endured to the end, and I know he earned that promised reward.

42 To facilitate your feast, may I share a personal pattern of scriptural study that may also be helpful to you? I have marked my new LDS edition of the King James Version of the Bible to highlight enrichment material from three alternate translations. I have colored those little letters above the biblical text that draw attention to corresponding footnotes below, which I have colored with little round dots. Those citations from Hebrew I have marked with blue circles over both the cross-referenced superscript letter and the corresponding footnote below. The Old Testament comes to us primarily from the Hebrew language or those languages closely associated with Hebrew.

43 The New Testament comes to us primarily from the Greek language. Thus, frequently the alternate translation from the Greek adds significantly to a better understanding of the New Testament. The little superscript letters and corresponding footnotes from Greek I have marked with green circular dots.

44 For those passages clarified by excerpts from the Joseph Smith

Translation of the Bible, I have marked the little superscript letters and corresponding footnote citations with red circular dots. Now, whenever I turn to a page of scripture, I can immediately spot those special insights provided by this enrichment material.

45 The importance of these enhancements was taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith, who made this interesting statement: "Our latitude and longitude can be determined in the original Hebrew with far greater accuracy than in the English version".^u But more about that later when we get to the third step of our discussion.

46 I note from the program that many course offerings are classified under "parenting," which, of course, includes grandparenting. I think it's time to tell a story about grandchildren. I should like to honor all who are grandparents here today and ask them to stand and be recognized. Would all grandparents please arise? What a marvelous sight!

47 Now, while you continue to stand, will those who are not yet grandparents stand as well, as I think you all need a little rest. You can stand while I tell you a true story—a one-on-one encounter between one of our grandchildren and her grandmother. It occurred during one of those special moments when they were alone. Grandmother

t 2 Nephi 31:20
u Teachings, p. 290

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asked our seven-year-old granddaughter, "Do you think I look younger with my glasses on, or with them off?"

48 The granddaughter replied, "Well, try them on, and now, try them off." Her grandmother complied. Our granddaughter then said, "Do it again, Grandmother. First put them on, and then take them off." And so her grandmother again demonstrated. Finally, the granddaughter, after asking her grandmother to repeat the exercise a third time, said conclusively, "Grandmother, its older either way."

49 Sensing that her candor may have exceeded her diplomacy, our granddaughter then added, "Grandmother, have you tried Oil of Olay?"

50 Thank you. Now, as you return to your seats, I notice there are eight courses offered under the classification of aging.

51 Each time I go to the barber-shop, I see the sheet that has been swirled about me has collected clippings that are grayer and scantier than the time before. But seriously, I give thanks for the aging process. Yes, I am grateful to be alive to participate in it. Our bodies are such magnificent creations. The healing power in each one of us causes broken bones to heal and cuts and bruises to repair themselves. Contemplate what would happen if you could create a chair that would repair its own broken leg, or if you could make stock-

ings that would mend their own runs. If you could do that, literally, you could create dynamic life that would perpetuate itself infinitely.

52 Our bodies, capable of self-repair, would do the same thing, were it not for aging. Life on this earth would be without end and without hope of eternal life with our father, mother, and loved ones, if the healing process responded in this marvelous way to all injuries and illnesses. That hope we had in the beginning, to return to our Father in Heaven, would be but a baseless dream were it not for the assurance provided by the aging process. Alma so taught his son Corianton: "It was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would *destroy* the great plan of happiness".^v Be grateful for the privilege of aging and all that it provides.

53 These marvelous bodies deserve our best daily care. So, as you consider optional courses on fitness and sports, health, and self-improvement, may you remember that no code of health can compare with section 89 in the Doctrine and Covenants for brevity, content, and efficacy.

54 Things do go wrong with these bodies from time to time. Lady Liberty and those of us eager to prolong useful life can appreciate help provided by necessary and timely repairs. And we should remember the remarkable principle revealed

v Alma 42:8; emphasis added

injunction: “I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect”.^{ad}

64 How do we explain these similar but significantly different statements? Between the time of his Sermon on the Mount and his sermon to the Nephites, the sinless Savior had become perfected by his atonement. “Perfect” in Matthew 5:48 comes from the Greek word *teleios*, meaning “complete,” and is derived from the Greek word *telos*, which means “to set out for a definite point or goal.” Thus, this scripture conveys the concept of conclusion of an act. Therefore, perfect in this scripture also means “finished,” “completed,” “consummated,” or “fully developed,” and refers to the reality of the glorious resurrection of our Master.

65 Before his crucifixion Jesus so taught, “Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected”.^{ae}

66 His atonement provides that the body, once corruptible, now may become incorruptible. Our physical frame, once capable of death and decay, now may become immortal and beyond crumbling deterioration. That body presently sustained by the blood of life^{af} and ever changing,

may one day become sustained by spirit—changeless and incapable of death any more.

67 So the admonition “to be perfect” should not cause depression among us. To the contrary, it should bring us great joy and jubilation. The Lord knew that the procedure would be long and challenging. So he added this word of encouragement:

68 *For verily I say unto you, they [the best gifts] are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited.*^{ag}

69 Those who are really seeking to do his will are recipients of his blessings, for he knows the intent of our hearts.

70 As he concluded his ministry among the Nephites, Jesus issued this powerful challenge: “What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am”.^{ah}

71 I know from long experience as a teacher that a sure way to lose students is to use long or numerous quotations. Attention is easier to maintain through amusing stories. I have not been called as an apostle to entertain, but to teach the word of the Lord. You, too, are disciples as well as teachers and students. I

ad 3 Nephi 12:48

ae Luke 13:32

af Leviticus 17:11

ag D&C 46:9; emphasis added

ah 3 Nephi 27:27

know you can stay with me as we climb the hill of enlightenment through direct study from the scriptures. Fasten your mental seat belts and let us see how much we can learn about these two little words, I am. Are you with me?

72 These two words, I am, the simplest words in all scripture, appear in the New Testament in the Greek language as ego eimi. In the original text of the Old Testament, I am is read in Hebrew as hayah.

73 Let our jargonal journey begin with John 8:58. Inquisitors once asked Jesus if he had seen Abraham. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (In the Greek text these two special words are ego eimi.)

74 My green-dotted mark at the superscript "b" before "I am" draws me down to this green-dotted footnote: "The term I AM used here in the Greek is identical with the Septuagint usage in Ex. 3:14 which identifies Jehovah."

75 Now, what does that mean? Let's turn to Exodus 3. To get the frame of reference for verse 14, let's start with verse 11. The scene is on Mt. Sinai. A dialogue is taking place between Jehovah and Moses. I presume Moses was suffering some kind of identity crisis (at verse 11) when he said unto God:

76 Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

77 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

78 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

79 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.^{ai}

80 In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, I am comes from the word hayah. Translated into English it means "to be," or "existence," and applies as well to the future as it does to the present tense. Indeed, this verse could be translated, "I will become what I will become." Here, to Moses, the premortal Messiah is proclaiming not only one of his names, but choosing a word that could literally imply the redeeming role he was yet destined to fulfill.

81 Two other facts about the word hayah are of interest: (1)

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ai Exodus 3:11-14

hayah is the Hebrew root from which the word "Jehovah" is derived; and (2) it is closely related to the Hebrew term havah, and shares in common two of three characters. Havah means "to be" as does hayah, but it also has the connotation "to breathe."

82 Are there hints hidden in the deep meaning of God's reply, recorded in Exodus 3:14? We know the treasured truth that the Lord God Jehovah, creator of heaven and earth under the direction of the Father, revealed to Moses one of the Lord's special names. This word may have intimated his role in the eternal existence of man, including the inception of the breath of life into his nostrils, to man's potential immortality. All this was to be made possible through the atoning sacrifice which he, Jesus the Christ, was to be sent to the earth to effect.

83 Now let us look at selected verses from the New Testament. In Mark 14:61-62: "Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am." Next from John 4:25-26: "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."

84 In your Bible, the last word of that verse, he, is printed in italics, meaning that the King James translators added that word for clarification of meaning. In the

Greek text, the sentence contains these two words: ego eimi, (I am). The words of Jesus in this passage could be translated, "I am [is] speaking to you."

85 Let's turn to John 8:28:

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

86 Here again, King James translators added the word he after I am and italicized it to note their honest addition. But the Greek New Testament records: "Then shall ye know that ego eimi (I am).

87 Yes, before Abraham was, Jesus was "I am," hayah in Hebrew or ego eimi in Greek. Under the Father's plan, Jehovah, Creator, God of this world, Savior and Redeemer, was indeed the Great I Am. Although this phrase, the Great I Am, does not appear in the text of the King James Version of the Bible, it is evident that the Prophet Joseph Smith understood this concept well. Three times he recorded this wording in the Doctrine and Covenants, in verse one of sections 29, 38, and 39.

88 I'll conclude our scriptural sojourn by returning to Christ's challenge to us: "What manner of men ought ye to be? . . . even as I am".^{aj}

89 So, my brothers and sisters, be inspired by such an example and by great monuments, and consider your living a monumental life. During this education week, enlarge your pedestal of preparation, and then ultimately build on these three fundamental steps: (1) I'll go. Go with faith to the arena of life's challenge. (2) I'll do. Do whatever you can to erect a shaft of righteous, endeavor that will remain even beyond your days. (3) I'll be. And "be not weary in well doing",^a but "let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator".^b

90 Be not discouraged when imperfections of yours and of your loved ones seem more than you can bear. And please, "continue in patience until ye are perfected".^c

91 Then you may be, as the Lord pleaded, "even as I am." You will be numbered among his elect and will be known of him at the glorious advent of his Second Coming.

92 There is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ. Behold, he is the life and the light of the world. Behold, he is the word of truth and righteousness.^d

93 By so learning and living, your life will become monumental, not only as a tribute to your own accomplishment, but as an everlasting credit to him who created you. God bless you to go where he wants you to go, to do his will with a heart sincere, and to be what he wants you to be, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 19

Joy Cometh in the Morning - Delivered October 1986 in the Sunday Afternoon Session of General Conference

THE title of my message is taken from the thirtieth Psalm, verse 5: "Joy cometh in the morning." As I discussed this scripture with members of our family, they recalled that "men are, that they might have joy"^e, but they had not pondered the intriguing concept that "joy cometh in the morning."

2 One of our family said, "News reports appear almost daily concerning people who have problems with drugs, drinking, and emotional distress. How can they, and we, attain the joy spoken of in the scriptures?"

3 "The gospel of Jesus Christ offers hope," I answered. "It declares joy to be part of our divine destiny. And to experience joy in

a 2 Thessalonians 3:13; Galatians 6:9
b 1 Peter 4:19
c D&C 67:13
d Alma 38:9
e 2 Ne. 2:25

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the morning becomes our special challenge. The true test," I continued, "is to be able to look in the mirror, first thing in the morning, and feel real joy."

4 One of our daughters, who had recently announced that she was expecting a new addition to the family, said, "But Dad, that's the hardest time of the day for me!"

5 "My dear ones," I replied, "in order to experience true joy in the morning, or at any time, at least three factors are needed. You need to feel good about the people with whom you live and work—your companions in life. You must feel good about yourself—not in any sense of conceit, but simply a proper esteem for yourself, well deserved. And possibly most important, you must feel good about your relation to God and sincerely love him."

6 As I so counseled my family in that conversation, we all might consider those three steps to achieve real joy in life.

Courtesy to Companions

7 Joy in the morning begins with courtesy to companions. When shades of slumber first admit the light of dawn, I reach gently for my beloved companion nearby. I gain sweet reassurance that all is well with her even before my eyes are fully opened. That reminds me, incidentally, of advice given by President David O. McKay, who said, "During

courtship we should keep our eyes wide open, but after marriage keep them half-shut"^f

8 My sweetheart has done that. Through our many long years of postgraduate study, professional responsibilities, and a growing family, she did not complain. Recently I overheard a conversation she had with young mothers enduring similar stress. They asked her how she had managed with ten children and a husband whose time to help was so limited. Kindness was reflected in her reply: "Through our struggling years I didn't expect much, so I was rarely disappointed."

9 She is special. With her, it is easy to obey the scriptural injunction to "live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of [thy] life".^g

10 Not all of us are blessed with such wonderful eternal companions—not yet anyway. Many of us who are married cannot be together as much as we would like. Thankfully, we all have companionship of family and friends.

11 Recently another General Authority was my partner for mission tours to dusty places. On occasion, when I returned from a morning shower, I found to my surprise that this considerate companion had shined my shoes. Gratefully I wondered if each of the thirty thousand missionaries now laboring in the

f Conference Report, Apr. 1956, p. 9
g Eccl. 9:9

21 Therefore, spiritual and physical elements each must be nurtured if we are to earn proper self-esteem.

22 Spiritual self-esteem begins with the realization that each new morning is a gift from God. Even the air we breathe is a loving loan from him. He preserves us from day to day and supports us from one moment to another.^m

23 Therefore, our first noble deed of the morning should be a humble prayer of gratitude. Scripture so counsels: "Pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto [you]: and [you] shall see his face with joy".ⁿ

24 I did not fully appreciate the significance of prayerful greetings until I became a father myself. I am so grateful that our children never gave their mother or dad the silent treatment. Now I sense how our Heavenly Father may appreciate our prayers, morning and night. But I can imagine the pangs of his sorrow because of silence from any of his children. To me, such ingratitude seems comparable to sullen goldfish oblivious to kind providers who sprinkle food in their bowl. Indeed, those who pray can "worship God with exceedingly great joy".^o

25 I learned long ago that a period of uninterrupted scriptural

study in the morning brings enduring enrichment. I feel as did Jeremiah: "Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart".^p Sacred scriptures have been repeatedly described as "glad tidings of great joy".^q As we learn and abide their teachings, that joy becomes part of our lives.

26 Joy cometh in the morning when personal talents are developed. Each of us is blessed with different potential. I don't think I could get up early enough to become a portrait painter. But I have appreciated teachings since my earliest childhood from parents who knew the joy that good music brings. And some of the sweetest sounds in our home have been those from songs and instruments of children improving their talents.

27 Even in Old Testament days, "David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, ... sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy".^r

28 Confidence to begin each morning ready to meet the challenges of the day comes from spiritual self-esteem.

29 Physical self-esteem also requires nurturing. Our bodies deserve thoughtful care. I echo this declaration of Paul:

m Mosiah 2:21

n Job 33:26; see also Alma 34:21; Alma 37:37

o Alma 45:1

p Jer. 15:16

q Hel. 16:14; Mosiah 3:3; Alma 13:22; Luke 2:10

r 1 Chr. 15:16

30 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

31 "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are".^s

32 Physical conditioning from regular exercise is important. And we can do so much more to keep our bodies strong.

33 In 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith received the Word of Wisdom by revelation. It includes these simple directives: We are not to drink alcohol, tea, or coffee, and we are not to use tobacco. Prophets in our generation and in this conference have told us also to avoid harmful drugs. Now medical science increasingly confirms the physical benefits of compliance with these teachings.

34 The damaging effects of alcohol are so widely known, additional comment is hardly needed. Harm inflicted by alcohol has been demonstrated, for example, by a study of the relationship between alcohol

consumption among expectant mothers and the birth weight of their newborn infants. Findings published from the U. S. National Institutes of Health disclosed that consumption of one to two alcoholic drinks a day was associated with a substantially increased risk of producing a growth-retarded infant.^t

35 Scientists now know that smoking tobacco is the number one preventable cause of death in all the world. It is the leading preventable cause of heart disease, lung disease, artery disease, and cancer.^u

36 Still another report indicates that more than one fourth of all deaths in the United States are now caused by conditions which physicians classify as addictive disorders.^v

37 Obedience to the Word of Wisdom keeps one free from all such addictions. This protection is pronounced by covenant in the last verse of the eighty-ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

38 "And I, the Lord, give unto

s 1 Cor. 3:16-17

t James L. Mills, et. al., "Maternal Alcohol consumption and Birth Weight," Journal of the American Medical Association, 12 Oct. 1984, pp. 1875-79

u William W. Pollin and R. T. Ravenholt, "Tobacco Addiction and Tobacco Mortality," Journal of the American Medical Association, 23 Nov. 1984, pp. 2849-54; 1986 Heart Facts, American Heart Association, 1986, p. 16; "The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General," publication DHHS (PHS) 84-50204, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services, Office of Smoking and Health, Rockville, Md., 1983

v Pollin and Ravenholt, p. 2849

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them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them".^w

39 This reference to the first Passover reminds us that, in faith, ancient Israel was obedient to the commandment to take blood and "strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses".^x

40 "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not ... destroy you".^y

41 So, in faith, modern Israel is commanded to obey the Word of Wisdom. It becomes our token of a covenant with the Lord—a spiritual separator of covenant Israel from the rest of the world.

42 Joy cometh in the morning—to those who can stand before the mirror and feel clean, to those whose mouths are free from the taste of flavors forbidden by the Lord, to those whose spirits and bodies are free from feelings of self-remorse.

Love of God

43 The crowning attribute that leads to joy is love of God. Even that first look in the mirror can be more enjoyable knowing we

are created in his image. Each of us can say, as did the Apostle, "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance".^z

44 God, who gave us life, also gave us commandments to live by, that we might have joy. They have been revealed periodically by prophets from Adam to President Benson. One wrote this expression: "Consider ... the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual".^{aa}

45 But for those who have not known his ways or who have strayed from them, remember, it is not too late to change. Blessings from faith and repentance still can be yours.

46 To those who feel defeated and downtrodden, look to the early hours of the day for your rescue. The Lord tells us, "Cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated".^{ab}

47 The dawning of a brighter day heralds a time of forgiveness. Shadows of yesterday's grief melt in the rays of early morn's opportunity.

w D&C 89:21
x Ex. 12:7
y Ex. 12:13
z Acts 2:28; Ps. 16:11
aa Mosiah 2:41
ab D&C 88:124

48 Joy comes from our posterity, and we rejoice as they are blessed by the ordinances of salvation and exaltation.

49 Our family experienced that in a special way recently as our youngest daughter was sealed to her eternal companion in the holy temple. To witness this event, along with other family members, were her parents and all eight of her older sisters and their husbands. For us, there was truly joy in the morning on that day. Then we really felt the scriptural truth, "Men are, that they might have joy".^a

50 These experiences, glorious as they are, become but prelude to that great day ahead, when the faithful will stand at the latter day upon the earth. They shall abide the Second Coming of the Lord and shall stand with him when he appears.^b On that joyous morning, the mirror will reflect the miracle of the first resurrection. The faithful shall be crowned with glory, immortality, and eternal life.^c

51 Once again "morning stars [will] sing together, and ... all the sons [and daughters] of God [will] shout for joy!".^d For on that morning, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together".^e

52 Then, "there'll be peace and contentment evermore, ev'ry heart, ev'ry voice on that day will rejoice. ... There'll be joy in the morning on that day".^f It shall be ours—through our faithfulness—I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 20

Love Thy Neighbor - Published in the January 1987 Ensign Magazine

THIS is an edited version of a talk delivered at the Regional Representatives' Seminar held 4 April 1986.

2 The Lord's concern for the one is evident in many ways. Luke gives three illustrations: the parables of the lost sheep, the misplaced piece of silver, and the prodigal son. Each emphasizes the concern our Lord has for the individual soul.

3 This concern continues today. The First Presidency recently said that those not receiving the blessings of full activity in the Church are invited to "come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the Saints."^g

4 Sometimes in our zeal to do right, we may stumble over our

a 2 Ne. 2:25
 b Mal. 3:2–12; 3 Ne. 24:2–12
 c D&C 75:5; D&C 138:51
 d D&C 128:23; Job 38:7
 e Isa. 40:5; Ezek. 20:48; Luke 3:6; D&C 101:23
 f Natalie Sleeth, "Joy in the Morning," Carol Stream, Illinois: Hope Publishing Co., 1977, pp. 4–5, 9–10
 g Ensign, Mar. 1986, p. 88

own feet. Our efforts to do good may be undermined unknowingly by labels we apply, even though labels can be important. Our Sunday School studies of the Old Testament have shown us the symbolic significance of names given to the great patriarchs. Abram, for example, had a name that means “exalted father.” Then, just as he was getting used to that name after nearly one hundred years, the Lord changed it from Abram to Abraham to indicate that he would be more than an exalted father. He would become “a father of many nations.”^h

5 Gabriel, magnified by many heavenly errands, bears a name that means “man of God.”

6 Elijah, meaning “my God is Jehovah,” has components of the names of both Elohim and Jehovah. Bearing a name signifying the Father and the Son, Elijah was the one entrusted with the keys “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers.”ⁱ

7 But a human soul without such purposeful designation searches for identity and assurance. In a popular musical an orphan sings these lines:

*Every night I kneel and pray,
Let tomorrow be the day
When I can see the face of someone
who*

*I can mean something to.
Where, where is love?^j*

8 If a child, slow of speech, is declared a stammerer by others, he or she may speak with even less assurance than before. In fact, some evidence suggests that stuttering is aggravated merely by labeling one a stutterer. Unkind words exchanged between people can also injure deeply, especially if discourteous labels are applied in the process.

9 People tend to become what is expected of them. Labels convey those expectations. Pigeons may feel comfortable in designated pigeonholes, but people can be offended when labeled or classified.

10 Yet, in spite of the obvious dangers, we are prone to label one another. “Smoker,” “drinker,” “inactive,” “liberal,” “unorthodox” are but a few terms applied, as though we cannot separate the doer from the deed.

11 In the eyes of God, all are his children; all are brothers and sisters. Millions who have joined the Church have witnessed to the Lord at the time of their baptism their willingness to take upon themselves his name and to keep his commandments. Having entered the first gate of baptism to embark upon the strait and narrow path,^k members of the Church may progress

h Gen. 17:1–5
i D&C 110:15
j Lionel Bart, Oliver
k 2 Ne. 31:17–18

toward salvation and exaltation.

12 But we progress at our own pace. Each of us, regardless of struggles, is a choice soul, precious in the sight of the Lord. Many of us, if not most, will slip and fall somewhere along the way.

13 Because leaders stand at a higher level of perception, they can look on those making the climb to identify those in distress. I hope those who are leaders—stake presidents, bishops, home teachers, visiting teachers—have learned to love and to lift all members, but especially to lift those who have stumbled along the gospel pathway.

14 “For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.¹

15 I believe this is what the Lord meant when he taught us through Paul to “lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet.”^m For that correct path leads to the glorious gate that enables blessings of the priesthood to come into our lives. That is the gate of the temple. The ultimate reason for our membership in the Church is that we may enjoy all the blessings there for us and our families.

16 Obstacles along the way, such

as habituation to tobacco or to stimulating drinks like coffee and tea, need not raise artificial barriers between us as brothers and sisters or between an individual and the fulfillment of his or her own potential.

17 Years ago I was given a home teaching assignment to a special couple. A faithful, wonderful wife welcomed us to their home while her husband retreated to a small room filled with amateur radio equipment. But our concern for him was great enough that we tolerated the dense smoke of his cigars as he reluctantly responded to our questions about the principles of radio operation.

18 As our regular visits continued, earlier barriers melted into bonds of dear friendship. Our wives became fast friends, too. The sweetness of his soul began to emerge. He refined his life. Now, more than thirty years later, we look back on his distinguished service as a stake president, mission president, and temple president. Last year, I had the great privilege of ordaining this dear friend of mine a patriarch!

19 Paul wrote to the Galatians: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. ...

20 “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. ...

1 Eccl. 4:10
m Heb. 12:12–13

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21 "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."ⁿ

22 A wife grieves because of errant activities of her husband. Parents sorrow when a child goes astray. But scriptures hold great promise, particularly for those who have been taught the gospel earlier in life: "Train up a child in the way he should go," the proverb states, "and when he is old, he will not depart from it."^o

23 Job expressed hope with this analogy:

24 "For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

25 "Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

26 "Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant."^p

27 That scent of water is the wonderful refreshment of love. Most of the disaffected have separated themselves from full fellowship in the Church not because of doctrinal disputations but because of hurt, neglect, or lack of love. Progress toward full participation in the blessings of the

gospel needs no new programs, only a new vision of love that can be rendered best by friends and neighbors.

28 When someone asked the Savior, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

29 "This is the first and great commandment.

30 "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

31 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."^q

32 Quick and easy ways to "come back" cannot be packaged at Church headquarters and delivered to local priesthood leaders. Love cannot be conveyed remotely, even with new technology. These two great commandments must be applied by leaders of the Church locally, thus building the Church throughout the world:

33 "Preach my gospel ... and cause my church to be established."^r

34 When that happens, great blessings of eternal worth will result:

n Gal. 6:1–2, 10

o Prov. 22:6

p Job 14:7–9

q Matt. 22:36–40

r D&C 28:8

think no one cares! Perhaps it was this feeling that caused the psalmist to write, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."^a

50 The church of our loving Lord cannot function that way! We all need each other. Paul explained this by likening members of the Church to parts of the body:

51 "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

52 "And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ...

53 "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

54 "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."^b

55 As we fortify ourselves for our mighty redeeming tasks, may we heed this inspired prayer from the Book of Mormon:

56 "O Lord, wilt thou grant unto us that we may have success in bringing [our brothers and sisters] again unto thee in Christ.

57 "Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren; therefore, give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee."^c

58 Let us unlabel our brothers and sisters. They are not strangers, "but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."^d Let leaders and members alike love God and love one another. Obedience to these two great commandments will crown our efforts with success.

59 "Verily, thus saith the Lord, ... if those who call themselves by my name and are essaying to be my saints, if they will do my will and keep my commandments ... they may be prepared for that which is in store for a time to come."^e

60 That time will be glorious, especially when shared with all the sheep of the fold, with none lost! We shall bless the lives of our families, friends, and neighbors as we help them prepare for the great day of the Lord, which is nigh.

CHAPTER 21

The Magnificence of Man - Delivered March 29, 1987 as a devotional at BYU Provo

I invite you to ponder things

- a Ps. 142:4
 b 1 Cor. 12:15–16, 21, 27
 c Alma 31:34–35
 d Eph. 2:19
 e D&C 125:2

by the naked eye. Twenty-three chromosomes from both the father and the mother unite in one new cell. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes. A marvelous process of genetic coding is established by which all the basic human characteristics of the unborn person are determined. A new DNA complex is thus formed. A continuum of growth is instituted that results in a new human being. Approximately twenty-two days after those two germ cells have united, a little heart begins to beat. At twenty-six days the circulation of blood begins. Cells multiply and divide, some becoming differentiated to become eyes that see, or ears that hear, while others are destined to become fingers that feel the wonderful things about us. Yes, awareness of the magnificence of man begins with the miracles of conception and our creation.

Specific Organs

12 In our treasure chest of understanding, we can look to the compartment of capability of selected organs. Time won't permit complete consideration, but each jewel merits admiration, appreciation, and awe.

13 Let's mention the magnificence of the eyes with which we see. No doubt you have stood before the mirror, as have I, watching pupils react to changes in the intensity of light—dilating to let more light in, constricting to reduce the light allowed to reach the sensitive retina of the eye. A self-focusing lens is at the front of each eye. Nerves and muscles

synchronize the function of two separate eyes to produce one three-dimensional image. Eyes are connected to the brain, ready to record sights seen. No cords, no batteries, no external connections are needed; our visual apparatus is marvelous—ininitely more priceless than any camera money can buy.

14 As we admire good stereophonic equipment for sensing sound, ponder the magnificence of the human ear. It is so remarkable. Compacted into an area about the size of a marble is all the equipment needed to perceive sound. A tiny tympanic membrane serves as the diaphragm. Minute ossicles amplify the signal that is then transmitted along nerve lines to the brain, which registers the result of hearing. This marvelous sound system is also connected to the recording instrument of the brain.

15 A large portion of my life's study and research has been focused on the jewel of the human heart—a pump so magnificent that its power is almost beyond our comprehension. To control the direction of the blood's flow through the heart, there are four important valves, each pliable as a parachute and delicate as a dainty silk scarf. They open and close over 100,000 times a day—over 36 million times a year. Yet, unless altered by disease, they are so rugged that they stand this kind of wear seemingly indefinitely. No man-made material developed thus far can be flexed this frequently and for so long without breaking.

16 The amount of work done by the heart is most amazing. Each day it pumps enough fluid to fill a 2,000-gallon tank car. The work it performs daily is equivalent to lifting a 150-pound man to the top of the Empire State Building, consuming only about four watts of energy—less than that used by a small light bulb in your home.

17 At the crest of the heart is an electrical generator transmitting energy down special lines, causing myriads of muscle fibers to beat in coordination and in rhythm. This synchrony would be the envy of the conductor of any orchestra.

18 All this power is condensed in this faithful pump—the human heart—about the size of one’s fist, energized from within by an endowment from on high.

19 One of the most wondrous of all jewels in this treasure chest is the human brain with its intricate combination of power cells, recording, memory, storage, and retrieval systems. It serves as headquarters for the personality and character of each human being. As I observe the lives of great individuals, I sense that the capacity of the brain is seemingly infinite. Wise men can become even wiser as each experience builds upon previous experience. Indeed, continuing exercise of the intellect brings forth increased intellectual capacity.

20 Each time I marvel at a computer and admire the work it can do, I respect even more the mind of man that developed the computer. The human brain is certainly a recording instrument that will participate in our judgment one day as we stand before the Lord. The Book of Mormon speaks of a “bright recollection”^f and of a “perfect remembrance”^g that will be with us at that time. Each one of us carries that recording instrument guarded within the vault of the human skull.

21 As we symbolically sift through the treasure chest of understanding, we could spend hours, even a lifetime, studying the incredible chemical capacity of the liver, the kidneys, and any or all of the endocrine and exocrine glands of the body. Each is a shimmering jewel, worthy of our study and our deepest gratitude.

Conceptual Considerations

22 Now let us turn our attention to jewels in another compartment in the treasure chest of understanding, leaving behind those representing the marvelous functions of each specific organ. Let us consider some concepts that bridge beyond individual organ systems.

23 The first concept that I would mention is that of reserve, or backup. In the theater, major actors have understudies. In electrical instruments, backup in

f Alma 11:43
g Alma 5:18

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the event of power failure may be provided by batteries. In the body, think of the backup provided by a number of organs that are paired, such as the eyes, ears, lungs, adrenal glands, kidneys, and more. In the event of illness, injury, or loss of one, the other is there ready to keep our bodily functions intact. In the event of loss of sight or hearing altogether, other sensory powers become augmented in a miraculous manner.

24 Some backup systems are not so apparent. For example, crucial single organs like the brain, the heart, and the liver have a double blood supply. They are all nourished by two routes of circulation, minimizing damage in the event of loss of blood flow through any single blood vessel.

25 Another dimension of backup I shall describe as collateral pathways. For example, if our nasal passageways are obstructed by a "stuffy nose," we may breathe through our mouths. Similarly, collateral pathways may grow in the event of obstruction or severance of blood vessels or nerves.

26 Consider another concept—that of self-defense of the body. I watched some three-year-old children playing one day. I saw them lapping water from the sidewalk after it had spilled through a neighbor's garden. I suppose the germs they ingested were incalculable in number, but not one of those children became ill. They were defended by their bodies. As soon as that dirty drink reached their stomachs,

hydrochloric acid went to work to purify the water and protect the lives of those innocent children.

27 Think of the protection provided by the skin. Could you make, or even conjure in your mind how to create a cloak that would protect you and yet, at the same time, perceive and warn against injuries that excessive heat or cold might cause? That is what the skin does. It even gives signals indicating when another part of the body is ailing. The skin can flush and sweat with fever. When one is frightened or ill, the skin pales. When one is embarrassed, the skin blushes. And it is replete with nerve fibers that communicate and often limit possible harm through perception of pain.

28 Pain itself is part of the body's defense mechanism. For example, protection is provided by sensory areas of the mouth guarding the delicate esophagus, which has very few nerve fibers. Like a sentinel, the mouth receives warnings to protect the tender esophagus from becoming burned by drinks that are too hot.

29 The defense of the body includes chemical antibodies manufactured in response to infections acquired along life's way. Each time we are exposed to bacterial or viral infections, antibodies are made that not only combat infection but persist with memory to strengthen resistance in days to come. When military conscription was

required during World War II, soldiers who had come from isolated rural areas had much less immunity and were more prone to infections than were those from more highly populated urban areas whose resistance was better developed.

30 Closely related to the concept of self-defense is that of self-repair. Consider the fact that broken bones mend and become strong once again. If I were to break one of the legs of the chair I was just sitting on, how long would we have to wait for that chair leg to heal itself? It would never happen. Yet many here tonight walk on legs that once were broken. Lacerations in the skin heal themselves. A leak in the circulation system will seal itself, but circulatory systems outside the body do not have this power. I gained appreciation for this miracle early in my research career when I was working in the laboratory to create an artificial heart-lung machine. Whenever tubing in that machine would spring a leak, it meant long hours cleaning up the lab, and I came home late for dinner. Never did a leak in the artificial heart-lung machine ever seal itself.

31 The concept of self-renewal is remarkable. Each cell in the body is created and then regenerated from elements of the earth according to the recipe or formula contained within genes unique to us. The average red blood corpuscle, for example, lives about 120 days. It then dies and is replaced by another. Each time you

bathe, thousands of dead and dying cells are scrubbed away to be replaced by a younger crop. To my thinking, this process of self-renewal prefigures the process of resurrection.

32 Another concept that is truly remarkable is that of autoregulation. In spite of wide fluctuations in the temperature of man's environment, the temperature of the body is carefully controlled within very narrow bounds.

33 Have you wondered why you can't swim under water very long? Autoregulation limits the time you can hold your breath. As breath is held, carbon dioxide accumulates. Partial pressure of carbon dioxide is monitored continuously by two carotid bodies situated in the neck. They transmit signals up nerves to the brain. The brain then sends stimuli to muscles of respiration, causing them to work so that we might inhale a fresh supply of oxygen and eliminate retained carbon dioxide. This is but one of many, many servomechanisms that autoregulate individual ingredients in our bodies.

34 The number of these systems exceeds our ability to enumerate them. Sodium, potassium, water, glucose, protein, nitrogen are but a few of the many constituents continuously monitored by chemical regulators within our bodies.

35 Consider the concept of adaptation. People on the earth dwell amidst climatic and dietary differences of vast scope. Eskimos

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in the Arctic Circle consume a diet with a large component of fat that is acceptable and even necessary to sustain life in a very cold climate. The Polynesian, on the other hand, eats a diet provided by a tropical environment. Yet these different groups work and adapt to varying conditions and diet available to them.

36 The concept of identity in reproduction is marvelous to contemplate. Each one of us possesses seeds carrying our unique chromosomes and genes that control our own specific cellular identity. For this reason, tissues surgically transplanted from one person to another can only survive by suppressing the host's immune response that clearly recognizes tissues foreign to one's own inherited genetic formula. Truly we are blessed with the power to have children born in the likeness of parents on earth as well as in heaven.

37 As we consider self-defense, self-repair, and self-renewal, an interesting paradox emerges. Limitless life could result if these marvelous qualities of the body continued in perpetuity. Just think, if you could create anything that could defend itself, repair itself, and renew itself without limit, you could create perpetual life. That our Creator did with the bodies he created for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. If they had continued to be nourished from the tree of life, they would have lived forever. According to the Lord, as

revealed through his prophets, the fall of Adam instituted the aging process, which results ultimately in physical death. Of course, we do not understand all the chemistry, but we are witnesses of the consequences of growing old. This, and other pathways of release, assure that there is a limit to the length of life upon the earth.

38 Yes, troubles do develop in our bodies that do not repair themselves with time. To the skilled physician, this profound question is posed by each sick patient seen: "Will this illness get better, or will it get worse, with the passage of time?" The former needs only supportive care. The latter requires significant help to convert the process of progressive deterioration to one that might improve with time.

39 Death, when it comes, generally seems to be untimely to the mortal mind. Then we need to have the larger view that death is part of life.

40 It was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness.^h

41 When severe illness or tragic injuries claim an individual in the flowering prime of life, we can take comfort in this fact: The very laws that could not allow life to persist here are the same eternal laws that will be implemented at the time of the resur-

^h Alma 42:8; D&C 29:43

rection, when that body “shall be restored to [its] proper and perfect frame”.ⁱ

42 Thoughts of life, death, and resurrection bring us to face crucial questions. How were we made? By whom? And why?

Created by God

43 Through the ages, some without scriptural understanding have tried to explain our existence by pretentious words such as ex nihilo (out of nothing). Others have deduced that, because of certain similarities between different forms of life, there has been a natural selection of the species, or organic evolution from one form to another. Still others have concluded that man came as a consequence of a “big bang” that resulted in the creation of our planet and life upon it.

44 To me, such theories are unbelievable! Could an explosion in a printing shop produce a dictionary? It’s unthinkable! But it could be argued to be within a remote realm of possibility. Even if that could happen, such a dictionary could certainly not heal its own torn pages, or renew its own worn corners, or reproduce its own subsequent editions!

45 We are children of God, created by him and formed in his image. Recently I studied the scriptures simply to find how many times they testify of the divine creation of man. Looking up references that referred either to create or form (or their derivatives) with either man, men, male, or female in the same verse, I found that there are at least fifty-five verses of scripture that attest to our divine creation.^j I have selected one to represent all those verses that convey the same conclusion:

46 And the Gods took counsel among themselves and said: Let us go down and form man in our image, after our likeness. . . .

47 So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.^k

Spiritual Discernment

48 I believe all of those scriptures pertaining to the creation of man. But the decision to believe is a spiritual one, not born solely by an understanding of things physical:

49 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness

i Alma 40:23

j Genesis 1:27; 2:7, 8; 5:1, 2; 6:7; Deuteronomy 4:32; Isaiah 45:12; Malachi 2:10; Mark 10:6; Romans 9:20; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 3:10; 2 Nephi 1:10; 2:15; 9:6; 29:7; Jacob 4:9; Mosiah 4:2, 9; 7:27; Alma 1:4; 18:32, 34, 36; 22:12, 13; Mormon 9:12, 17; Ether 1:3; 3:15, 16; Moroni 10:3; D&C 20:18; 29:30, 34; 77:2; 77:12; 93:29; Moses 1:8; 2:27; 3:5, 7, 8, 9; 6:8, 9; 7:32; 8:26; Abraham 4:26, 27; 5:7, 8, 14, 16

k Abraham 4:26, 27

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unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.^l

50 It is incumbent upon each informed and spiritually attuned person to help overcome such foolishness of men who would deny divine creation or think that man simply evolved. By the spirit we perceive the truer and more believable wisdom of God.

51 With great conviction I add my testimony to that of my fellow apostle, Paul, who said:

52 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

53 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.^m

Duality of Man

54 The Lord said that “the spirit and the body are the soul of man”.ⁿ Each one of us therefore is a dual being—a biological (physical) entity, and an intellectual (spiritual) entity. The combination of both is intimate throughout mortality.

55 In the beginning, man, as that intellectual entity, was with God. Our intelligence was not created or made, nor can it be.^o

56 That spirit, joined with a phys-

ical body of such remarkable qualities, becomes a living soul of supernal worth. The Psalmist so expressed this thought:

57 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

58 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? . . .

59 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour,^p

60 Why were we created? Why are we here? Why are we upon the earth?

61 God has made it plain over and over again that the world was made for mankind to exist. We are here to work out our divine destiny, according to an eternal plan presented to us in the great council of heaven. Our bodies have been created to accommodate our spirits, to allow us to experience the challenges of mortality.

Avoid Desecration of the Physical Temple

62 With this understanding, it is pure sacrilege to let anything enter the body that might defile this physical temple of God. It is irreverent to let even the gaze of our precious eyesight or the

l 1 Corinthians 2:14
 m 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17
 n D&C 88:15
 o D&C 93:29
 p Psalms 8:3-5

sensors of our touch or hearing supply the brain with memories that are unclean and unworthy. Could any of us lightly regard precious seeds of reproduction—specifically and uniquely ours—or disregard the moral laws of God, who gave divine rules governing their sacred use?

63 Knowing we are created as children of God, and by him given agency to choose, we must also know that we are accountable to him. He has defined the truth and prescribed commandments. Obedience to his law will bring us joy. Disobedience of those commandments is defined as sin. While we live in a world that seems increasingly reluctant to designate dishonorable deeds as sinful, a scripture so warns: “Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour”.⁹

64 No one is perfect. Some may have sinned grievously in transgressing God’s laws. Mercifully, we can repent. That is an important part of life’s opportunity as well.

65 Repentance requires spiritual dominion over appetites of the flesh. Every physical system has appetites. Our desires to eat, drink, see, hear, and feel respond to those appetites. But all appetites must be controlled by the intellect for us to attain true joy. On the other hand, whenever we allow uncontrolled appetites of the body to determine behavior opposed to nobler promptings

of the Spirit, the stage is set for misery and grief.

66 Substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and harmful drugs are forbidden by the Lord. We have similarly been warned about the evils of pornography and unclean thoughts. Appetites for these degrading forces can become addictive. Physical or mental addictions become doubly serious because, in time, they enslave both the body and the spirit. Full repentance from these shackles, or any other yokes to sin, must be accomplished in this life while we still have the aid of a mortal body to help us develop self-mastery.

67 When we truly know our divine nature, our thoughts and behavior will be more appropriate. Then we will control our appetites. We will focus our eyes on sights, our ears on sounds, and our minds on thoughts that are a credit to our physical creation as a temple of our Father in Heaven.

68 In daily prayer we may gratefully acknowledge God as our Creator, thank him for the magnificence of our physical temple, and then heed his counsel.

More Yet to Learn

69 Though we cannot fully comprehend the magnificence of man, in faith we can continue our reverent quest. We may join with Jacob in this marvelous declaration:

70 Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. . . .

71 For behold, by the power of his word man came upon the face of the earth, which earth was created by the power of his word. . . .

72 Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand.^r

73 For years I have attended scientific meetings of learned societies. Medical scientists and practitioners by the thousands participate in such assemblies annually from all over the world. The quest for knowledge is endless. It seems that the more we know, the more there is yet to learn. It is impossible that man may learn all the ways of God. But as we are faithful and are deeply rooted in scriptural accounts of God's magnificent creations, we will be well prepared for future discoveries. All truth is compatible because it all emanates from God.

Beware of False Doctrine

74 Of course, we know that "there is an opposition in all things".^s In the world even many so-called "educators" teach contrary to divine truth. Be mindful

of this prophetic counsel:

75 O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

76 But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.^t

77 You need not be reminded that the work and glory of the Lord are opposed by forces of Satan, who is the master of deceit. Many follow his teachings. Remember,

78 Man may deceive his fellow-men, deception may follow deception, and the children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till naught but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave.^u

79 Be wise and keep away from temptations and snares. Cautiously avoid "foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition".^v

80 Flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness,

r Jacob 4:8-10

s 2 Nephi 2:11

t 2 Nephi 9:28-29

u JS-H 1:71 footnote

v 1 Timothy 6:9

4 When I considered that request, I remembered many such incidents which had been whispered in confidence to me over the years. But those seemed too sacred to share in a worldly way, especially to the benefit of a commercial venture. Besides, what would be the validity of isolated stories of life after life without supporting testimonies of witnesses?

5 To me, much more logical and convincing would be a study of well-documented and carefully witnessed evidences of life after life.

6 President Benson has spoken of one of these priceless records. The activities of the living Christ in America followed his own resurrection from the dead. Many witnesses in many places have seen the risen Lord, before, during, and after the account to which President Benson has referred.

7 To Associates in the Holy Land The first mortal person known to have seen the resurrected Savior was Mary Magdalene.^d

8 Another recorded appearance of the risen Lord was to other women. Witnessing this event were Mary (mother of James), Salome (mother of James and

John), Joanna, Susanna, and many others.^e

9 Jesus appeared to Simon Peter,^f the senior Apostle, who held the keys of priesthood authority on earth then, as President Benson does now.

10 Later the same day, Cleopas and presumably Luke, while journeying on the road to Emmaus, were met by the resurrected Lord. The Savior partook of food with them.^g

11 He also revealed himself to the Apostles in an upper room. He showed them his hands and his feet. "They gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he ... did eat before them".^h

12 Eight days after he so appeared to the Apostles, Jesus came again to them. This time, skeptical Thomas was present.ⁱ Christ said unto Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed".^j

13 At the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus appeared to seven of the Twelve who had fished all night and caught nothing. The Master then caused their nets to be filled with fish. Later, Peter was command-

d John 20:16–17
 e Mark 16:1; Luke 8:3
 f 1 Cor. 15:5
 g Luke 24:30, 33
 h Luke 24:42–43
 i John 20:26–28
 j John 20:29

ed to feed the flock of God.^k

14 Perhaps the greatest congregation in Palestine to witness the risen Lord occurred on the mount near Galilee's shore. Here he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once!^l

15 Later the Master again took the eleven to "a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." There he gave that endless charge to his Apostles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations".^m

16 Then Jesus was seen by his brother, James, who became one of his special disciples.ⁿ

17 Paul added, "And last of all he was seen of me".^o

18 Prior to his ascension from the Mount of Olives, Jesus bade farewell to the leaders of his Church in Asia and foretold, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me ... unto the uttermost part of the earth".^p

19 When Stephen was stoned as a martyr at the gate of Jerusalem, he "looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on

the right hand of God".^q

To the Nephites

20 The ministry of the resurrected Lord to the Nephites who lived on the American hemisphere has been spoken of so eloquently by President Benson. He told us that there at least twenty-five hundred souls^r heard his voice, felt the nail marks in his hands and feet, and thrust their hands into his side.^s I sense that many of them wet his feet with their tears of joyous adoration.

To the Dead

21 The postmortal ministry of the Lord continued in other realms. Jesus ministered unto the dead in the postearthly spirit world.^t Peter testified that "the gospel [was] preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit".^u

22 John taught of this as well: "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live".^v In our day, additional scriptures have been added which attest to the ministry of the living Lord among the dead.^w

- k John 21:1-24
 l 1 Cor. 15:6
 m Matt. 28:16, 19
 n 1 Cor. 15:7
 o 1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9:4-5
 p Acts 1:8; Mark 16:19, Luke 24:50-51
 q Acts 7:55
 r 3 Ne. 17:25
 s 3 Ne. 11:7-17
 t 3 Ne. 23:9-10
 u 1 Pet. 4:6; see also 1 Pet. 3:19-21
 v John 5:25
 w D&C 138

To the Lost Tribes

23 From the Book of Mormon we read that Jesus was to visit the lost tribes of the house of Israel—to do for them, we presume, what he had done for others.^x

To Those of This Dispensation

24 After almost two thousand years, new witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus have added their testimonies of this transcendent truth.

25 The Prophet Joseph Smith was visited in 1820 by God the Father and his Son, the resurrected Lord.^y Joseph saw them and heard their voices. He received a personal witness of the divine sonship of Jesus from the Father himself. Joseph learned that “the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also”.^z

26 Twelve years later, the Savior again revealed himself to Joseph Smith and to Sidney Rigdon. “We saw him,” they exclaimed, “even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father”.^{aa}

27 On April 3, 1836 (151 years ago yesterday), with Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph saw the Master once more:

28 “We saw the Lord standing

upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; ...

29 “His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

30 “I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father”.^{ab}

31 Yes, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most carefully documented events in history. I have mentioned many of those appearances, but additional instances have been recorded.

32 Even more remarkable is the fact that his mission among men—the Atonement, the Resurrection—extends privileges of redemption from sin and a glorious resurrection to each and every one of us! In some marvelous way, fully comprehended only by Deity, this is his work and his glory—“to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man”.^{ac}

33 Teachers in the Church so instruct the old and the young. Sometimes the results are humorous. One leader shared this story with me:

x 2 Ne. 29:13; 3 Ne. 17:4; 3 Ne. 21:26

y JS—H 1:17

z D&C 130:22

aa D&C 76:23

ab D&C 110:2–4

ac Moses 1:39

34 As a little boy came home from Primary one day, his mother asked him what he had learned, and he said, “My teacher told me that I used to be dust and I would be dust again once more. Is that true, Mommy?”

35 “Yes,” the mother replied. “A scripture tells us so: ‘For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.’”^{ad}

36 The little boy was amazed at this! The next morning, he was scurrying around getting ready for school, looking for his shoes. He crawled under the bed. Lo and behold, there he saw balls of dust. He ran to his mother in wonder, saying, “Oh, Mommy, somebody’s under my bed, and they’re either coming or going.”

Nature of the Resurrection

37 Yes, compounds derived from dust—elements of the earth—are combined to make each living cell in our bodies. The miracle of the Resurrection is matched only by the miracle of our creation in the first place.

38 No one knows precisely how two germ cells unite to make one. Nor do we know how that resulting cell multiplies and divides to make others—some to become eyes that see, ears that hear, or fingers that feel glorious things about us. Each cell contains chromosomes with thou-

sands of genes, chemically insuring identity and independence of each individual. Our bodies undergo constant rebuilding according to genetic recipes that are uniquely ours. Each time we take a bath, we lose not only dirt, but cells dead and dying, as they are replaced by a newer crop. This process of regeneration and renewal is but prelude to the promised phenomenon and future fact of our resurrection.

39 “If a man die, shall he live again?” asked Job.^{ae} In faith, he answered his own question:

40 “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

41 “And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God”.^{af}

42 At the time of our resurrection, we shall take up our immortal tabernacles. Bodies that now age, deteriorate, and decay will no longer be subject to processes of degeneration: “This mortal must put on immortality”.^{ag}

43 This great priesthood power of resurrection is vested in the Lord of this world. He taught that “all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”.^{ah} Though he supplicated his Father for aid at the eleventh hour,

ad Gen. 3:19
 ae Job 14:14
 af Job 19:25–26
 ag 1 Cor. 15:53
 ah Matt. 28:18

the final victory over death was earned by the Son. These are his words:

44 “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

45 “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father”.^{ai}

46 This power he subtly proclaimed when he said unto the Jews:

47 “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. ... But he spake of the temple of his body”.^{aj}

48 The keys of the Resurrection repose securely with our Lord and Master. He said:

49 “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

50 “And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die”.^{ak}

51 But obedience to the commandments of God is requisite if one is to be resurrected with a celestial body. Laws leading to celestial glory will be discussed

at this conference. Our challenge is to learn them and abide by them.

52 I thank God for his Son, Jesus Christ, for his mission in mortality, and for his ministry as the resurrected Lord. He brought about his own resurrection. Testimonies of thousands, from ancient and modern times, attest to the truth that the resurrected Jesus is the Savior of mankind. He brought about a universal resurrection: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”.^{al}

53 His sacrifice and his glory assure that “the spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time”.^{am}

54 Gratefully and positively, I affirm that there is life after life, first in the spirit world and then in the Resurrection, for each and every one of us. I know that God lives and that Jesus the Christ is his Son. He is “the resurrection, and the life”.^{an} He lives. He is my Master. I am his servant. With all my heart, I love him, and I testify of him, in his holy name—the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

ai John 10:17–18

aj John 2:19–21

ak John 11:25–26

al 1 Cor. 15:22; Mosiah 3:16

am Alma 11:43

an John 11:25

CHAPTER 23

Keys of the Priesthood - Delievered October 1987 in the Priesthood Session of General Conference

YOU all know how valuable keys can be. Many, if not most, of us carry keys in our pockets at this very moment.

2 But the keys about which I shall speak are far more important. They are precious, powerful, and invisible! Some can lock and unlock in heaven as well as on earth. I speak of keys of the priesthood.

3 You boys hold what is sometimes referred to as the preparatory priesthood. Preparation, priesthood service, and keys are all related, but different. Service of any type requires preparation. But proper authorization to give that service requires keys. May I illustrate?

4 Prior to my call to the Twelve, I served as a medical doctor and surgeon. I had earned two doctor's degrees. I had been certified by two specialty boards. That long preparation had consumed many years, yet it carried no legal permission. Keys were required. They were held by authorities of the state government and the hospitals in which I desired to work. Once those holding proper authority exercised those keys by granting me a license and permission, then I could perform operations. In re-

turn, I was obligated to obey the law, to be loyal, and to understand and not abuse the power of a surgeon's knife. The important steps of preparation, permission, and obligation likewise pertain to other occupations.

5 Why is the power to act in the name of God more important? Because it is of eternal significance. We should understand the source of our authority and something of the keys that control its power. They may benefit every man, woman, and child who now lives, who has lived, and who yet will live upon the earth.

6 Let us consider keys of the priesthood through three scenes of history: in ancient days, during the Lord's mortal ministry, and in modern times.

Scene One—Ancient Days

7 Scene one pertains to keys of the priesthood in ancient days, even before creation of the earth. We then existed as spirit children of God. Abraham was one of us. He was told that he was among rulers chosen—even before he was born.^a Scriptures also relate that the Lord God foreordained priests prepared from the foundation of the world according to his foreknowledge. Thus, our calling to the holy priesthood was foreseen before we were born.^b

8 We know that Adam received

a Abr. 3:23
b Alma 13:1-5

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priesthood authority before the world was formed.^c

9 The potential of the priesthood is so vast that our comprehension of it is a challenge. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity”.^d

10 President Brigham Young added that the priesthood is “the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue for ever and ever”.^e

11 Priesthood is the authority of God delegated to man to minister for the salvation of men. “The power of directing these labors constitutes the keys of the Priesthood”.^f

Scene Two—The Mortal Ministry of the Lord

12 Many in scene one held those keys, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elias, and Elijah.

13 Scene two pertains to keys of the priesthood during the mortal ministry of the Lord. Jesus revealed the extent of priesthood authority. To his Apostles, the Savior said, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of

heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”.^g

14 Within a week of that promise, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a high mountain. Keys of the priesthood were bestowed upon them by Moses and Elijah (Elias) under divine direction.^h

15 The Master then reminded his disciples of their sacred calls to the holy apostleship, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you”.ⁱ

16 Jesus not only called and ordained men, but he taught them their duties.

17 After Christ was crucified, and even before the early Apostles completed their labors, the Apostasy began. This occurred as prophesied when priesthood authority was abused and sacred ordinances were defiled.

Scene Three—Modern Times

18 With scenes one and two as background, let us consider scene three—the modern times in which we live. After centuries of apostasy, keys of the priesthood have again been restored.

c Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 157, 167–68; see also D&C 78:16

d *Teachings*, p. 157

e *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p. 130

f Joseph F. Smith, *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1901, p. 230

g Matt. 16:19; D&C 128:10

h Matt. 17:1–5

i John 15:16; D&C 7:7

28 To understand the power of the priesthood, we must know the divinity of its restoration in these latter days. In 1820, our Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith. In 1829, John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.ⁿ Shortly thereafter they received the Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James, and John.^o

29 Later, the Lord spoke to Joseph and Oliver of others to whom specific keys of the priesthood had been committed. Each, in turn, did confer these keys:

Moroni: Keys of the Book of Mormon.^p

Moses: Keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the ten tribes.^q

Elias: Keys of the restoration of all things,^r including the Abrahamic covenant.^s

Elijah: Keys of the sealing power.^t

30 Joseph Smith conferred all keys on all of the Twelve.^u In turn, keys have been transferred to present leaders.

31 Today, President Ezra Taft Benson actively holds every restored key held by “all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation”.^v

32 Surely a sacred moment of my life occurred April 12, 1984, when the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles laid their hands upon my head. As had been done for others before me, all the keys of the priesthood were conferred. As it is with each member of the Quorum of the Twelve, some keys are not used until called upon by the Lord, or as directed by his senior Apostle.

33 I feel the weight of responsibility and the burden of timeless trust. I know those keys have been restored “for the last days and for the last time”.^w

34 I am deeply grateful that we bear the priesthood—each of us foreordained from the founda-

n D&C 13, D&C 27:8; JS—H 1:69, 72
o D&C 27:11–12
p D&C 27:5
q D&C 110:11
r D&C 27:6
s D&C 110:12; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56, 3:126–27
t D&C 27:9, D&C 110:13–16; see also D&C 128:21
u Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:154–56
v D&C 112:31; italics added; see also D&C 128:18
w D&C 112:30

tion of the world for that responsibility.^a

35 As a symbol of gratitude, I have penned a few lines to be sung as the concluding portion of my message. A verse for each of three scenes of history may summarize my remarks. This song will be new to you. The words have been written to music from Wales.^b For the gracious support of Brother Jerold D. Ottley and our male chorus I express my appreciation. To this song I have assigned an ancient title, "Hosanna," the prayerful shout of fervent praise:

Hosanna

*Through time's immortal endless stay
In love he guides our way.
Beyond the realms of heaven's beam,
Our great God, Elohim.
Hosanna to his holy name—
Our fathers' God is still the same.
That holy night in Bethlehem
His Son was born among men.
To ransom from a timeless grave,
Each child of God to save.
Hosanna to his holy name—
Our fathers' God is still the same.
His priesthood power restored to earth
To bless each soul given birth.
Our song of prayer to him we raise
Proclaiming joy and praise.
Hosanna to his holy name—
Our fathers' God is still the same.
Amen, amen, amen, amen.*

36 May we be true to the trust he has given to us who bear the holy priesthood and hold its sacred keys, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 24

Lessons From Eve - Delivered October 1987 in the General Women's Meeting

PRESIDENT and Sister Benson, I hope you can feel the love and spirit emanating from the thousands of sisters at this General Women's Meeting. President Hinckley and President Monson, we extend our love to you and your companions. The attendance of members of the First Presidency symbolizes their support for each of us. On their behalf, I extend their gratitude and love to all of you.

2 I deeply appreciate the invocation and the messages delivered by the General Presidency of the Relief Society and by this wonderful women's chorus.

3 Sister Doxey has recounted the privilege that each of us has to strengthen the family—the basic component of society, and the fundamental unit of the Church. The family is provided in God's plan to nurture his children and prepare them to return to him—as families.

a Alma 13:1–5

b Lyrics by Russell M. Nelson, copyright 1987; "Tydi A Roddaist," by Arwell Hughes, copyright 1938. Gratitude is expressed to Mr. Hughes for permission to use his music with these words and to Barry D. R. Whittaker, president of the Cardiff Wales Stake, for his assistance.

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4 Sister Evans has helped us understand that the human race doesn't run on a smooth track. The route more closely resembles an obstacle course with hurdles, puddles, or snares lurking around every turn we make. Life isn't meant to be easy. The race isn't to be won by the swift or the flashy. Victory comes only to those who muster the faith to stay on the track—the strait and narrow way.

5 Sister Winder has put our purpose in perspective. She has taught an eternal truth—"Men are, that they might have joy".^c And she has emphasized one of the means by which true joy is realized: rendering selfless service of worth to others.

6 As the male participant tonight, I bear a great responsibility to convey deep feelings of gratitude. For the men of the Church, I say thank you!

7 Not only do I express gratitude, but our affection as well. Represented in this vast audience are our dear companions, our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, and our granddaughters. We respect and honor you. We support your wonderful efforts. We are grateful to receive the benefit of your counsel and insights in challenges we share as partners. And we thank you as mothers or potential mothers for your partnership with God in providing

life. Without women, the whole purpose of the creation of this world would be in vain.

8 This truth we learn from scriptures about the priesthood, the Creation, Adam and Eve.

9 Before the world was formed, the Lord Jesus Christ was Jehovah, "the Great I Am ... the beginning and the end, ... [who] looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven".^d

10 He told Abraham, having first shown him "the intelligences that were organized before the world was; among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

11 "And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers".^e

12 The Lord then revealed that Abraham was one of them, chosen and foreordained before he was born.

13 Scriptural verse then continues:

"There stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, ... and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell".^f

c 2 Ne. 2:25

d D&C 38:1; D&C 29:1; D&C 39:1

e Abr. 3:22–23

f Abr. 3:24

14 Then “the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth”.^g

15 You will recall that after the earth had been created, divided, beautified, and inhabited with plant and animal life, the crowning achievement of the Creation was to be man—the human being. “So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, ... male and female to form they them”.^h

16 The very purpose of creation was to provide bodies, to enable these eagerly awaiting spirits to enjoy mortal life and experiences.

17 Question: What was the role of the priesthood in the process of creation?

18 The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

“The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity. ... Christ is the Great High Priest; Adam next”.ⁱ

19 “The priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation,

before the world was formed”.^j

20 President Brigham Young said, “Priesthood ... is the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue for ever and ever”.^k

21 Thus, priesthood is the power of God. Its ordinances and covenants are to bless men and women alike. By that power, the earth was created. Under the direction of the Father, Jehovah was the creator. As Michael, Adam did his part. He became the first man. But, in spite of the power and glory of creation to that point, the final link in the chain of creation was still missing. All the purposes of the world and all that was in the world would be brought to naught without woman—a keystone in the priesthood arch of creation.

22 When Eve was created—when her body was made by God—Adam exclaimed, “Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man”.^l

23 From the rib of Adam, Eve was formed.^m Interesting to me is the fact that animals fashioned by our Creator, such as dogs and cats, have thirteen pairs of

g Abr. 4:1
h Abr. 4:27; Gen. 1:26
i Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 157–58
j Teachings, p. 157
k Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p. 130
l Moses 3:23
m Gen. 2:22; Moses 3:22; Abr. 5:16

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ribs, but the human being has one less with only twelve. I presume another bone could have been used, but the rib, coming as it does from the side, seems to denote partnership. The rib signifies neither dominion nor subservience, but a lateral relationship as partners, to work and to live, side by side.

24 Adam and Eve were joined together in marriage for time and for all eternity by the power of that everlasting priesthood.ⁿ Eve came as a partner, to build and to organize the bodies of mortal men. She was designed by Deity to cocreate and nurture life, that the great plan of the Father might achieve fruition. Eve “was the mother of all living”.^o She was the first of all women.

25 From our study of Eve, we may learn five fundamental lessons of everlasting importance:

- She labored beside her companion.^p
- She and Adam bore the responsibilities of parenthood.^q She and her partner worshipped the Lord in prayer.^r
- She and Adam heeded divine commandments of obedience and sacrifice.^s
- She and her husband taught the gospel to their children.^t

26 From these five fundamental lessons, we can study patterns which apply to present-day circumstances. Let us review them, lesson by lesson.

27 She labored beside her companion. Adam held the priesthood. Eve served in matriarchal partnership with the patriarchal priesthood. So today, each wife may join with her husband as a partner unified in purpose. Scriptures state clearly, “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord”.^u “They twain shall be one flesh”.^v Marvelously, it takes a man and a woman to make a man or a woman. Without union of the sexes, neither can we exist, nor can we become perfect. Ordinary and imperfect people can build each other through their wholeness together. The complete contribution of one partner to the other is essential to exaltation. This is so “that the earth might answer the end of its creation”.^w

28 So labor and love in partnership. Honor your companion. Any sense of competition for place or position is not appropriate for either partner, especially when enlightened by scriptural understanding.

n Gen. 2:24–25; Moses 3:25; Abr. 5:18–19
 o Moses 4:26
 p Moses 5:1
 q Moses 5:2
 r Moses 5:4
 s Moses 5:5, 6
 t Moses 5:12
 u 1 Cor. 11:11
 v Matt. 19:6; Mark 10:8; D&C 49:16
 w D&C 49:16

the name of the Lord”,^{aa} a precedent was established. As each of us follows that pattern of prayer, blessings of wisdom and personal peace will ensue.

37 “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good”.^{ab} Pray alone in your closet—in the solitude of your own sanctuary. Pour out the longings of your soul. Then pray with and for your husband, your sons and daughters, your sister and brother, your mother and father and all in your family. Let the weight of your innocence be felt as you lovingly motivate others to good works. With your mind so attuned to the Lord and his power, your influence for good becomes immeasurably great. And in this world of sin and temptation, the power of prayer will protect you and be a shield for your loved ones.

38 I plead with the women of the Church to accept individual responsibility to know and to love the Lord. Communicate with him. He will impress upon your mind inspiration and personal revelation to give you strength.

39 Eve and her husband heeded divine commandments of obedience and sacrifice. They received “commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer ... an offering unto the Lord”.^{ac}

40 This direction to worship and sacrifice was obeyed by Adam and Eve. Later they learned that this was “a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth”.^{ad}

41 When Christ came to the earth, he fulfilled the promised role as he became the ultimate sacrificial lamb. His atonement brought about a greater destiny and a nobler concept for us. We are still commanded to sacrifice, but not by shedding blood of animals. Our highest sense of sacrifice is achieved as we make ourselves more sacred or holy.

42 This we do by our obedience to the commandments of God. Thus, the laws of obedience and sacrifice are indelibly intertwined. Consider the commandments to obey the Word of Wisdom, to keep the Sabbath day holy, to pay an honest tithe. As we comply with these and other commandments, something wonderful happens to us. We become disciplined! We become disciples! We become more sacred and holy—like our Lord!

43 I pay tribute to beloved ladies in my life who have taught sanctifying lessons to me.

44 For a short time during the first year of our marriage, Sister Nelson maintained two jobs while I was in medical school. Be-

aa Moses 5:4

ab Alma 37:37

ac Moses 5:5

ad Moses 5:7

deeming members of your family will cause you to concentrate on covenants and ordinances of eternal significance.

53 As you exercise your agency, teach things that are elevating and useful. Teach the principles of honesty, self-reliance, avoidance of unnecessary debt. You will build a more stable society by so doing. And remember your example. What you are is more important than what you do or what you say.

54 We can't all do all things. Circumstances, available time, and talents vary widely among us. Your diversities take you to numerous arenas of activity. There let your presence be felt.

55 Your foes in a sordid society demean the sacredness of women and the sanctity of motherhood. Your world, sickened by unchastity and plagued with sexually transmitted disease, needs your righteous example. For the wrath of God is provoked by governments that sponsor gambling, condone pornography, or legalize abortion. These forces serve to denigrate women now, just as they did in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

56 You can—you must—make a difference. You are vital to the Lord's team—one team with one purpose. Through your diversity, build strength in unity. Bind yourselves together in all holiness. Anchor yourselves to "the

foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone".^a

57 As Sister Winder mentioned, the funeral service for Sister Camilla Kimball was held earlier today. Magnificent and well-deserved tributes were paid to her. We can learn from her great example of courage. Let us emulate her faith and likewise heed this teaching from the Book of Mormon, which gave her such strength and security:

58 "Remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall".^b

59 Beloved sisters, let your lives be committed to your Father in Heaven, to his Only Begotten Son, and to his church, restored by them in this latter day. I testify that it is true and that President Benson is the prophet on earth today. A dispensation of the gospel has been entrusted to our care. Everlasting priesthood principles, laws, and powers depend upon our partnership.

a Eph. 2:20

b Hel. 5:12

60 I invoke the blessings of Almighty God upon you that you may be successful in fulfilling your divine destiny, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 25

With God Nothing Shall Be Impossible - Delivered April 1988 in the Saturday Afternoon Session of General Conference

I echo the testimony of our beloved associate, Elder Dallin H. Oaks. With him and the other Brethren, I applaud the efforts of Latter-day Saints throughout the world who willingly serve in building the kingdom of God. Likewise, I respect those who quietly do their duty though deepening trials come their way. And I admire those who strive to be more worthy by overcoming a personal fault or who work to achieve a difficult goal.

2 I feel impressed to counsel those engaged in personal challenges to do right. In particular, my heart reaches out to those who feel discouraged by the magnitude of their struggle. Many shoulder heavy burdens of righteous responsibility which, on occasion, seem so difficult to bear. I have heard those challenges termed impossible.

3 As a medical doctor, I have known the face of adversity. I have seen much of death and dying, suffering and sorrow. I also remember the plight of students overwhelmed by their

studies and of those striving to learn a foreign language. And I recall the fatigue and frustration felt by young parents with children in need. Amidst circumstances seemingly impossible, I have also experienced the joyous relief that comes when one's understanding is deepened by scriptural insight.

4 The Lord has often chosen to instruct His people in their times of trial. Scriptures show that some of His lasting lessons have been taught with examples terrible as war, commonplace as childbearing, or obvious as hazards of deep water. His teachings are frequently based on common understanding, but with uncommon results. Indeed, one might say that to teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely.

5 Warfare, for example, has been known since time began. Even in that ugly circumstance, the Lord has helped those obedient to His counsel. Going into battle, all would assume the obvious advantage of outnumbering an enemy. But when God's disciple Gideon was leading an army against the Midianites, "the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many ..., lest Israel vaunt themselves ..., saying, Mine own hand hath saved me".^c

6 So the Lord directed Gideon to reduce his numbers. He first decreased the troops from twenty-two thousand to ten thousand.

c Judg. 7:2

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7 Then the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are yet too many".^d So another reduction was made. Finally, only three hundred remained. Then the Lord delivered the victory to the outnumbered few.^e

8 Even more widely known than war is an understanding of child-bearing. Everyone "knows" that old women do not bear children. So upon whom did the Lord call to bear Abraham's birth-right son? Sarah, at age ninety! When told this was to be, she asked a logical question: "Shall I [which am old] of a surety bear a child?"^f From heaven came this reply: "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?"^g

9 So decreed, she gave birth to Isaac, to carry the crucial Abrahamic covenant into the second generation.^h

10 Later, for one of the most important events ever to occur, the other extreme was chosen. As all knew that an elderly woman could not bear children, it was just as obvious that a virgin could not have children. But Isaiah had made this prophetic utterance:

11 "The Lord himself shall give

you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel".ⁱ

12 When Mary was notified of her sacred responsibility, the announcing angel reassured, "For with God nothing shall be impossible".^j

13 The expression deep water means danger! That very hazard challenged the Israelites led by Moses at the Red Sea.^k Later, they were led by Joshua to the river Jordan at flood time.^l In each instance, deep water was divinely divided to allow the faithful to reach their destination safely. To teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely.

14 Turning to our day, have you ever wondered why the Master waited so long to inaugurate the promised "restitution of all things"?^m Any competitor knows the disadvantage of allowing an opponent to get too far ahead. Wouldn't the work of the restoration of the Church have been easier if begun earlier?

15 Suppose for a moment you are a member of a team. The coach beckons you from the bench and says: "You are to enter this contest. I not only want you to win;

d Judg. 7:4
 e Judg. 7:5–25
 f Gen. 18:13
 g Gen. 18:14
 h Gen. 26:1–4, 24
 i Isa. 7:14
 j Luke 1:37
 k Ex. 14
 l Josh. 3
 m Acts 3:21

seph, Moses, Joshua, and others were accomplished.^r

23 Prophets on the American hemisphere similarly taught the fundamental importance of faith. Moroni said it included things “hoped for and not seen” and then warned his skeptics, “Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith”.^s Then he spoke of leaders whose faith preceded their miraculous deeds, including Alma, Amulek, Nephi, Lehi, Ammon, the brother of Jared, and the three who were promised that they should not taste of death.^t

24 The Lord personally taught this truth to his disciples: “If ye have faith,” he said, “nothing shall be impossible unto you”.^u

25 Faith is nurtured through knowledge of God. It comes from prayer and feasting upon the words of Christ through diligent study of the scriptures.

Focus

26 The second requisite I have classified as focus. Imagine, if you will, a pair of powerful binoculars. Two separate optical systems are joined together with a gear to focus two independent images into one three-dimensional view. To apply this analogy, let the scene on the left side of your binoculars represent

your perception of your task. Let the picture on the right side represent the Lord’s perspective of your task—the portion of His plan He has entrusted to you. Now, connect your system to His. By mental adjustment, fuse your focus. Something wonderful happens. Your vision and His are now the same. You have developed an “eye single to the glory of God”.^v With that perspective, look upward—above and beyond mundane things about you. The Lord said, “Look unto me in every thought”.^w That special vision will also help clarify your wishes when they may be a bit fuzzy and out of focus with God’s hopes for your divine destiny. Indeed, the precise challenge you regard now as “impossible” may be the very refinement you need, in His eye.

27 Recently I visited the home of a man terminally ill. The stake president introduced me to the man’s family. His wife demonstrated such focus when she asked for a blessing for her dying husband—not for healing, but for peace, not for a miracle, but for ability to abide to the end. She could see from an eternal viewpoint, not merely from the perspective of one weighted with the responsibilities of her husband’s day-to-day care.

28 Elsewhere, a mother with focus nurtures her son, crippled

r Heb. 11:4–34

s Ether 12:6

t Ether 12:13–20

u Matt. 17:20

v D&C 4:5; see also Morm. 8:15

w D&C 6:36

for the whole of this life. Daily she thanks her Heavenly Father for the privilege of laboring in love with a child for whom mortality's vale of tears will be mercifully brief. Her focus is fixed on eternity. With celestial sight, trials impossible to change become possible to endure.

Strength and Courage

29 A third theme in the scriptures requisite for significant accomplishment is difficult to summarize in one word, so I shall link two to describe it—strength and courage. Repeatedly, scriptures yoke these attributes of character together, especially when difficult challenges are to be conquered.^x

30 Perhaps this is more easily illustrated than defined. Our pioneer forefathers are good examples. They sang, "Gird up your loins; fresh courage take".^y They feared no toil and no labor. Among them were Johan Andreas Jensen and his wife, Petra, who left their native Norway in 1863. Their family included six-week-old tiny twin daughters. As handcarts were pulled in their rugged journey, one of those little girls died along the way. The child who survived grew up to become my Grandmother Nelson!

31 There are pioneers in the Church today just as strong and courageous. Recently, I interviewed a married couple three

days after their release as full-time missionaries in a large metropolis. "We are converts," they said. "We joined the Church ten years ago. Even though we just completed a mission, we want to go again! But this time, we would like to volunteer for a more difficult assignment. We want to teach and serve children of God who live in remote areas of the world!"

32 As I countered with the grim realities of their request, they continued their expression of commitment. "Our three children and their spouses will assist with our expenses. Two of those couples have joined the Church already, and the third is equally supportive. Please send us among humble people who love the Lord and desire to know that His Church has again been restored to the earth." Needless to say, their petition was gratefully heard, and now they have received their second call to missionary service.

33 Strength and courage also characterize another couple. As faithful members of the Church, they had always upheld its doctrines, including the twelfth article of faith. When their country went to war, military conscription called the dutiful husband away from his wife before either had learned she was to bear their child. He was captured by enemy troops and taken as a prisoner of war. Months elapsed.

x Deut. 31:6, 7, 23; Josh. 1:6, 7, 9, 18; Josh. 10:25; 1 Chr. 22:13; 1 Chr. 28:20; 2 Chr. 32:7; Ps. 27:14; Ps. 31:24; Alma 43:43; Alma 53:20
y "Come, Come, Ye Saints," Hymns, 1985, no. 30

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Their baby came. Still no word to know whether the new father was alive. A year after his capture, he was permitted to write to his wife.

34 Meanwhile, though countries apart, they each remained faithful to covenants made at baptism. Even though clothed in prisoner's stripes and able to speak the language of his captors' country only in a limited way, he became Sunday School superintendent of the branch. He baptized four fellow prisoners during their confinement. Three years after the war ended, he returned home to his wife and a son he had never seen. Later, he served for ten years as the first stake president of his country. Now he is a member of the presidency of one of our temples! His wife stands faithfully beside him in the privilege of that sacred assignment.

35 You who may be momentarily disheartened, remember, life is not meant to be easy. Trials must be borne and grief endured along the way. As you remember that "with God nothing shall be impossible",^a know that He is your Father. You are a son or daughter created in His image, entitled through your worthiness to receive revelation to help with your righteous endeavors. You may take upon you the holy name of the Lord. You can qual-

ify to speak in the sacred name of God.^b It matters not that giants of tribulation torment you. Your prayerful access to help is just as real as when David battled his Goliath.^c

36 Foster your faith. Fuse your focus with an eye single to the glory of God. "Be strong and courageous",^d and you will be given power and protection from on high. "For I will go before your face," the Lord declared. "I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up".^e

37 The great latter-day work of which we are a part shall be accomplished. Prophecies of the ages shall be fulfilled. "For with God all things are possible",^f I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 26

The Purpose of Life - Delivered September 6, 1988 as a devotional at Ricks College. (Transcription may contain errors.)

I, for one, am very grateful for Brother Belnap, beautiful rendition of the 23rd Psalm. As President Christiansen indicated, Sister Nelson is the mother of our 10 children and I have seen her face death on one of those occa-

a Luke 1:37
 b D&C 1:20
 c 1 Sam. 17
 d 2 Chr. 32:7
 e D&C 84:88
 f Mark 10:27

sions. And that was the thought she expressed to me. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." For she knew her Lord would be with her.

2 I'm grateful that He preserved her life for her to be with me on rare occasion, when we have an assignment, cherished as this. People often ask if she gets to travel with me very often. And I make the remark, "But when she's real good, she gets to stay home." She doesn't regard this as any punishment, though, because she loves the youth of the church. She's with me in unity on that particular issue.

3 I bring to you the greetings of President Ezra Taft Benson, President Hinckley and President Monson and also my brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve. I know how much President Benson would like to have been with you to celebrate this one hundredth anniversary of Ricks College. I was with him here on October 10th, 1986, when President Joe Jay Christensen was officially inaugurated as the 12th president of Ricks College. On that occasion, President Benson put aside his prepared text and spoke extemporaneously from his heart. I remember it so well.

4 He spoke of the love he had for the people of Idaho. He proclaimed affection for this college and all for which it stands. And dearly, he expressed his personal love for President Christensen and his cherished wife, Barbara, and their family. I echo

Benson's tender feelings.

5 And I'm honored to see President Clark here, one of the previous presidents of this college. Do they all know you, President Clark? Stand and be recognized with Sister Clark. Thank you. You were what, number ten, nine? Ninth president and others are here. Their hearts are here, but their bodies are elsewhere. I know President Hafen and President Eyring would like me to send their greetings as well. And my special commission from President Benson is to bring his personal love and greetings to each of you on this historic day.

6 This is the opening assembly of the 100 year since the founding of this college. Sister Nelson and I love birthday parties. You can imagine how many we have. We got 33 grandchildren. So we just have one party a month and put everybody's name on the cake and all of them get around, blow the candles. It's the most economical way we've learned yet to celebrate birthdays. Now, I've stopped celebrating mine, but the rest of you still enjoy theirs.

7 Ricks College has truly come of age. At its centennial celebration, we gratefully pause to acknowledge the special roots from which it has grown. Its unique history is neither unimportant to the present, nor is it unrelated to its future. In fact, there are risks associated with forgetting. As Joseph Sobran warned, "Erasing the past is not a matter of freeing ourselves from something alien.

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It's a kind of self mutualization." Or, as Elder Neal Maxwell put it, "Deafness as to history can cause blindness as to the future."

8 Birthday parties give us a unique opportunity to reflect on the past and contemplate the future. Today, I should like to do this first for the institution and then for you students of the institution. The portion of my message that pertains to the college, I would subtitle, "Review and Preview." That portion of my message that pertains personally to each student might be labeled "Remind and Find."

Review and Preview

9 Let's turn the calendar back one hundred years. Membership of the church at that time was 180,294. There were 32 stakes. The first presidency of the church was concerned with education of its youth then as it is now. In that period, centered just one hundred years ago, the church established 22 academies.

10 Their purpose was explained in a letter penned by President Wilford Woodruff, who wrote in behalf of the Church Board of Education. "We feel that the time has arrived when the proper education of our children should be taken in hand by us as a people. Religious training is practically excluded from the district schools. The perusal of books that we value as Divine Records is forbidden. Our children, if left to the training they receive in these schools, will grow up entirely ignorant of

those principles of salvation for which the Latter-day Saints have made so many sacrifices. To permit this condition of things to exist among us would be criminal. The desire is universally expressed by all thinking people in the church that we should have schools wherein the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants can be used as textbooks. And where the principles of our religion may form a part of the teaching of the schools."

11 Well, the restrictive condition described by the first presidency was widespread. It had special impact on church members in Idaho, where the state constitution barred anyone who accepted the doctrines of this church from even voting or holding public office. It was not a popular thing to be a latter-day saint in those days. Thomas E. Ricks was president of the Bannock Stake and was appointed by the Brethren to be chairman of the Board of Education for the stake. Jacob Spori was called to be the first principal of the academy. At the first meeting of that board, held August 18th, 1888. They decided that the meeting house at Rexburg would be suitable for such a school, and the mission of Rick's college was launched.

12 The school was first named Bannock Stake Academy, but during the 1895-96 school year, the Bannock Stake was divided and the academy was renamed Fremont Stake Academy. With further growth of the church and creation of new stakes, the name

am I here and what am I to do? To find identity and purpose, it helps to be reminded of the past.

17 Now I'm going to give you a little quiz. You knew somebody would do that first day. I'm going to ask you if you know who you really are. I want to ask for your answers aloud in this congregation, but perhaps you can answer these questions yourself or even write them in your notes. Who are your parents? Where do you come from? What town, what state? Those questions aren't too tough. Now, let's try some others. Are you of Israel? Are you Hebrew? Are you Jewish? To what countries do you trace your ancestry? Do any of you trace your ancestry to Egypt?

18 To find answers let's go back in a mental time tunnel, before the world was made. Jesus Christ the great I AM, that was his name. He called himself "I-ya" in Hebrew, which translated into English is "I AM." He looked upon the wide expanse of eternity and all the seraphic hosts of heaven. The Lord had shown Abraham the intelligences that were organized before the world was, and among all these were many of the noble and great ones. We were probably, no doubt, among those he envisioned. The Lord said, "These I will make my rulers. Abraham thou art one of them. Thou wast chosen before thou wast born."

19 Our Heavenly Father and his beloved son, contemplating the plan to create an earth on which

those spirits may dwell, said, "We will prove them herewith and see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord, their God shall command them." The creation was accomplished. The plan was underway. The fall of Adam took place so that man might be. The birth of the Savior took place. Prior to his planned atonement, he ministered among men. You may recall the conversation the master had with the Jews who questioned his knowledge about Abraham. Said the Jews unto Jesus, "Thou art not yet fifty years old and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham, was I AM."

20 After Abraham withstood the severe trial command of God, in which he was willing to offer his special son, Isaac, the Lord personally appeared and promised Abraham special blessings. Included in divine covenants made with Abraham, were the assurances that Christ would come through his lineage, Abraham's posterity would receive certain lands as an inheritance and all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed. These promises are part of what we call the Abrahamic covenant.

21 So important were these promises that the Lord appeared personally to Isaac and renewed that covenant. So important was that covenant that the Lord appeared again to Jacob and reconfirmed that same covenant a third time to a third genera-

tion. Following the pattern God declared for his grandfather, Abraham who received a name change, Jacob received a divine change of name to Israel. So I may use the terms Israel and Jacob interchangeably.

22 Well, happily, as young men are want to do, and maybe even women to, Jacob fell in love. He worked for years for the hand of his intended bride, Rachel. In an act, I would not recommend a day, Jacob kissed Rachel on their first date. The reason I wouldn't recommend it is because on that occasion, Jacob also kissed her father. Perhaps that combination may provide some restraint on any amorous enthusiasm.

23 Later, Jacob asked Rachel's father for permission to marry her. But after agreeing, the father veiled faces which daughters and gave Jacob his oldest daughter, Leah. Her father cited the tradition of giving the hand of his first daughter before allowing Rachel, the younger daughter, to be married. Now, Sister Nelson and I didn't exactly follow that. Now we've gone out of order on a couple of our girls and they wouldn't listen to reason.

24 Ultimately, Rachel and Jacob were permitted to marry. He worked another seven years for her. That's even longer than waiting for a missionary today. So great was his love for Rachel that he described the period as but a few days for the love he had for her. Leah bore sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel, meanwhile, was barren.

25 So desirous was she of having children that she gave her handmaiden, Bilhah, to Jacob as another wife with the expectation that children born to Bilhah would become Rachel's own because Rachel owed Bilhah. You know, like a toothbrush or a piece of luggage. Bilhah had been given to Rachel as a wedding gift by her father. Bilhah did conceive and gave birth to a son upon Rachel's knees. Rachel said, "God has judged me and have also heard my voice and hath given me a son." Therefore called she his name Dan. And in the Hebrew language means "Judge." Rachel wanted Dan judged as if he were her own offspring.

26 Well, Bilhah later bore a second son named Naftali. When Leah saw that pattern of surrogate motherhood successfully practiced by her sister, she decided to do the same. Leah's maid Zilpah was given to Jacob as a fourth wife. And she bore sons Gad and Asher. Leah subsequently had two more sons named Issachar and Zebulon. So Israel had ten sons before Rachel finally conceived and born a son of her very own.

27 She called his name Joseph. This name had very special meaning. The word Joseph relates to the Hebrew word "Yusoff," which means "to add." Rachel wanted all to know that this son was to be added to those that she already had through her maid Bilhah. "Joseph" also related to the Hebrew word "Asaph," which means "to gather." Jo-

seph's lineage was destined to play an important role, ultimately, in the gathering of Israel.

28 Well, meanwhile, God changed the name of Jacob to Israel and renewed the Abrahamic covenant with Israel. Rachel conceived again. As they were traveling from Bethel in the north to Bethlehem in the south, Rachel went into labor and experienced a fatal complication of her pregnancy. Scriptures indicate that it was notably a hard labor. She endured severe pain. The midwife announced that her baby was a boy and asked for a name. As Rachel was dying, she gave him the name "Ben-Oni," which means "son of my sorrow." Rachel died and was buried just north of Bethlehem. Her husband was grief stricken. I suppose he could not bear the thought of being reminded of the death of his beloved Rachel every time the name of the child was recited. So Jacob changed the name to "Ben-jamin," which means "son of my right hand."

29 To me, this is really one of the tender love stories in all of holy writ. And I empathize with that as I think of what my own eternal partner did in order to welcome our tenth child into the world.

30 Well, this history takes on an additional dimension when one considers the Hebrew law of primogenitor or "the birthright." Under this law, for example, if President Christensen had three sons, his estate would not be di-

vided three ways, but four. A quarter would go to each of the three and a fourth quarter would go to the birthright son. To have the birthright meant property and a measure of wealth. All of which was to help to defray the cost of managing the estate, to take care of the daughters and maybe even have a little bit left over for an executor's fee.

31 Being the first son, Reuben held the birthright. But he lost that precious possession when he defiled the bed of his father. Now the question is, who gets the birthright? It was not to go to the second son, Simeon, or to any of the older boys, because the Hebrew law of primogenitor required that the birthright go to the first son of the second wife. So the birthright, went to Asaph, Yusaff, Joseph. That's why he was given the coat of many colors. It wasn't because he was a favorite son necessarily. It was because the coat designated who held the birthright. Of course, this infuriated his 10 older brothers. You remember that they angrily sold Joseph into Egypt.

32 Joseph then married Aseneth, and she gave birth to two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Patriarchal blessings were as important then, as they are now. When the father of these two sons felt the time was appropriate for his boys to receive patriarchal blessings, he took them to the stake patriarch. His name was Israel. Who by that time was elderly and his eyesight was failing. You all remember the story when Is-

rael crossed his hands, putting the right hand on the younger Ephraim and his left hand on the older Mannaseh. Joseph tried to correct his father, but Israel persisted in his plan to give the patriarchal blessings in that order. He bestowed upon them both blessings of greatness and conferred the birthright upon Ephraim.

33 Well, now you've been dying to ask, "Brother Nelson what is all this ancient history have to do with me?" It has everything to do with you. The connection became clear in our day when God, the Father and his son, Jesus Christ came to the Earth. They re-established the Abrahamic covenant with Joseph Smith. Bestowing upon him all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They conferred upon him priesthood authority and the right to convey blessings of that covenant by that same priesthood authority to those who followed. Listen to this connection. Joseph Smith, whose father's name was Joseph, had the same name as Joseph who was sold into Egypt. Who millennia before had prophesied of the coming of Joseph Smith. The name Joseph carried that connotation relating to the gathering of Israel.

34 Well, what of the Abrahamic covenant? It had been partially fulfilled in that, Christ did come from the seed of Abraham through the lineage of Judah.

That tribe had been entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the world for the first coming of the Lord. Responsibility for the preparation of the world for the second coming of the Lord was reserved for the lineage of Joseph; Ephraim and Manasseh.

35 Now, the territorial inheritance promised to the Sons of Israel provided property in the Holy Land for Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulon, Gad, Asher, Dan, Naftali and Benjamin. But where was the inheritance for Joseph? From the Book of Mormon. We learned that his inheritance was this land in the American hemisphere, identified as being choice above all other lands. You ever wondered what that meant? It was choice, but not necessarily from the standpoint of scenery or wealth, certainly not from the air that we breathe right now. It's just a smoke in Salt Lake as it is here in Rexburg. It was choice to become, one day, the location for the restoration of the Gospel. To serve as the repository of sacred metallic plates and to host the headquarters of the restored church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

36 Now, do you see the importance of a patriarchal blessing? It is personal scripture to you. It will help you to remind and find. It will remind you of your linkage with the past as it identifies your special lineage. And it will help you find your future potential.

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37 You can lay claim upon the Lord for fulfillment of those blessings through your faithfulness. How many of you have already qualified for your endowment in the temple? Most will have that great privilege yet in the future. But in the temple, with the authority that is there and the sealing power that's conferred upon leaders vested with that sacred authority, blessings of the Abrahamic covenant will be conferred. You may become heir to all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

38 Now, every man who's received the Melchizedek priesthood has been foreordained from the foundations of the world for that privilege. Every woman here has been foreordained to come at this time to participate in the partnership of building up the church and the kingdom of God upon the Earth as part of that preparation for the Second Coming of the Lord.

39 Well, now let's review those questions I asked you earlier. Are you of Israel? Absolutely! You're the hope of Israel, Zion's army, children of the promised day. That's why you sang that song. Once you were spirits in premortal realms with Elohim, Jehovah, Abraham and other elected rulers to be. There, you were held in reserve to come forth in this latter day when the great and marvelous work of the restoration was to take place.

40 Are you Hebrew? Yes! As scriptures define the term, you are related to Abraham, who

was the great "Eber" from which the term "Hebrew" was derived.

41 Are you Jewish? That precious lineage maybe claimed if your ancestors are from the loins of Judah.

42 I think most of us here today of the lineage of Joseph through Ephraim or Manasseh. That was the lineage selected to pioneer the gathering of Israel, the seed to lead throughout the world, in blessing all the nations of the earth.

43 Now I see in this congregation many hundreds of return missionaries. Many of you I met on your missions. You're part of the fulfillment of that prophesy. But of course, missionary work is only the beginning of blessing all the nations of the earth. The fulfillment, the consummation of those blessings, the flower from the seed, comes as those who have entered the water of baptism perfect their lives to that point when they may enter the holy temple. Receiving their endowment, links them to the Abrahamic covenant. There they may receive all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. More missionaries will yet blanket the earth. More temples will dot the lands of this world in rich fulfillment of that covenant.

44 Now, how do you trace your ancestry to Egypt? If your patriarchal blessing indicates that you are of the lineage of Joseph, Ephraim or Manasseh, yes! You may claim Egyptian ancestry. Once you know your name, your

only to have desire and little or no ability to help. Prepare your minds and your hands so that you can qualify to serve people. Gain competence that others do not have. It takes work. It takes effort. But it is worth the price.

50 I remember with Sister Nelson and I were in our ump-teenth year of graduate training. We had four children. I never heard her murmur till one night we were walking down the streets of Boston. She pressed her nose against a window of a furniture store and she said, "Honey, do you think we'll ever have a lamp?" Never in all those long years of post-graduate training did she ever ask if all of that training was worth the price.

51 Reason number two. Learn in your youth to keep the commandments of God. As you have commenced in your youth to look to the Lord your God, even so, I hope that you will continue in keeping his commandments. For blessed is he that endureth to the end.

52 I greet you in love and say Happy Birthday Ricks College! And happy days for each of you 700,500+ students who can make this its greatest year yet. Keep Ricks College as Ricks College. Keep its personality intact. It is a jewel in the crown of educational institutions in the church. To each student, know who you are and what God expects of you.

53 I leave my love and invoke the blessings of our father in heaven upon you. That you will

stay close to your families and loved ones. And that you may remain well and strong as you fulfil the purposes for which you have come. God bless you always and keep you. I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

CHAPTER 27

Addiction or Freedom - Delivered October 1988 in the Saturday Morning Session of General Conference

I am impressed to speak out on a problem of deep concern—the worldwide epidemic of drug addiction. As a medical doctor, my study of drugs began early in medical school. Each doctor spends months in specialized courses learning potential benefits and risks of medicinal agents. Proper prescription of drugs is the forte of skilled physicians. Generally, when their advice is carefully followed, results are remarkably successful. In addressing this topic, I specifically exclude such application of modern knowledge by educated professionals.

2 But I raise my voice with others throughout the world who warn against abuse of drugs beyond prescribed limits, and the recreational or social use of chemical substances so often begun naively by the ill-informed.

3 From an initial experiment thought to be trivial, a vicious cycle may follow. From trial comes a habit. From habit comes dependence. From dependence

comes addiction. Its grasp is so gradual. Enslaving shackles of habit are too small to be sensed until they are too strong to be broken. Indeed, drugs are the modern "mess of pottage" for which souls are sold. No families are free from risk.

4 But this problem is broader than hard drugs. Their use most often begins with cigarette smoking. ^aTobacco and alcoholic beverages contain addicting drugs. They lead the list in incidence and cost to society.

5 As I speak with governmental and medical leaders of many nations, they voice grave concern over the consumption of alcohol and other substances by their citizens. Though the extent of the challenge is international, data from the United States of America will be cited solely to indicate the monstrous scope of this worldwide problem.

Tobacco

6 Consider the magnitude of tobacco's harm. Cigarette smoking is the most frequent preventable cause of heart disease, artery disease, lung disease, and cancer.^b In the U.S.A. in 1982, 16 per-

cent of all deaths (314,000) were attributed to the smoking of tobacco.^c

7 For the year 1985, the estimated cost of both smoking-related health care and lost productivity amounted to \$65 billion. That calculates to an average of \$2.17 per pack of cigarettes sold.^d Social consequences of smoking far exceed the price paid to purchase cigarettes.

8 An insurance company recently reported that one-fifth of all its claims were for afflictions that could have been prevented by simply not smoking.^e We all bear this financial burden of illness that need not be.

9 Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop and his team of more than fifty scientists recently published a landmark report. For the U.S.A. alone, they attributed 320,000 deaths annually to tobacco, 125,000 to alcohol, and lesser mortality to cocaine (2,000) and other opioids (4,000). They declared nicotine to be a powerfully addicting drug in the same sense as are drugs such as heroin and cocaine.^f Comparable views have been recorded

a The Health Consequences of Smoking: Nicotine Addiction, Public Health Service, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988, pp. 262-63.

b Cigarette Smoking and Cardiovascular Disease 1985: Special Report to the Public, American Heart Association (50-075-A).

c Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress Staff Memorandum, Sept. 1985, p. 2.

d Ibid., p. 5.

e Utah Hospital Leaders Digest, July 15, 1988, p. 2.

f The Health Consequences of Smoking: Nicotine Addiction, Public Health Service, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988, pp. 14, 334.

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by medical authorities in many other nations.^g Yet many of our good friends who use tobacco may not believe it to be addicting. Some are reluctant to admit that their behavior is substantially controlled by a drug. We understand those feelings.

Alcohol

10 There is mounting concern worldwide over the consumption of alcohol. The U.S. government estimates that 10.6 million adults are alcoholics and that one family in four is troubled by alcohol.^h It is a factor in half of all the nation's traffic deaths.ⁱ

11 Last year, a tragic milestone was reached. More Americans had been killed from alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents (1,350,000) than had been killed in all the wars America has ever fought (1,156,000).^j

Other Drugs

12 Drugs such as LSD, marijuana, heroin, and cocaine are also endangering people throughout the earth. The noble attributes

of reason, integrity, and dignity, which distinguish men and women from all other forms of life, are often the first to be attacked by these drugs and alcohol.

Reaching Help

13 We reach out in love to family, friends, and neighbors, regardless of nationality or creed, who suffer addiction. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to help relieve this international plague.

14 The solution to this problem ultimately is neither governmental nor institutional. Nor is it a question of legality. It is a matter of individual choice and commitment. Agency must be understood. The importance of the will in making crucial choices must be known. Then steps toward relief can follow.

Agency

15 Agency, or the power to choose, was ours as spirit children of our Creator before the world was.^k It is a gift from God,

g Among them are Nigel Gray, Director, Anti-Cancer Council, Victoria, Australia; David Simpson, Director, Action on Smoking and Health, U.K.; Pamela Taylor, Spokesperson, British Medical Association, U.K.; Andrew Pipe, University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Canada; Roberta Ferrence, Addiction Research Foundation, Canada; Bernie McKay, Secretary, Commonwealth Department of Health, Australia. Times and Seasons, Documentary on Tobacco, July 1988.

h U.S. News and World Report, Nov. 30, 1987, pp. 56–57.

i Healthy People: The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Public Health Service, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979, p. 125.

j Accident Facts, Annual report of the National Safety Council, 1975, confirmed by telephone conversation 20 July 1988.

k Alma 13:3; Moses 4:4

25 Reconciliation requires faith, repentance, and baptism. Be “born of God, changed from [your] carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness.”^o Renew covenants made at baptism by worthily partaking of the sacrament regularly, “that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world.”^p

26 Then “be meek and lowly in heart; ... withstand every temptation of the devil, with ... faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.”^q

27 Choose to believe in and be blessed by your Creator.

C. Choose to Change.

28 “How long will ye suffer [yourself] to be led by foolish and blind guides? Yea, how long will ye choose darkness rather than light?”^r Choose to change—today!

29 “The spirit and the body are the soul of man.”^s Both spirit and body have appetites. One of life’s great challenges is to develop dominance of spiritual appetites over those that are physical. Your willpower becomes strong when joined with the will of the Lord.

30 Addiction to any substance enslaves not only the physical body but the spirit as well. Therefore, repentance is best

achieved while one still has a body to help attain spiritual supremacy: “This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; ... this life is the day for men to perform their labors. ...

31 “Do not procrastinate the day of your repentance; ... if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed. ...

32 “That same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life ... will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.”^t

33 To be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life eternal.^u That blessing will come to those with the will to change.

D. Choose to Be Different.

34 Distinguish yourself from worldly crowds. Defenders do not resemble offenders. Among them are clever merchandisers who plot to link beer with sports, tobacco with charm, and drugs with fun. Scripture warns of those who so deceive:

35 “Thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned

o Mosiah 27:25
p D&C 59:9
q Alma 37:33
r Hel. 13:29
s D&C 88:15
t Alma 34:32–34
u 2 Ne. 9:39; Rom. 8:6

will be blessed both physically and spiritually.

E. Choose to Exercise.

45 Exercising the body and the spirit will aid in the climb toward recovery. Appropriate physical activity helps to combat depression, which so often accompanies addiction.

46 But spiritual exercise is even more crucial. This battle will be more easily won with fervent prayer. If we truly “counsel with the Lord in all [our] doings, ... he will direct [us] for good.”^a

47 Strength comes from uplifting music, good books, and feasting from the scriptures. Since the Book of Mormon was to come forth “when there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth”,^b study of that book in particular will fortify us. President Benson has issued that challenge.

48 Exercise the body and the spirit and choose to exercise faith in God.

F. Choose to Be Free.

49 Break “bands of iniquity.”^c Leave behind “an iron yoke, ... handcuffs, and chains, and shackles, and fetters of hell.”^d

50 Choose to be free from feigned friends who first flatter yet later

despise.^e Drug abuse may have started with them, but you pay the price.

51 “Remember, my brethren [and sisters], that whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free.”^f

52 The Lord has revealed His sacred standard to guide people in a troubled world. You and I were born free to follow His divine guidance. We may choose for ourselves. Those choices may bring addiction or freedom. For freedom and joy, choose to “be faithful in Christ.” He will lift you up. May “the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever”,^g I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 28

Thanks for the Covenant - Delivered November 22, 1988 as a devotional at BYU Provo

SISTER Nelson and I are thrilled to be with you on this special occasion. Whenever we come to BYU and are privileged to rub shoulders with members of the faculty and student body, we are better for it.

a Alma 37:37
b Morm. 8:31
c Mosiah 23:12; see also 1 Ne. 13:5
d D&C 123:8
e D&C 121:20
f Hel. 14:30
g Moro. 9:25

2 In two days, people in this nation will set aside their usual labors and celebrate Thanksgiving Day. This custom fosters gratitude to God for the good things of life. Each one of you will offer your own expressions of gratitude in your own way, wherever you are. We have so much for which we are grateful—family, friends, food, freedom, faith—all of which come to us from a loving Father in Heaven.

3 On my list of things for which I am thankful are items that may not be on your list. I would especially like to express my gratitude for the privilege of being here today. In the past five weeks my calling has taken me to thirteen different nations on three different continents. So I'm grateful for the jet airplane and competent people who work to help us travel in safety. I'm pleased that I don't have jet lag. My poor brain has long since given up trying to keep track of which time zone I'm in. I find that if one travels eastward to Europe and then westward to the East, time zones get fuzzy anyway, and opposing jet lags hopefully just cancel out.

4 I am grateful also for the fact that wherever I travel, the reputation made by groups from Brigham Young University has preceded me. I salute cultural ambassadors of goodwill who represent this institution. What you have done is of inestimable value. Literally, the world is your campus.

5 Another observation for which I am grateful is that graduates from BYU are widely disseminated throughout the earth. Precious seedlings of faith blown by winds of responsibility reach fertile soil of opportunity in lands near and far.

6 Wherever I go in the world, I see amazing growth of the Church. People once uninformed are learning of the gospel. I am an eyewitness to fulfillment of the promise made to the Prophet Joseph Smith when the Lord said, "The ends of the earth shall inquire after they name".^h

7 National governments once hostile to this Church are now cautiously opening doors because they have learned that doctrines restored through that great Prophet will strengthen citizens of their nations.

8 I would like to speak to each individual here with the hope that I may give you a new perspective of gratitude at Thanksgiving. Against a historical backdrop I should like to paint a mental picture that would allow you more fully to comprehend who you really are.

9 The panorama of history will extend so far back you will wonder if I have forgotten to relate my message to you. But if you'll pay careful attention and follow the thread of thought, you will see that the relationship is real. In fact, if you should view your own identity without this broad-

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h D&C 122:1

er understanding, such limitation would constitute an unfortunate injustice.

Going Back in Time

10 Each one here no doubt has at one time or another had some sort of identity crisis. On those occasions one has wondered with truth introspection: "Who am I really? Why am I here? What am I to do?" To find identity, direction, and purpose, it helps to be reminded of the past.

11 Before we start, I'd like to give you a little quiz. Nothing you'd rather have today, is there? I won't ask for answers aloud, but perhaps you can silently answer these questions or even write them in your notes.

- Who are your parents?*
- Where is your home?*
- Are you of Israel?*
- Are you Hebrew?*
- Are you related to Abraham? If so, how?*
- Are you Jewish?*
- To what countries do you trace your ancestry?*
- Do any of you trace your ancestry to Egypt?*

12 To find answers, let's go back in a mental time tunnel. Before the world was made, "Jesus Christ, the Great I AM, . . . looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of

heaven".ⁱ The Lord had shown Abraham "the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones".^j We are no doubt among those he envisioned.

13 "And God saw these souls . . . and he said: These I will make my rulers; . . . Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born".^k Contemplating the plan to create an earth on which those spirits could dwell, our Heavenly Father said to those about him, "We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them".^l

14 The Creation was accomplished. The fall of Adam took place that man might be. Dispensations of the gospel were entrusted to Adam, to Enoch, to Noah, Abraham, and others.^m Then the Savior of the world was born. Prior to his planned atonement, he ministered among them.

15 You may recall the conversation the Master had with Jews who questioned his knowledge about Abraham;

16 Then said the Jews unto [Jesus], Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

i D&C 38:1
j Abraham 3:22
k Abraham 3:23
l Abraham 3:25
m Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City; Bookcraft, 1954], 1:161

on, Levi, and Judah. Meanwhile, Rachel was barren. So desirous was she of having children that she gave to Jacob her handmaiden, Bilhah, as another wife, with the expectation that children born to Bilhah would become Rachel's own, because Rachel owned Bilhah. Bilhah had been given to Rachel as a wedding gift by her father. Bilhah did conceive and gave birth to a son upon Rachel's knees.^x It was customary for names of babies to be selected by their mothers. "Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan".^y Dan in Hebrew language means "judge." Rachel wanted Dan judged as though he were her own offspring. Bilhah later bore a second son named Naphtali.^z

25 When Leah saw that pattern of surrogate motherhood successfully practiced by her sister, Leah decided to do the same. Her maid, Zilpah, was given to Jacob as a fourth wife, and she bore sons named Gad and Asher.^{aa} Leah subsequently had two more sons named Issachar and Zebulun.^{ab}

26 So Israel had ten sons before Rachel finally conceived and

bore a son of her very own. She called his name Joseph.^{ac} This name had a very special meaning. The word Joseph relates to the Hebrew word yasaph, meaning "to add." Rachel wanted all to know that this son was added to sons that she already had through her maid Bilhah. Joseph also relates to the Hebrew word asaph, which means "to gather".^{ad} The name and lineage of Joseph were destined to play an important later role in the gathering of Israel.

27 In time, Rachel conceived again. As they were traveling from Beth-el in the north to Bethlehem in the south, Rachel went into labor and experienced a fatal complication. Scriptures indicate that it was a particularly hard labor. She endured severe pain. The midwife announced that the baby was a boy and asked for a name. As Rachel was dying, she gave the baby the name Ben-oni,^{ae} which means "son of my sorrow." Rachel then died and was buried just north of Bethlehem. Her husband was grief-stricken. I suppose he could not bear the thought of being reminded of the death of his beloved Rachel every time the name of the child was mentioned. So Jacob changed the

x Genesis 30:3

y Genesis 30:6

z Genesis 30:8

aa Genesis 30:9–13

ab Genesis 35:23

ac Genesis 30:24

ad Genesis 30:24, footnote 24a in the LDS edition of the King James Version

ae Genesis 35:18

33 This connection became clear when in our latter-day, God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ came to earth. In addition to other actions of eternal consequence, they established once again the Abrahamic covenant, this time through the Prophet Joseph Smith. These are the words of the Lord:

34 And as I said unto Abraham concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph [Smith]: In thee and in thy seed shall the kindred of the earth be blessed.^{ak}

35 The Master conferred upon Joseph Smith priesthood authority and the right to convey blessings of the Abrahamic covenant to others.

36 Joseph Smith, whose father's name was Joseph, had the same name as Joseph who was sold into Egypt, who millennia before had prophesied of Joseph Smith. This fact is documented in the Book of Mormon^{al}. The name Joseph carried the connotation both that he was "added" to, and that his mission related to the "gathering" of Israel.

37 Have the promises of the Abrahamic covenant been fulfilled? Partially. Christ indeed has come from the seed of Abraham through the lineage of Judah. That line was entrusted

with responsibility for preparation of the world for the first coming of the Lord. On the other hand, responsibility for preparation of leadership of the world for the second coming of the Lord was assigned to the lineage of Joseph, through Ephraim and Manasseh.

38 This remarkable fact was fore-known centuries before the birth of the Lord. In the earliest pages of the Book of Mormon this revelation is recorded:

39 Wherefore, our father hath not spoken of our seed alone, but also of all the house of Israel, pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days; which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.^{am}

40 Now, what of the promise of possession of certain lands? Territorial inheritance destined for the sons of Israel provided property in the Holy Land for Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali, and Benjamin.

41 But where was the inheritance for Joseph? From the Book of Mormon we learn that his inheritance was this land in the American hemisphere^{an}—identified as being choice above all other lands.^{ao} It was choice, but

ak D&C 124:58; D&C 110:12

al 2 Nephi 3:6–21

am 1 Nephi 15:18

an Ether 13:8

ao Ether 1:42, 10:28, 13:2; D&C 38:20

the term Hebrew was derived.^{as}

51 Are you Jewish? That precious lineage may be claimed if your ancestors are from the loins of Judah. But most of us are of the lineage of Joseph through Ephraim or Manasseh. That was the lineage selected to pioneer the gathering of Israel, the seed to lead throughout the world in blessing all the nations of the earth.

52 Missionary work is only the beginning of that blessing. The fulfillment, the consummation, of those blessings comes as those who have entered the waters of baptism perfect their lives to the point that they may enter the holy temple. Receiving an endowment there seals members of the Church to the Abrahamic covenant.

53 Can you trace your lineage to Egypt? If your patriarchal blessing indicates that you are of the lineage of Joseph, Ephraim, Manasseh, or other descendents of Israel, yes, you may claim Egyptian ancestry.

54 And, of course, each of you is a child of God, created in his image. And you are disciples of his Beloved Son. If you really comprehend the power of that identity, other elements of your background matter less. Paul described this well. He said:

55 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

56 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

57 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.^{at}

58 The promise is the promise of the Abrahamic covenant.

59 The angel Moroni so taught the Prophet Joseph Smith. On September 21, 1823, Moroni appeared to the Prophet, quoting scripture from the fourth chapter of Malachi, "though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles".^{au} The difference in text from the Bible is highly significant. You recall it refers to the heart of the fathers being turned to the children, and the heart of the children being turned to the fathers.^{av} Joseph Smith tells us that Moroni

60 Quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

61 He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the

as Genesis 10:21, 14:13; 2 Corinthians 11:22

at Galatians 3:27-29

au JS—H 1:36

av Malachi 4:6

promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.^{aw}

62 The concept the Prophet was taught emphasized that the hearts of the children will become aware of the promises made to their fathers. Then, with that comprehension, the hearts of the children shall turn to their parents. That includes parents, grandparents, great-great-grandparents—including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Once we know who we are and the royal lineage of which we are a part, our actions and our direction in life will be more appropriate to our inheritance.

63 Now you can better understand this revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith. It applies to each one of us. He said:

64 Thus saith the Lord unto you, with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers—

65 For ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God—

66 Therefore your life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets

since the world began.

67 Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savior unto my people Israel.^{ax}

68 The Lord has called you. He has chosen you. You have inherited greatness of transcendent worth.

“Children of the Prophets”

69 Why are you here today? At least two great reasons emerge. One: You are to learn in your youth to keep the commandments of God.^{ay} There is no other way you can achieve your divine destiny. A prophet said:

70 As you have commenced in your youth to look to the Lord your God, even so I hope that you will continue in keeping his commandments; for blessed is he that endureth to the end.^{az}

71 Reason number two: Learn wisdom so that you can render significant service of worth to your fellowmen. How frustrating it would be to have desire only and little or no ability to help people. Prepare your minds and your hands so that you can qualify to serve people and bless their lives. Gain competence that others do not have. That takes work—it takes effort—but it is worth the price.

aw JS—H 1:38-39
ax D&C 86:8-11
ay Alma 37:35
az Alma 38:2

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72 And for some, a third reason emerges. Here you may fall in love and find your eternal companion. Now with your understanding of the Abrahamic covenant, you may clearly see the importance of marrying within the covenant to obtain all the blessings of the covenant.

73 Long ago, when Jacob’s parents pondered the risk of his dating certain ladies not of covenant Israel, their concern was evident. His mother, Rebekah, said to Isaac:

74 If Jacob take a wife . . . such as these which are of the daughters of the land [and not of Israel], what good shall my life do me?^a

75 So today your parents and predecessors are pulling and praying for you. Be wise in selecting your companion. Keep courage to be morally clean. Let fidelity and trust distinguish all you do. Don’t ever defile our chosen lineage or demean your boundless potential for greatness.

76 These words from the mouth of the Lord recorded in 3 Nephi may summarize my message today:

77 And behold, ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed

shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.^b

78 At Thanksgiving time, express gratitude to your Heavenly Father for blessings uniquely yours. Echo in your heart this prayerful plea recorded in the Book of Mormon:

79 Take upon you the name of Christ; . . . humble yourselves . . . and worship God, in whatsoever place ye may be in, . . . live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you.^c

80 Gratefully add to your list of blessings thanks for the covenant—the Abrahamic covenant—by which you will be vital and precious participants in God’s promise to bless all the nations of the earth through that choice seed.

81 I express my love and invoke the blessings of our Father in Heaven upon you—that you will reach the potential of your divine destiny. God bless you always, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 29

The Canker of Contention - Delivered April 1989 in the Sunday Afternoon Session of General Conference

SOME months ago my esteemed colleague Elder Carlos E. Asay

a Genesis 27:46
b 3 Nephi 20:25
c Alma 34:38

and I stood atop Mount Nebo, where Moses once stood.^d We saw what he saw. In the distance to our right was the Sea of Galilee. The river Jordan flowed from there to the Dead Sea on our left. Ahead was the promised land into which Joshua led the Israelite faithful so long ago.

2 Later we were permitted to do what Moses could not. We were escorted from the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan to its western border with Israel. From there, we and our associates walked over the Allenby Bridge. We felt the tension as armed soldiers nearby guarded both sides of the international boundary.

3 After safely enduring this experience, I thought of the irony of it all. Here in the land made holy by the Prince of Peace, contention has existed almost continuously from that day to this.

4 Prior to His ascension from the Holy Land, the Savior pronounced a unique blessing: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."^e

5 His peace is not necessarily political; His peace is personal. But that spirit of inner peace is driven away by contention. Contention does not usually begin as strife between countries. More often, it starts with an individual, for

we can contend within ourselves over simple matters of right and wrong. From there, contention can infect neighbors and nations like a spreading sore.

6 As we dread any disease that undermines the health of the body, so should we deplore contention, which is a corroding canker of the spirit. I appreciate the counsel of Abraham Lincoln, who said:

7 "Quarrel not at all. No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare time for personal contention. ... Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him."^f

8 President Ezra Taft Benson in his keynote address yesterday described contention as "another face of pride."

9 My concern is that contention is becoming accepted as a way of life. From what we see and hear in the media, the classroom, and the workplace, all are now infected to some degree with contention. How easy it is, yet how wrong it is, to allow habits of contention to pervade matters of spiritual significance, because contention is forbidden by divine decree:

10 "The Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; that they should not lie;

d Deut. 34:1-4

e John 14:27

f Letter to J. M. Cutts, 26 Oct. 1863, in Concise Lincoln Dictionary of Thoughts and Statements, comp. and arr. Ralph B. Winn, New York: New York Philosophical Library, 1959, p. 107.

that they should not steal; that they should not take the name of the Lord their God in vain; that they should not envy; that they should not have malice; that they should not contend one with another.”^g

Creator of Contention

11 To understand why the Lord has commanded us not to “contend one with another,” we must know the true source of contention. A Book of Mormon prophet revealed this important knowledge even before the birth of Christ:

12 “Satan did stir them up to do iniquity continually; yea, he did go about spreading rumors and contentions upon all the face of the land, that he might harden the hearts of the people against that which was good and against that which should come.”^h

13 When Christ did come to the Nephites, He confirmed that prophecy:

14 “He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me [saith the Lord], but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

15 “Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men

with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.”ⁱ

Origin of Contention

16 Contention existed before the earth was formed. When God’s plan for creation and mortal life on the earth was first announced, sons and daughters of God shouted for joy. The plan was dependent on man’s agency, his subsequent fall from the presence of God, and the merciful provision of a Savior to redeem mankind. Scriptures reveal that Lucifer sought vigorously to amend the plan by destroying the agency of man. Satan’s cunning motive was unmasked in his statement:

17 “Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.”^j

18 Satan’s selfish efforts to alter the plan of God resulted in great contention in heaven. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained:

19 “Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he could save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose

g 2 Ne. 26:32
 h Hel. 16:22
 i 3 Ne. 11:29–30
 j Moses 4:1

up in rebellion against God, and was cast down.”^k

20 This war in heaven was not a war of bloodshed. It was a war of conflicting ideas—the beginning of contention.

21 Scriptures repeatedly warn that the father of contention opposes the plan of our Heavenly Father. Satan’s method relies on the infectious canker of contention. Satan’s motive: to gain personal acclaim even over God Himself.

Targets of the Adversary

22 The work of the adversary may be likened to loading guns in opposition to the work of God. Salvos containing germs of contention are aimed and fired at strategic targets essential to that holy work. These vital targets include—in addition to the individual—the family, leaders of the Church, and divine doctrine.

The Family

23 The family has been under attack ever since Satan first taunted Adam and Eve.¹ So today, each must guard against the hazard of contention in the family. It usually begins innocently. Years ago when our daughters were little girls who wanted to be big girls, the style of the day was to wear multiple petticoats. A little contention could have crept in as the girls soon learned that the

one to get dressed first was the one best dressed.

24 In a large family of boys, those with the longest reach were the best fed. In order to avoid obvious contention, they adopted a rule that required them at mealtime to leave at least one foot on the floor.

25 The home is the great laboratory of learning and love. Here parents help children overcome these natural tendencies to be selfish. In rearing our own family, Sister Nelson and I have been very grateful for this counsel from the Book of Mormon:

26 “Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, ...

27 “But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.”^m

28 And I might add, please be patient while children learn those lessons.

29 Parents should be partners to cherish and protect one another, knowing that the aim of the adversary is to destroy the integrity of the family.

k Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, p. 357

l See Gen. 3; Moses 4

m Mosiah 4:14–15

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Leaders of the Church

30 Leaders of the Church are targets for attack by those who stir contention. This is true even though not a single leader has called himself or herself to a position of responsibility. Each General Authority, for instance, chose another path to pursue as his life's occupation. But the reality is, as with Peter or Paul, each was surely "called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority."ⁿ With that call comes the commitment to emulate the patterns of the Prince of Peace.

31 That goal is shared by worthy servants of the Master, who would not speak ill of the Lord's anointed nor provoke contention over teachings declared by ancient or living prophets.

32 Certainly no faithful follower of God would promote any cause even remotely related to religion if rooted in controversy, because contention is not of the Lord.

33 Surely a stalwart would not lend his or her good name to periodicals, programs, or forums that feature offenders who do sow "discord among brethren."^o

34 Such agitators unfortunately fulfill long-foretold prophecy: they "take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed."^p

35 Yet, mercifully, the anointed pray for those who attack them, knowing the sad fate prophesied for their attackers.^q

36 Throughout the world, Saints of the Lord follow Him and His anointed leaders. They have learned that the path of dissent leads to real dangers. The Book of Mormon carries this warning:

37 "Now these dissenters, having the same instruction and the same information ..., having been instructed in the same knowledge of the Lord, nevertheless, it is strange to relate, not long after their dissensions they became more hardened and impenitent, and more wild, wicked and ferocious ... ; giving way to indolence, and all manner of lasciviousness; yea, entirely forgetting the Lord their God."^r

38 How divisive is the force of dissension! Small acts can lead to such great consequences. Regardless of position or situation, no one can safely assume immunity to contention's terrible toll.

39 Thomas B. Marsh, once one of the Twelve, left the Church. His spiritual slide to apostasy started because his wife and another woman had quarreled over a little cream! After an absence from the Church of nearly nineteen years, he came back. To a congregation of Saints, he then said:

n A of F 1:5
 o Prov. 6:19; Prov. 6:14
 p Ps. 2:2
 q D&C 121:16–22
 r Alma 47:36

40 "If there are any among this people who should ever apostatize and do as I have done, prepare your backs for a good whipping, if you are such as the Lord loves. But if you will take my advice, you will stand by the authorities."^s

41 Of course the authorities are human. But to them God has entrusted the keys to His divine work. And He holds us accountable for our responses to the teachings of His servants. These are the words of the Lord:

42 "If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

43 "But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest."^t

Divine Doctrine

44 Divine doctrine of the Church is the prime target of attack by the spiritually contentious. Well do I remember a friend who would routinely sow seeds of contention in Church classes. His assaults would invariably be preceded by this predictable comment: "let me play the role

of devil's advocate." Recently he passed away. One day he will stand before the Lord in judgment. Then, I wonder, will my friend's predictable comment again be repeated?

45 Such contentious spirits are not new. In an epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul gave this warning, "that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed."^u

46 "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to [his] doctrine ... doting about questions and strifes of words, ... supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."^v

47 Dissecting doctrine in a controversial way in order to draw attention to oneself is not pleasing to the Lord. He declared:

48 "Bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me.

49 "And this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scrip-

s Journal of Discourses, 5:206; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1984, pp. 81-83.

t D&C 124:45-46

u 1 Tim. 6:1

v 1 Tim. 6:3-5; see also Isa. 29:21; 2 Ne. 27:32; D&C 19:30; D&C 38:41; D&C 60:14

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tures and do not understand them."^w

50 Contention fosters disunity. The Book of Mormon teaches the better way:

51 "Alma, having authority from God, ... commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another."^x

52 Steps to Supplant Contention
What can we do to combat this canker of contention? What steps may each of us take to supplant the spirit of contention with a spirit of personal peace?

53 To begin, show compassionate concern for others. Control the tongue, the pen, and the word processor. Whenever tempted to dispute, remember this proverb: "He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace."^y

54 Bridle the passion to speak or write contentiously for personal gain or glory. The Apostle Paul thus counseled the Philippians, "Let nothing be done through

strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."^z

55 Such high mutual regard would then let us respectfully disagree without being disagreeable.

56 But the ultimate step lies beyond beginning control of expression. Personal peace is reached when one, in humble submissiveness, truly loves God. Heed carefully this scripture:

57 "There was no contention in the land, *because of* the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people."^{aa}

58 Thus, love of God should be our aim. It is the first commandment—the foundation of faith. As we develop love of God and Christ, love of family and neighbor will naturally follow. Then will we eagerly emulate Jesus. He healed. He comforted. He taught, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."^{ab}

59 Through love of God, the pain caused by the fiery canker of contention will be extinguished from the soul. This healing begins with a personal vow: "Let there be peace on earth, and let

w D&C 10:62–63

x Mosiah 18:18, 21; Mosiah 23:15

y Prov. 11:12; Prov. 17:28

z Philip. 2:3

aa 4 Ne. 1:15; 4 Ne. 1:2; italics added

ab Matt. 5:9; 3 Ne. 12:9

it begin with me.”^a This commitment will then spread to family and friends and will bring peace to neighborhoods and nations.

60 Shun contention. Seek godliness. Be enlightened by eternal truth. Be like-minded with the Lord in love and united with Him in faith. Then shall “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding”,^b be yours, to bless you and your posterity through generations yet to come. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 30

Woman -- Of Infinite Worth - Delivered October 1989 in the Saturday Afternoon Session of General Conference

WORDS are inadequate to express the gratitude we feel for these brethren who have just been released from active assignment as General Authorities of the Church. We appreciate their marvelous ministry and powerful influence for good in the world.

2 Our privilege of sustaining leaders is granted by the Lord.^c Sustaining makes known to the Church who has authority^d and enables each of us to show sup-

port. We honor all our leaders, both men and women, and are grateful for brothers and sisters so united in this kingdom of God on earth.

3 At a recent news conference in an Eastern European country, I was asked about the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I replied that perhaps the Church does more to enlighten understanding about and to lift the cause of women than any other institution on earth. It provides the path to her eternal destiny.

4 A worthy woman personifies the truly noble and worthwhile attributes of life. A faithful woman can become a devoted daughter of God—more concerned with being righteous than with being selfish, more anxious to exercise compassion than to exercise dominion, more committed to integrity than to notoriety. And she knows of her own infinite worth.

5 Each faithful young woman in the Church proclaims that individual worth is one of her most cherished values. She declares, “I am of infinite worth with my own divine mission which I will strive to fulfill.”^e Each daughter of God is of infinite worth because of her divine mission.

a “Let There Be Peace on Earth,” Sy Miller and Jill Jackson, © Jan-Lee Music, Beverly Hills, Calif., 1972

b Philip. 4:7

c D&C 20:63–66; D&C 26:2; D&C 28:13; D&C 38:34; D&C 93:51; D&C 104:21; D&C 124:144

d D&C 42:11

e Personal Progress, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, p. 7

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6 Important lessons about her divine mission may be learned from women of the scriptures. Mother Eve was a great example. She labored beside her husband as a partner. They both knew the plan of salvation. They both heeded commandments of obedience to God. Likewise, she prayed for divine guidance. She bore children. She taught the gospel to them.^f

7 Sarah, in becoming the mother of Isaac in her advanced years, verified that nothing is “too hard for the Lord.”^g

8 Mary, mother of our Redeemer, was the perfect example of complete submission to the will of God.^h She kept confidences.ⁱ In faith, she endured grief.^j

9 The stories of these and other scriptural heroines show that women are essential in God’s plan for His children. Likewise, men have important but different assignments. We learn from the scriptures that men are to hold priesthood responsibilities and, as husbands and fathers, provide for^k and protect their families.^l From the beginning, the priesthood has been conferred only upon men, coming through the “lineage of the fathers.”^m

10 Blessings of the priesthood are shared by men and women. All may qualify for baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. All may take upon themselves the name of the Lord and partake of the sacrament. All may pray and receive answers to their prayers. Gifts of the Spirit and testimonies of the truth are bestowed regardless of gender. Men and women receive the highest ordinance in the house of the Lord together and equally, or not at all.ⁿ

11 Opportunities for development of spiritual and intellectual potential are equal. Masculinity has no monopoly on the mind, and femininity has no exclusive dominion over the heart. The highest titles of human achievement—teacher, educated professional, loyal employee, faithful friend, student of the scriptures, child of God, disciple of Christ, trusted companion, loving parent—are earned under a uniform requirement of worthiness.

12 Loving parent. What a noble title! There are no greater roles in life for a man than those of husband and father. Likewise, there are no greater roles for a woman than those of wife and mother.

13 As I have watched my be-

f Moses 5:1–12; D&C 138:39

g Gen. 18:14

h Luke 1:38

i Luke 2:19

j John 20:11

k Rom. 12:17; 1 Tim. 5:8; D&C 75:28; D&C 83:2, 4

l D&C 134:6, 11

m D&C 84:6–16; D&C 86:8; D&C 107:40–41; Abr. 1:3–4

n D&C 131:1–3

loved companion and our dear daughters stretch to meet the challenging demands of these sacred roles, I have truly been inspired.

14 I have marveled at Mother’s forecast that a child would break out with measles or chicken pox well before my trained medical eye would have so predicted. I have watched the incredible calm of Mother when her child experienced a convulsive seizure.

15 So much is expected of a woman. Often she is a detective; she must search for lost articles and solve on a daily basis baffling “who done it” mysteries.

16 Frequently, her eager audience requests her talent as a musician by calling upon her to sing—any time, any place. She is an artist, using crayons and coloring books, needles and thread, or other means to create works of art by her own hands.^o

17 During the early life of most children, a woman is the principal disciplinarian. She treads the tightrope of judgment between being too strict or too permissive.

18 Mother is “secretary of labor” for her home. She teaches the work ethic with its responsibilities and rewards. Father, too, shares that duty. I remember a hot Saturday afternoon

years ago when one of our little daughters heard the chimes of an approaching ice-cream wagon. She asked me for some money. A bit heartlessly, I replied, “Sweet-heart, why don’t you earn your money like everyone else does?” I’ll never forget her reply.

19 “But, Daddy,” she said, “I don’t like to work!” (Things are different now with four children of her own.)

20 A woman is a master communicator. And she communicates best in humble prayer. How many of us first learned to pray beside the bended knees of our mothers? Surely she knows that her children can walk alone only when they have found their pathway to Father in Heaven through prayer.

21 Certainly, a woman is a teacher. Someone said, “When you teach a boy, you teach an individual, but when you teach a girl, you teach a whole generation.”

22 J. Edgar Hoover said that “the cure of crime is not the electric chair but the high chair”^p

23 I honor women who are not mothers. They know that motherhood is but one of the realms of womankind. The virtue and intelligence of women are uniquely applicable to other realms as well, such as compassionate service and teaching.

o Ps. 90:17; D&C 42:40

p Emerson Roy West, comp., Vital Quotations, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, p. 78

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24 I am indebted to so many wonderful men and women who were my teachers. From grade school, I remember Miss Crow, Miss McLean, Miss Starr, and others. Later, Miss Bradford, Miss Cunningham, and Miss Snow were among my favorites. They were modest, gracious, and moral examples. They were not concerned with what I was to acquire, but with what I was to become. These marvelous unmarried teachers exerted an influence distinct from that of my angel mother. Their gleaming hopes, vicarious ambitions, and exacting demands were vitally important to my preparation for life.

25 A wise woman renews herself. In proper season, she develops her talents and continues her education. She musters the discipline to reach her goals. She dispels darkness and opens windows of truth to light her way.

26 A woman teaches priorities by precept and example. Recently I watched a television program in which a female lawyer was being interviewed. She was at home with her child on a full-time basis. When asked of her decision, she replied, "Oh, I may go back to the law sometime, but not now. For me, the issue is simple. Any lawyer could take care of my clients, but only I should

be the mother of this child."

27 Such a decision is made not in terms of rights but in terms of obligations and responsibilities. She knows that as she rises to meet responsibilities, rights will take care of themselves.

28 The Prophet Joseph Smith was taught this lesson while unjustly incarcerated in Liberty Jail—scene of so few rights, so little freedom, and so much abusive authority. As the Master tutored His Prophet regarding rights, those instructions were surrounded by schooling about obligations and responsibilities.^q

29 A righteous woman is a student of the scriptures. Many apply uniquely to her life.^r In the scriptures she finds "great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures."^s

30 She need not have majored in physics to know divine truths, as "there is no such thing as immaterial matter."^t She need not have graduated in astronomy to learn lessons taught by God to Abraham—the relation of the earth to the sun, the sun to the planets, the planets to the center of the universe, and more.^u When she sings "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are," she knows scriptural answers.

q D&C 121

r Gen. 27:46; Ps. 113:9; Prov. 31:10–31; Eph. 5:22–33; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:3–5; Jacob 3:7; Mosiah 4:14–16; D&C 25

s D&C 89:19

t D&C 131:7

u Abr. 3

said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."^a

39 The Good Shepherd said, "Feed my lambs."^b So a woman feeds her loved ones, providing succor and sustenance just as the Savior would do. Her divine gift is to nurture, to help the young, to care for the poor, to lift the brokenhearted.

40 The Lord said, "My work and my glory [is] to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."^c So His devoted daughter-disciple may truly say, "My work and my glory is to help my loved ones reach that heavenly goal."

41 To help another human being reach one's celestial potential is part of the divine mission of woman. As mother, teacher, or nurturing saint, she molds living clay to the shape of her hopes. In partnership with God, her divine mission is to help spirits live and souls be lifted. This is the measure of her creation. It is ennobling, edifying, and exalting.

42 Her saintly calling is opposed by Satan. He would shatter the family unit and demean the worth of woman. He would triumph if one man would offend or fail to honor her, or if one woman would deny her infinite

worth and behave beneath her dignity. The vulgar portrayal of her beauty as an object of lust, the vile invasion of her private purity, should provoke righteous indignation from all caring people.

43 The gospel has been restored in these latter days so that the light of the Lord can prevail over efforts of the adversary. This day has long been prophesied. The Lord has promised worthy Saints of our time: "Upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."^d

44 A woman's richest rewards will come as she rises to fulfill her destiny as a devoted daughter of God. To all faithful Saints He has promised thrones, kingdoms, principalities, glory, immortality, and eternal lives.^e That is the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is exalting, everlasting, and divine.

45 God bless us to honor each woman in her divine mission as a woman of infinite worth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 31

Four Steps to Learning - Published in the September 1989 Tambuli Magazine

a John 14:15; Ex. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; Mosiah 13:14; D&C 46:9; D&C 124:87

b John 21:15

c Moses 1:39

d Joel 2:29

e Rom. 2:7; D&C 75:5; D&C 128:12, 23; D&C 132:19

WE all understand the importance of education. Perhaps we should consider how to learn. May I suggest four steps to facilitate the learning process.

One

2 The first is to have a great desire to know the truth. As a teacher of surgery for many years, I have observed the differences of individuals to learn. Before every operation there is a set period of time for scrubbing hands clean. Some trainees have either been silent or have passed this time with trivial conversations that had no substance. Those with desire filled that time with questions. I observed that students with great desire know what they don't know and seek to fill those voids.

Two

3 The second step would be to study with an inquiring mind. Again, I take this pattern from the scriptures. You remember that when the brother of Jared was preparing to cross the ocean, he realized there was no provision for light in the ships. So he asked the Lord, "Shall we cross this great water in darkness?"

4 The Lord gave an interesting reply: "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels? ... Ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you. ... Ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea".^f The Lord could have told

the brother of Jared what to do, but he was left to study this out in his own mind. As a result, he selected sixteen stones and then asked the Lord to touch them that they might provide the light for their travel.

5 That same concept was again stressed in latter-day revelation, when the Lord told his servant, "You have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right."^g

6 Many of the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants were given to the prophets only after concentrated study on their part and after asking thoughtful, specific questions of the Lord. That's the way it was with the Word of Wisdom and the revelation on the priesthood given to President Spencer W. Kimball in 1978. Similarly, you will best learn with the spirit of inquiry.

Three

7 The third step is to apply or practice your learning in your daily lives. Those who have learned another language know how important that is. Even with great desire and study, mastery of a language comes only as it is applied to the daily situations of life.

f Ether 2:22-24
g D&C 9:7-8

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Four

8 The fourth and very important step in the learning process is to pray for help. As a surgeon, I did not hesitate to communicate with the Lord in great detail, about any surgery I was about to perform. In my prayers I would even include any new technical procedures I might be using. Often just the process of going over it in my mind while engaged in prayer allowed divine direction for me to see a better way.

9 Now may I offer important words of warning: Learning, if misused, can destroy your goals. Let us consider some safeguards to protect you from such an undesirable end.

10 Your faith must also be nourished. Enrich that faith with private scriptural study and with exposure to other fine books, art, and music. Nourish the gifts of the Spirit on the same daily basis that you feed your physical body.

11 Choose good role models. Before you endorse all the teachings of any teacher, ask yourself if his or her faith is strong enough to be worthy of following. If it isn't, be very discriminating in what you learn from such an individual. Remember that the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price are the standards by which you should measure all doctrine.

12 Avoid poisons of faith such as

sin, pornography, or barely abiding the letter of the law instead of embracing the ennobling spirit of the law. Remember, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."^h

13 Many challenges will be put in your way. For example, you will hear allegations that the Church is "anti-intellectual." But you are the greatest evidence proving that statement is wrong. Individually, you have been encouraged to learn and to seek knowledge from any dependable source. In the Church, we embrace all truth, whether it comes from the scientific laboratory or from the revealed word of the Lord. We accept all truth as being part of the gospel. One truth does not contradict another.

14 Through generations of time, some of the greatest "intellectuals" have been those with the strongest faith. Socrates felt that the unexamined life is not worth living. He had unwavering faith in God, freedom, and immortality. So deeply did he believe in the doctrine of immortality of the soul that although he might have prolonged his earthly life by choosing exile, he submitted with complete serenity to the death sentence of the Athenian court.

15 The great French chemist Louis Pasteur [1822-1895] said:

16 "The Greeks have given us one of the most beautiful words

^h 2 Cor. 3:6

tural prophecy. Years before this event the prophet Micah foretold:

4 “But thou, Bethlehem ... though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”^d

5 The Book of Mormon also records that the Lord’s birthplace was foredetermined, as prophesied by Alma eighty-three years before the Savior was born:

6 “And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.”^e

7 Yes, after millennia of preparation, the long awaited event occurred. Christ was born among men. No wonder angelic choirs sang as they knew that extended centuries of death and darkness were to be relieved by the Atonement, which was finally to come through this Babe of Bethlehem.

8 Why Bethlehem? Is there symbolic significance in the meaning of the name Bethlehem, which in Hebrew means “house of bread”? The Great Provider declared Himself to be the “bread of life.”^f How appropriate it was that He, the “bread of life,” was to come from the “house of bread.”

9 But why among the animals? He, whom John declared to be the “Lamb of God”,^g was born during the season of Passover amongst the animals, as were other lambs being prepared for Paschal sacrifice.

10 At the birth of Him who is called the “good shepherd”,^h shepherds were the first to receive the announcement of His holy birth.ⁱ

11 At the birth of Him who once identified Himself as the “bright and morning star”,^j a new star appeared in the heavens.^k Shining brightly over Bethlehem, that star had been placed in orbit far in advance of the foretold event in order that its light could coincide in time and place with His blessed birth.

12 At the arrival of Him who is called “the light of the world”,^l

d Micah 5:2

e Alma 7:10

f John 6:48

g John 1:29

h John 10:14

i Luke 2:8–16

j Rev. 22:16

k Matt. 2:2; 3 Ne. 1:21

l John 8:12

darkness was banished as a sign of His holy birth.^m He was born the Son of God and the son of a virgin mother, as foretold by Isaiahⁿ and other prophets.^o

Exodus to Egypt

13 The place of His birth was to be in close proximity to Egypt in order to fulfill other scriptural prophecies. Shortly after his birth, Jesus was taken to Egypt, comparable to travels of earlier Israelites. The sojourn of the Holy Child in Egypt fulfilled the prophecy recorded in Hosea 11:1: "I ... called my son out of Egypt." That this scripture truly pertained to the Savior was affirmed by Matthew:

14 "[Joseph] took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: ... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son."^p

Childhood in Nazareth

15 But He didn't stay in the spiritual darkness of Egypt very long. As a child, the Savior was brought to the village of Nazareth. Why Nazareth? Again, to fulfill prophecy. Jeremiah foretold:

16 "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto

David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper."^q

17 I am intrigued with the symbolic significance of the fact that some scholars suggest that the word Nazareth is derived from the Hebrew word *naser*, which means "branch." Jesus, the divine Branch, was to be reared in the place with the name meaning "branch." Jeremiah further prophesied that the Lord would "cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."^r

18 We read in the Book of Mormon of another interesting connection between "branch" and "Nazareth." Do you remember the reply after Nephi had asked the Lord the meaning of the tree of life? The Lord then revealed to him a glimpse of the city of Nazareth, where Nephi beheld in vision "a virgin, most beautiful and fair." She was destined to become the mother of the Son of God.^s Isn't it interesting that the little town of Nazareth, which name signifies "branch," was shown to Nephi in vision after his inquiry about the tree of life?

19 From Matthew 2:23 we learn that Jesus "came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was

m 3 Ne. 1:15, 19
 n Isa. 7:14
 o 1 Ne. 11:13–21; Alma 7:9–10
 p Matt. 2:14–15
 q Jer. 23:5
 r Jer. 33:15
 s 1 Ne. 11:8–18

spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”^t

Water

20 Much of the Holy Land is desert with very little water. Because water was scarce and precious, it became the object of special lessons taught by the Lord.

21 The River Jordan was the site Jesus chose for His baptism by John to “fulfil all righteousness.”^u Is it significant that this sacred ordinance was performed in virtually the lowest body of fresh water on the planet? Could He have selected a better place to symbolize the humble depths to which He went and from which He rose? By example, he taught us that He literally descended beneath all things to rise above all things. Surely, being baptized after the manner of his baptism signifies that through our obedience and effort we, too, can come from the depths to ascend to lofty heights of our own destiny.

22 To us, the River Jordan is a sacred stream. The Jordan marked the termination of the wandering of the children of Israel. They had journeyed there from the banks of the Nile. Joshua had led some 600,000 Israelite warriors and their families across that roiling river during flood season, when the waters were suddenly stopped and heaped

up to allow the faithful Israelites, carrying the ark of the covenant, to cross an empty river bed.^v

23 We don’t know the precise location where this crossing occurred or the exact spot where Jesus was baptized. Both the Bible and the Book of Mormon indicate that the baptism took place in the vicinity of Bethabara.^w Bethabara in Hebrew means “house of the crossing.”

24 Time and again, we quote the statement of Jesus to Nicodemus. To him the Savior declared, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”^x Could it be that Christ chose this location for His baptism in the River Jordan as a silent commemoration of the crossing of those faithful Israelites under Joshua’s direction so many years before, as well as a symbol that baptism is a spiritual crossing into the kingdom of God?

25 Amidst wilderness and desert isolation such as this, the Savior was able to teach important lessons that only those who knew what it was to be thirsty could fully appreciate. To the woman of Samaria at the well He said:

26 “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

27 “But whosoever drinketh of

t Matt. 2:23

u Matt. 3:15; 2 Ne. 31:5–6

v Josh. 3

w John 1:28; 1 Ne. 10:9; JST, John 1:34

x John 3:5

the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”^y

28 The Savior brought his disciples a great distance to teach at a place called Caesarea Philippi, where He asked them this crucial question: “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

29 Simon Peter gave his inspired answer:

30 “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

31 “And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven . . . upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”^z

32 The modern-day scene in Caesarea Philippi is unique. There is a mountain at the base of which is a mighty rock from which water seems to be flowing. These cascades comprise one of the three major headwaters of the River Jordan, literally the liquid lifeline of this country. As Jesus was preparing to conclude His mortal ministry, here He trained future leaders of His Church. Could it be that the Savior brought His disciples to this

spot to teach the lesson that this majestic mountain symbolized the rock of Christ from whom revelation would flow?—revelation to bring light and life to them, just as that flowing water of the River Jordan nourishes Israel.

Mountains

33 Other mountains in the land were also made holy by Jesus. He employed them as spiritual and visual aids to teach His followers.

34 Nearly a week after the Lord was with his disciples at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus took “Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

35 “And was transfigured before them: and ... there appeared unto them Moses and [Elijah].”^{aa}

36 Scholars do not know for sure whether Mount Hermon or Mount Tabor was the actual site of the Transfiguration. What is more important is that Moses and Elijah there conferred keys of the priesthood, under the direction of the Lord, on Peter, James, and John.

37 Remarkable is the fact that Moses and Elijah were those who conferred those same special keys upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, 3 April 1836, just one

y John 4:13–14
z Matt. 16:13, 16–18
aa Matt. 17:1–3

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week after the dedication of that temple.^{ab}

38 For centuries faithful Jews have anticipated the return of Elijah at the Passover. Isn't it interesting that the date of 3 April 1836 was one of the few times when Easter Sunday coincided with the beginning of Passover? Elijah did return as had been hoped, at the Passover, on Easter, to restore keys of the sealing power that were uniquely assigned to him to convey.

39 Those same keys are used today to effect eternal linkage in the holy temples of the Lord. We know that the Lord will honor these ordinances, performed by His duly authorized agents, as He declared, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."^{ac} Each such eternal ordinance is performed in a holy temple, appropriately known as a "mountain of the Lord's house."^{ad}

40 Mountains were often used anciently for the same purposes temples are used today. Moses, for example, was brought to Mount Sinai to be instructed there by the Lord.

41 Mountains are not easy to climb. Then, as now, the Lord called His disciples to climb

mountains to emphasize the efficacy of effort and obedience. He will ask the same of you, figuratively and possibly literally, also.

42 Christ again used a mountain to emphasize effort in His Sermon on the Mount. While speaking near the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, His disciples were commanded to be perfect even as their Father in Heaven. They were taught the principles of prayer. They were commanded to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The Lord promised salvation to those who followed His example in doing the will of His Father.^{ae}

43 There is another important mountain known in today's Israel, as in yesteryear, as Mount Moriah. Now ornamented by objects and mosques of man, it still suggests sacred recollection of the obedience and faith of Abraham and Isaac. Their long three-day journey from Beersheba to Mount Moriah was taken at the request of God. Moriah in the Hebrew language means "seen or chosen by Jehovah."

44 The first sacred temple of Jerusalem was constructed on Mount Moriah. At that site, Jesus attended the remodeled second temple. Initially He called it "my Father's house."^{af} There He accomplished the first cleansing of the temple by driving out the money-changers.

ab D&C 110:11-16

ac Matt. 18:18

ad Isa. 2:2; 2 Ne. 12:2.

ae Matt. 5-7

af John 2:16

45 At the time of the second cleansing, He called it “my house.” And He said unto them, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”^{ag}

46 Finally and sadly, He called it “your house” when He said in desperation, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”,^{ah} and predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of which one stone would not be left upon the other. How could these important messages regarding the temple have been delivered in any other land? For His own mortal ministry He chose the land with the temple.

Local Knowledge and Sites

47 Underground tombs were commonly used for interment of the dead. Jesus was elsewhere when His dear friend Lazarus died. But the Lord knew very well what had transpired. The scriptural account relates that not until Lazarus had been dead four days did Jesus appear on the scene. At that late date Martha, sister of Lazarus, exclaimed, “By this time he stinketh.”^{ai}

48 Jesus then “cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

49 “And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was

bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

50 “Then many ... believed on [the Lord].”^{aj}

51 There is great significance to the four-day interval between the death of Lazarus and his being called forth alive from the tomb. A portion of that significance was that, according to some Jewish traditions, it took four days before the Spirit finally and irrevocably departed from the body of the deceased person, so that decomposition could then proceed. The Master, in order to demonstrate His total power over death and His control over life, knowingly waited until that four-day interval had elapsed. Then He raised Lazarus from the dead!

52 Toward the end of His mortal ministry, the Messiah entered the old city of Jerusalem, riding upon a donkey. This, too, was in fulfillment of scriptural prophecy.

53 “Thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”^{ak}

54 That prophecy of Zechariah could hardly have been fulfilled if the Savior had ministered in any other locale.

ag Matt. 21:13
ah Luke 13:35
ai John 11:39
aj John 11:43–45
ak Zech. 9:9

55 Olive trees are special in the Holy Land. The olive branch is universally regarded as a symbol of peace. This tree provides food, light, heat, lumber, ointments, and medicine. It is now, as it was then, crucial to life in Israel. It is not a deciduous tree, but everbearing—always green. Even if the tree is chopped down, life will spring from its roots, suggesting everlasting life. Jewish tradition often refers to the olive tree as the tree of life. To me it seems to prefigure the Resurrection.

*Sites and Symbols of
the Atonement*

56 Jesus came to the base of the Mount of Olives to effect the first component of the Atonement. This He did at the Garden of Gethsemane. The word Gethsemane comes from two Hebrew roots: gath, meaning “press,” and shemen, meaning “oil,” especially that of the olive.

57 There olives had been pressed under the weight of great stone wheels to squeeze precious oil from the olives. So the Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane was literally pressed under the weight of the sins of the world. He sweated great drops of blood—his life’s “oil”—which issued from every pore.^{al}

58 Jesus was accorded titles of unique significance. One was the Messiah, which in Hebrew means “anointed.” The other was the Christ, which in the

Greek language means “anointed” as well. In our day, as it was in His day, the ordinance of administration to the sick includes anointing with the consecrated oil of the olive. So the next time you witness consecrated oil being anointed on the head of one to be blessed, and these sacred words are said, “I anoint you with this consecrated oil,” remember what that original consecration cost. Remember what it meant to all who had ever lived and who ever would yet live. Remember the redemptive power of healing, soothing, and ministering to those in need. Remember, just as the body of the olive, which was pressed for the oil that gave light, so the Savior was pressed. From every pore oozed the lifeblood of our Redeemer. Throughout the joyous days of your mission, when your cup of gladness runs over, remember His cup of bitterness which made it possible. And when sore trials come upon you, remember Gethsemane.

59 The second phase of His atonement was effected on the cross. Hours before that was accomplished, Barabbas was released and, in his stead, Jesus the Christ was consigned to the cross. Ironic it is that Barabbas in local language literally means “son of the father.” While he was released, the true Son of the Eternal Father was condemned to death.^{am}

60 Pilate delivered the Lamb of

al Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18
am Matt. 27:17–26

scripture. It is the great missionary scripture. It is another testament of Jesus Christ. Its four major writers—Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and Moroni—were all eye-witnesses of the Son of God. No wonder this sacred text has become our great and valuable friend as we teach and testify of the Lord.

72 We testify that God our Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in upstate New York in 1820. There and then the promised restitution of all things was begun. The great latter-day work of which we are a part was established, on schedule, to bless a waiting and weeping world.

73 But eventually the Lord will return to the land that He made holy by His mission there in mortality. In triumph, He will come again to Jerusalem. In flaming royal robes of red to symbolize His blood, which oozed from every pore, He shall return to the Holy City. There and elsewhere, “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”^{at} His “name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”^{au}

74 The significance of the Holy Land as headquarters of the Lord’s ministry is not all in the past. Other prophecies are yet

to be fulfilled in the future. Ultimately, at the onset of His millennial reign, Christ shall come again. The Mount of Olives to which He will return “shall cleave in twain.”^{av} When He appears, He will utter these words:

75 “I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.”^{aw}

76 Our sacred charge is to prepare the world for that glorious second coming of the Lord.

77 Another temple will yet be built in Jerusalem. Water will issue from under the temple. Waters of the Dead Sea will be healed. All this and more will occur prior to the promised second coming of our King. From that temple He shall reign forever as Lord of Lords.

78 Nothing in the Savior’s life was without supernal significance or eternal consequence. He used locations available during His mortal ministry to fulfill prophecy and to teach in His “more excellent way.”^{ax}

79 As I contemplate our call to stand as witnesses of Christ “at all times and in all things, and in all places”,^{ay} I think of a special scripture. After the priesthood had been given to the Lord’s Apostles, as His Father had giv-

at Isa. 40:5
 au Isa. 9:6; 2 Ne. 19:6
 av D&C 45:48
 aw D&C 45:52
 ax 1 Cor. 12:31; Ether 12:11
 ay Mosiah 18:9

en it to Him before, Jesus said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."^{az} Praying to His Father, He concluded, "And the glory [which is the priesthood] which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."^{ba}

80 So we are one, my beloved brothers and sisters, united in this cause and in the glory of Him who has sent us forth on His errand. May we sense and appreciate the symbolic signif-

icance of His mortal ministry in this Holy Land. May we understand His ministry to other sheep that He loved. May we realize our role in the restoration He has required, to prepare the world for His second coming. May we comprehend the eternal consequences of the endless life of our Lord, whose servants we are. May we have power and strength to motivate ourselves to do His will in the mountainous responsibilities that are before us.

THE SECOND BOOK OF RUSSELL M NELSON

A collection of conference talks and devotionals from 1990 thru 1999. After Monson's call to the First Presidency in 1985, Nelson was assigned as the apostle to oversee the work of the church in Eastern Europe. In this assignment, he worked closely with Dennis B. Neuenschwander and Hans B. Ringger. Nelson was involved in the first meetings between LDS Church leaders and government officials of Bulgaria, Romania, and the Soviet Union, and worked to continue LDS expansion and recognition efforts in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. In 1991, Nelson served as the negotiator for the LDS Church with the Internal Revenue Service over whether contributions to support missionaries serving would be tax deductible. In 1992, he was the church's lead delegate to the Parliament on World Religions. For a time he was also the church's representative to a US State Department committee on international religious freedom.

CHAPTER 1

Reflection and Resolution - Delivered as a devotional at BYU Provo January 7, 1990.

THE title of my message tonight is "Reflection and Resolution," for indeed this is a time for reflection on activities of the past, and for resolution pertaining to the future. This evening is a real milestone—the first Sabbath day of new semester, of a new year, and of a new decade.

2 We are pleased to be accompanied by several members of our family, including my father. We had my father, Marion C. Nelson, seated on the stand. Then he felt a little immodest about doing that, so he preferred to sit by the family. But I'd like my father to stand. I want you to know that in four days we will, as a family, celebrate his ninety-third birthday. We enjoy the blessings of both his reflections and his resolutions.

az John 20:21; John 17:18
ba John 17:22

3 Speaking of age, I'll relate a spoof attributed to an elderly person who was not as sharp as my father. This gentleman, who was a bit absentminded, quipped that "old age isn't all bad; your forgetfulness allows you to greet new friends every day, and you can even hide your own Easter eggs."

When We Were Young

4 But tonight we should not speak much of age. You are young, and life's exciting challenges are yet before you. Sister Nelson and I reflect on times when we were young. We met during our university days. Dantzel was a campus queen when I fell in love with her. I proposed to her while we were picking peas in a pea patch. Then and there we made a resolution that temple marriage was a must for us.

5 By the time I entered medical school we had become very good friends. Often, after I had spent a morning in the anatomy lab with its pungent aroma of formaldehyde, we ate our sack lunches together on the campus lawn. She always preferred for me to sit downwind from her.

6 We were married when she was a senior and I had graduated, but I was being recycled—as a sophomore once again, this time in medical school. We were so young that my father even had to sign my marriage certificate. Early married life on the campus was wonderful. With our limited means, we could only afford to share a can of soup for lunch. We really worked hard.

She received her baccalaureate degree at age twenty, and I became a doctor of medicine at twenty-two. I thought I knew so much. My parents thought I knew so little.

7 We traveled east for what we thought was to be one year of internship. That year expanded to many years of postdoctoral education, research, and military service. My academic appointments took us to major cities of the central and eastern sectors of the United States as President Taylor has mentioned. In all, more than twelve years elapsed from the time I received my doctor of medicine degree until I was finally able to enter private practice. By then we had six children. But never through that long period of study did Sister Nelson murmur about the lack of material possessions.

8 Oh yes, there was one exception. I remember a night in Boston when we were walking down Boylston street. She pressed her nose against the windowpane of a furniture store and asked, "Do you think we will ever be able to afford a lamp?"

9 As you've been told, our family grew to include nine daughters and one son. Our son has applied for admission to BYU, well aware of the fact that competition is keen for scarce seats here and that enrollment at BYU is a great privilege available only to a fortunate and steadily diminishing percentage of the youth of the Church.

10 To each of you I feel a special debt of gratitude. In my apostolic calling I speak with rulers, magistrates, and ministers of many countries. My assignments in 1989, for example, took me to twenty-one different nations. Wherever I go, BYU has a remarkable reputation, for which I thank you. It is known for good among many nations. Truly, the world is your campus.

A New Year, a New Decade

11 Now, if I had the wish of my heart, I would welcome a private hour with each of you. I would like to hear your own reflections and then listen to your resolutions for this new year and for this new decade. Somehow I don't see you as a vast and faceless congregation. I see you as an assembly of individuals, each one a person with unique talents, hopes, challenges, and a powerful potential beyond even your fondest dreams.

12 I would like to share with you a vision of what each of you can become in your own special way. A proverb of warning applies just as much to you as it did to me in the surgical operating room: "Where there is no vision, the people perish".^a

13 I would like to provide such vision. So let's follow the pattern of the Lord, who often chose to instruct his disciples on a high mountain. He also took Moses

to a mountain to see the scope of the work that was ahead.^b To another high mountain the Lord later took Peter, James, and John.^c There, power and authority, vision and purpose were given to them to qualify them for the work.^d

14 I would like to share a similar vision with each of you. Let us imagine that you and I are alone together on a mountaintop.

15 William, let's start with you. We reflect first on your accomplishments that have brought you here. I met you initially as a handsome and bright elder on your mission. You rendered such wonderful service. Many people now understand the gospel because of you. Some have even joined the Church. They and their posterity will always hold your name dear to their hearts. Reflections on your mission should always give you a sense of deep satisfaction.

16 Now, William, what will your resolutions include as you begin a new semester, a new year, and a new decade? What would you like to be? Have you gone to a quiet, secluded spot to be all alone? Have you found your own "Sacred Grove" equivalent, where you can pour out the secret longings of your soul in prayer to your Father in Heaven? Have you really conversed with God as one man speaks to

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- a Proverbs 29:18
- b Moses 1:1
- c Matthew 17:1
- d Isaiah 40:9; Ezekiel 40:2

another? Have you really declared your allegiance to him and your availability to him, without any reservation? Have you said, "Here I am Lord! Use me!"? Have you pleaded with him, and as you did, have you put behind any counterfeit clichés that may have been part of your prayers in the past? Have you cleanly and completely declared your commitment to be a saint, an elder, a righteous disciple through good times and bad? Such a resounding resolution would bring joy to your Heavenly Father.

17 Now I see Mary—beautiful Mary. You and your future husband plan to be sealed in the temple. I reflect on days when you were small and so full of fun. Now you are a woman, mature and wise.

18 What will you resolve in your heart to be? You will surely help your husband honor his priesthood as you share its blessings together. I already know of your commitment to chastity. It is the powerful protector of virile manhood and the crown of beautiful womanhood. You will continue in your resolve to be clean—to avoid flirtatious or flippant behavior unbecoming a lovely daughter of God.

19 You and your companion should resolve never, never to make uncomplimentary comments about one another to anyone at anytime. Good habit patterns are best established

during your courtship. Never stoop to demeaning words that hurt. Together, resolve now to make of your home a place of prayer. Make it a sanctuary of faith where servants of the Lord are always welcome and where scriptures are read and discussed together. You will both want to grow in true spiritual symmetry.

20 Remember, Mary, your partner's feelings about paying tithing will be in a large measure shaped by your attitude. Words of encouragement from you will help him feel confident in his commitment to tithe, especially during your early years together when pocketbooks are so thin. Plan to introduce yourselves to your new bishop with resolution to help build the kingdom in the fraction of the frontier where you are called upon to live.

21 Calls in the Church are not only opportunities to help others, but they will bless your lives, too. The Lord said, "Thy duty is unto the church forever, and this because of thy family".^e Now is the time to make that resolution to continue to serve the Lord. God bless you, Mary and your partner, and may you always remain best friends.

22 Next I would like to visit with Natasha. Your last name is usually mispronounced because of its roots in eastern Europe. Think of what has happened in that part of the world during the historic year of 1989. Surely your

e D&C 23:3

Natasha, what will be your New Year’s resolutions? Keep your eye on this big picture. But while you survey large fields, cultivate small ones. Prepare to serve. Take full advantage of your opportunity for an education; it will be invaluable to you. I don’t think it matters much whether you study to become a librarian, a lawyer, or a musician. Complete the course you have begun, and then God can use you to bless people with the fruits of your education.

31 Next, I would like to visit with Peter. As a relatively recent convert to the Church, you are so happy with the truths of the gospel that have expanded your mind. As you reflect on your past, Peter, remember that before you found the Church, you had many doubts. But your confusion departed when you discovered the fulness of the gospel. Ignorance was replaced by information, and then by conviction. Next came repentance. You became converted—changed—never to return to the ways of the spiritual skeptic who is devoid of faith.

32 Your choice of a career is yet a bit uncertain. That can be frustrating at times. But much more important than what you do is what you are. To be your best, will you quietly and personally resolve to remain a believer? Will you continue to nurture your faith in God? Keep your faith strong enough to defend attacks upon your religious conversion?

Beware! Wherever you go, there will be clever destroyers of faith, many even masquerading as fellow believers.

33 Your love for research is a great gift. Cultivate it. As you continue your advanced studies in this university, and perhaps elsewhere, resolve now, Peter, to know what you will do when confronted with ideas contrary to established doctrines of the Lord. Resolve now how you will react to those who stir up contention and contest the teachings of the prophets. Prepare now for the possibility that people of prominent status will deny their own Creator. Their skeptical teachings try to diminish the divinity of the mission of the Savior and even try to nullify the doctrine of the Atonement.

34 Resolve now to be steadfast. Be like Nephi of old, who did “liken all scriptures unto [himself]”.^h Resolve now never to compartmentalize your faith. Faith is not to be separated from your works but is to be an integral part of your works.

35 May I share with you some reflections of my own? Years ago, in my research career in a scientific discipline I helped to develop, I found success by applying truths gleaned from the scriptures. Let me explain.

36 When I first started medical school, we were taught that one must not touch the heart, for if one did, it would stop beating.

h 1 Nephi 19:23

Some placed sordid temptations before you for which you were ill-prepared at the time. Tonight, on the milestone of this Sabbath evening, what will each of you resolve to be? Now is the time to shape your behavior to your hopes. It is not always easy. I can empathize with you.

43 Years ago, while I served as a young intern in a large medical center, I attended a Christmas party. The host was the chief of surgery. I had made a major commitment to work for and be loyal to him and his world-famous institution, which had produced many of the great surgeons, scholars, and researchers of our generation. At the party, the chief's head resident offered alcoholic beverages to Sister Nelson and me. Of course, we politely declined.

44 Minutes later he returned with a more persuasive pitch: "Take a drink," he said, "or the chief will be offended." Again we declined. Our refusal infuriated the head resident. Red-faced and indignant, he said, "Nelson, you take this drink or I'll make life around here mighty miserable for you!"

45 I simply replied, "You do what you must, doctor, but I will do what I must."

46 I fulfilled my promise, and he fulfilled his.

47 He saw to it that I had no vacation that year. His responsibility to prepare the schedule of assignments and on-call duty bore

the stamp of his vitriolic vengeance against me. But now, as I reflect on this matter some forty years later, I would not trade places with him today, or ever.

48 Dorothy—and you too, Dave—remember that decisions are best made before the time of testing, whether those resolutions concern forsaking drugs, alcohol, and other addicting substances, or pornography, which can become an addiction of the mind. Resist any temptations of lust disguised as love. Instead of vice, let virtue garnish your thoughts. To all the Dorothys and Daves here, I urge you to choose companions well and cherish those friends who lift you and make you better in their presence. And be such friends to one another.

49 In the next section I see Richard. Reflect upon your parents. They sacrificed much so you could be here. I met them both in a stake conference a long distance away. A little unrealistically but very hopefully they said, "When you go to BYU, look for our son, Richard. We are so proud of him." So Richard, I bring regards from your parents.

50 What will you resolve to be? If I can read your thoughts correctly, you are committed to strive for personal righteousness. That is a wonderful goal. But it is a little more difficult to measure than a goal to shed ten pounds of unwanted weight, or to run or to swim a measured distance. Come with me to the high mountain, and I'll suggest

some ways in which you can measure your progress toward personal righteousness.

51 To begin, ask yourself, "What do I think of when I partake of the sacrament? Do I really concentrate on the atonement of Jesus Christ? Do I comprehend the magnitude of his sacrifice and the magnificence of my future as I take upon myself the name of Jesus Christ and resolve to keep his commandments? As his witness, do I worthily partake of the broken bread in remembrance of his broken body? Do I worthily partake of the water, blessed and sanctified to the souls of all those who drink of it, in remembrance of his blood shed for us?

52 You can recognize progress each week as you thoughtfully, regularly, and worthily partake of the sacrament.

53 Here's another spiritual yardstick: How do you feel about the Sabbath day? I'll share some of my personal reflections with you. When I was your age, I wondered just what activities were appropriate for the Sabbath. I read lists of do's and don'ts, all compiled by others. But now I have a much better understanding, which I gained from two Old Testament scriptures. One is from the book of Exodus:

*The Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
... my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you*

throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.^k

54 A similar message is in the book of Ezekiel:

I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. . . .

I am the Lord your God; . . .

. . . hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.^l

55 Pondering these scriptures has helped me to understand. My behavior on the Sabbath constitutes my sign to the Lord of my regard for him and for my covenants with him. If, on the one hand, my interests on the Sabbath day are turned to activities such as pro football games or worldly movies, the sign from me to him would clearly be that my devotions do not favor him. If, on the other hand, my Sabbath interests are focused on the Lord and his teachings, on the family, or on folks who are sick or poor or needy, that sign would likewise be evident to God. I have concluded that our activities on the Sabbath will be appropriate when we honestly consider them to be our personal sign of our commitment to the Lord.

56 Next, Richard, prepare to do work of real worth for your fel-

k Exodus 31:12-13
l Ezekiel 20:12, 19-20

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lowmen. This is one of the fundamental reasons for enrollment at this institution of higher learning. The critical difference between your just hoping for good things for mankind and your being able to do good things for mankind is education.

57 I'll share another personal reflection. Many years ago when I was a young intern, we had a wonderful neighbor lady named Netta Davis. She had a serious heart condition—a diseased mitral valve—destroyed in her youth by the ravages of rheumatic fever. Her husband, Don, was a fellow physician. Because he and I were usually at the hospital, Netta and my sweetheart, Dantzel, became very close friends. Sadly, as the years went by, Netta's strength ebbed. Her congestive heart failure worsened. Her little body finally died because of this malfunctioning valve.

58 This was long before the advent of surgical repairs within the heart. Such was hardly dreamed of in those days. But Netta's passing changed my life. I determined that her death was not to have been in vain.

59 Then I joined forces with a small team of researchers at a well-known university. Together we embarked on a project to develop an artificial heart-lung machine, as I mentioned earlier. The ultimate purpose of this effort was to allow repairs to be made within the empty heart while the circulation of the patient's blood was temporarily

maintained by the apparatus we were developing.

60 To make connectors for tubing, I learned quite a bit about glassblowing. And I learned how to operate lathes, drill presses, and other machines required to make pumps, valves, and cylinders. With my associates, I also had to learn the physiological requirements for oxygenation of the blood and the requirements for blood flow to and oxygen consumption of the tissues. We had to learn how to anticoagulate the blood and then reverse the anticoagulation so normal clotting could again be restored. And we learned the hard way that bacterial contamination could destroy an otherwise successful experiment. Incidentally, the conquering of that problem was the project for my Ph.D. thesis.

61 Long years elapsed before we were able to graduate from the laboratory to practical application in the operating room of a hospital. But finally it happened in 1951. The human heart could be opened. In the years that followed, thanks also to research in laboratories and clinics at many other universities, defective valves and other components could be repaired. The pioneering road was long and rugged. More than eight years elapsed from the time I received my doctor of medicine degree before I performed the first successful open-heart operation in Utah in 1955.

62 Netta Davis did not die in

ture. Cherish the privilege of education in this institution. Feast on the words of Christ. Apply his teachings in your lives. Then you will achieve your greatest potential for good. You have been reserved for this time and place in order that the nations of the earth shall be blessed through your efforts.

68 I testify to you that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that this is his Church, that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God, that each succeeding prophet has been a chosen instrument in the hands of the Lord for preparing his people for his second coming. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Fundamentals and Initiatives - Published in the Clark Memorandum Fall 1990. This fireside address was given to faculty and students of the J. Reuben Clark Law School on March 18, 1990.

I am deeply grateful for the privilege of meeting with each of you on this special occasion. I bring greetings from President Benson, President Hinckley, President Monson, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve. We sincerely appreciate this law school, its faculty and student body. And we especially admire those faithful partners who sustain the efforts of their student-spouses. As a doctor, I have had the opportunity of lecturing to many medical groups, but the privilege of speaking with a con-

gregation of lawyers is a rare one for me.

2 But my study of law is not rare. It is a continuing commitment, which has provided the undergirding strength for all I have tried to do. Of course, my study of law has pertained largely to those divine or natural laws - put in place by our Creator - that govern the structure, function, and healing powers of the human body. These would be classified in contrast to precedents of common law or statutes enacted by legislatures. I know very little about Marbury versus Madison, or the case of Brown against the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas.

3 But I will identify law as an important facet of my message tonight that I have entitled, "Fundamentals and Initiatives." I see the proper balancing of these two considerations - fundamentals and initiatives - as one of the great challenges of life.

4 Let us first turn our attention to the fundamentals, which include my feelings of reverence for the law.

5 I have learned that the wise physician asks himself at least two basic questions when confronted with any patient who is ill. Question number one: Will this illness subside with the passage of time, or will it become steadily more severe? Let me illustrate with a couple of examples. If a patient has a broken rib, it will get better with the passage of time. On the other hand,

if a patient has a broken mitral valve in the heart, the patient will steadily deteriorate and die.

6 Question number two is considered if the answer to question number one is an ominous prognosis. If the illness is steadily progressive, can that deteriorating course be changed by medical or surgical intervention? In a fractured mitral valve, the downhill progression can be reversed with surgical repair or replacement of that broken valve.

7 The conscientious physician devotes much of his study to learn the natural laws that govern the area of his concern. We could say the same for the aerospace engineer or the jet pilot whose understanding of the physical laws of "foil" and "lift" is vitally important.

8 Let us mentally portray this first fundamental principle as a circle of DIVINE LAW. Divine law is incontrovertible. It includes not only the laws of physics and physiology, but divine commandments as well. It pertains to things of eternal and everlasting worth, such as family, father, mother, children, ordinance, covenant, and doctrine. Divine law is the most basic of the fundamentals, obedience to which may begin the building of a life of greatness. Reference is made in the scriptures to this first fundamental:

All kingdoms have a law given;

And there are many kingdoms; for there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom;

And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions.^a

9 The second fundamental principle is also basic to success. It is the circle of RULES. This ring includes the laws of man that can be made and also changed by human endeavor. In the Church, we are subject to rules written in the *General Handbook of Instructions*. Not only do we obey our own church rules, but we heed those of the society in which we live. We charge our members to be "subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates," and to obey, honor, and sustain the law."^b

10 Government by law - both in word and practice - is the strength and bulwark of any democracy. No individual is to be above or below the law. This circle of rules must be added to the fundamentals upon which we build our lives. Of course, this will be the circle of your special interest as you shape, honor, and defend such laws of society for the benefit of all.

11 The next fundamental principle is that of POLICIES. Policies are established, for example, by

a D&C 88:36-38
b 12th Article of Faith

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

governing boards and presidential bodies who may also change those policies. In the Church, we believe in continuing revelation to presiding leaders who have been given authority and responsibility. The men you sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators respond to inspiration from Him who said, "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same".^c

12 Next, consider the importance of GUIDELINES. Guidelines can be written to help those at work, at school, at home, or at church. I know a man who really understands guidelines. He assists the General Authorities by studying all proposals to purchase or improve real property for the Church. I asked him once how he was able to formulate so many important recommendations he must make to the Brethren. He simply replied, "I work within my guidelines."

13 If we examine these rings from another perspective, perhaps we can see what he meant. He establishes guidelines well within the circle of policies set by the Brethren. They, in turn, function within rules of the Church and civil government. And those rules are well within bounds set by divine law.

14 Now let us discuss the final fundamental – that of STYLE. This circle includes personality, determination, and spirit. A scripture uniquely applies to personal style:

He that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant...

Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves.^d

See Figure 1

15 As we crown this stack with the ring of STYLE, note the importance of the central rod that is firmly attached to the basic ring of DIVINE LAW. This tie-rod may be likened to the scrip-

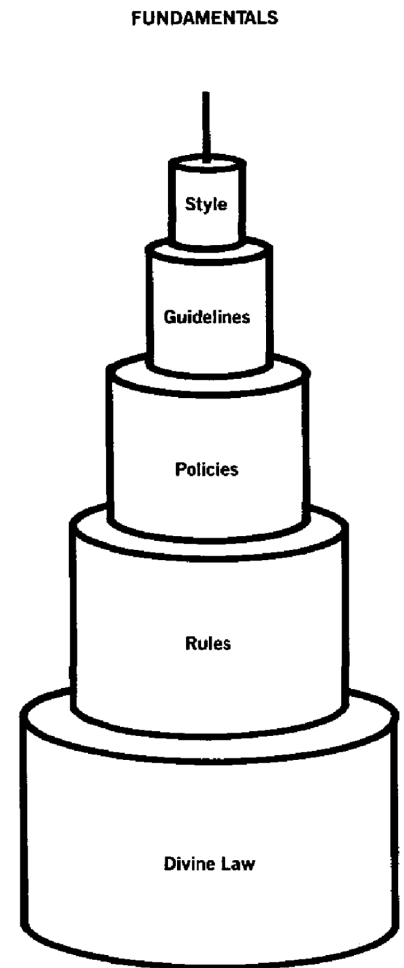


FIGURE 1

c D&C 1:38

d D&C 58:26-28

tural term, "the iron rod."

16 Variations in personal style should range within established guidelines, implemented policies, official rules, and divine law.

17 When properly stacked, these rings resemble a pyramid in shape. If our behavior is centered in Christ, and the iron rod attaches us firmly at any level of our activity to the fundamentals of God's commandments and things of eternal worth, then we won't be so likely to be tipped over by winds of adversity.

INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE

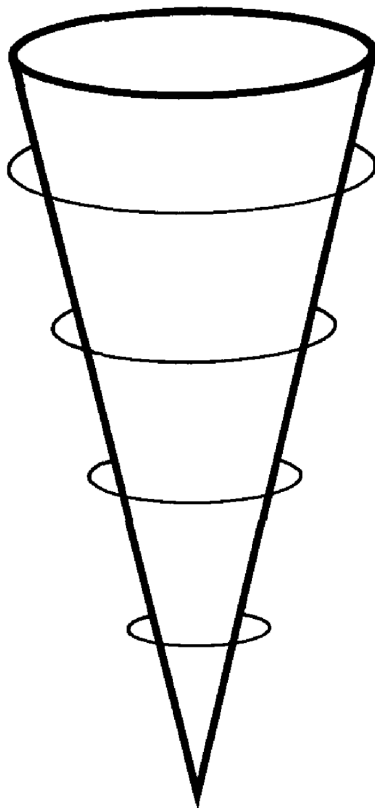


FIGURE 2

18 The heaviest weight in the pyramid is on the bottom. That gives great stability. In a way, it is similar to the heavy ballast in the bottom of an ocean liner, placed there so the ship won't be blown over in a storm.

19 Periodically we learn of individuals who are either not well anchored or obsessed with a particular idea that extends beyond the limits imposed by guidelines, policies, rules, or even divine law. Such a style may be portrayed as eccentric. This is an unstable situation that leads to wobbly imbalance.

20 Having considered the fundamentals, let us turn our attention now to the ideas alluded to in the second half of my title - individual initiative. This topic relates to one's freedom to act as a citizen in society or as a responsible member of the Church. The image of the cone of individual initiative takes the inverted shape of the pyramidal cone of fundamentals, which we have just discussed. It is shaped more like a top.

See Figure 2

21 Let me explain. As individuals, we have no latitude to break the commandments of God. They are absolutes for our conduct. "Thou shalt not commit adultery," for example, is an irrevocable commandment and part of DIVINE LAW.

22 There is a little more room for initiative under the RULE by which we live. Handbooks can

A series of horizontal lines for writing notes, spanning the right side of the page.

be edited, new statuses can be passed, even a constitution can be amended.

23 New POLICIES can be even more easily established – but only by those who formulate them in the first place.

24 GUIDELINES give even greater freedom for adaptation to particular circumstances.

25 The zone of greatest individual initiative is in the ring of style. We previously referred to the word of the Lord that “he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant.”^e So we are expected to exercise much individual initiative.

26 With this cone of individual initiative put in motion, imagine our rapidly rotating this cone to resemble a spinning top or a whirling gyroscope. A top spins well on a sturdy pivot-point. It also spins well only if there is no lopsided projection to deform its shape.

27 In our model, the laws of physics dictate that the forces generated by the spin provide lift in both outward and upward directions.

28 To me, this teaches a lesson. If individual initiatives are free from abrasive burrs and well based on a firm foundation, there is great potential for personal spiritual growth.

29 The Lord said, “What manner of men ought yet to be?...Even as I am.”^f How can one’s personal progress approach that of the Lord’s hopes for us? It is by exercising individual initiative upwards and outwards, while remaining within the limits of the fundamental bounds and conditions we have discussed.

30 So much for the theory. This strategy can be applied to the lives of real people.

31 Let me illustrate with a specific example. In the March 3,1990 issue of the Church News, there was a report of the official recognition of the Church by the government of Czechoslovakia. A photograph showed Elder Hans B. Ringger and me meeting with Dr. Josef Hromadka, Deputy Prime Minister of that country. The fourth person in that picture was Jiri Snederfler, district president of the Church in Czechoslovakia. The accompanying account was truly historic! But another unpublished story preceded that story reported by the media.

32 As general authorities of the Church, we have been petitioning for official recognition in Czechoslovakia for several years. When Elder Ringger and I met with the minister of Religious Affairs of the country for the first time, we asked him what must be done to gain official recognition that would allow members of the Church in Czecho-

e D&C 58:26

f 3 Nephi 27:27

*They must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son. For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified.*⁸

39 In a way, every leader in the Church has to endure trials. Every stake president, bishop, elders quorum president, and teacher has similar and challenging opportunities for individual initiative. When balanced in motion and upon sound fundamental principles, deeds of greatness can result.

40 Your legal training will require your becoming experts in the letter of the law. You will become craftsmen with words of the English language. But even more challenging will be your ability to master the spirit of the law.

41 The spirit is all important. President Benson often tells us that the most important thing about our work in the Church is the spirit. A similar expression was uniquely voiced last month by Dr. Hromadka, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. We conversed with him about the challenges faced by a new government in and where so much is needed. We asked if we, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, could be of any help to his people. He knew that our Church is well recognized for its efforts in providing humanitarian relief throughout

the world. We shall never forget his reply. He said, "We don't need material goods or technology. We need a new spirit. We need moral values. We need the Judeo-Christian ethic back in our curriculum. Please help us to make this a time of spiritual renewal for our nation!"

42 The new president of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel, won the admiration of his audience when he addressed a joint session of the United States Congress. He did not hold an empty hat in hand. He asked only for spiritual assistance, not just for himself, but also for his neighbor.

43 This man, who had been unjustly imprisoned for so long and could have felt unkindly toward his captors, said, "I cannot hate; I will not hate." As he spoke to the combined assembly of the United States Congress, he made this impassioned plea for spiritual help:

The worst thing is that we are living in a decayed moral environment. We have become morally ill, because we have become accustomed to saying one thing and thinking another. We have learned not to believe in anything, not to have consideration for one another, and only to look after ourselves. Notions such as love, friendship, compassion, humility, and forgiveness have lost their depth and dimension, and for many of us they represent merely a psychological idiosyncrasy, or appear to be some kind of stray relic, some-

thing rather comical in the era of computers and space rockets.

44 What a marvelous message! President Havel’s hopes for love, friendship, compassion, humility, and forgiveness harken right back to counsel given through the ages by living prophets of God. They have stressed the importance of practicing those principles broadly and, especially, within the walls of our own homes.

45 I am informed that about 50 percent of you students here tonight are married. And I suspect others may take that important step if your prospective mates are successful in catching you.

46 May I offer a little advice that may be helpful in your domestic relationships? Be mindful that there is no guarantee of a long life here in mortality.

47 The sporting world was shocked earlier this month. A 23-year-old basketball star, Hank Gathers, had just completed an “alley-oop” play with a spectacular slam dunk. He then headed up court with a big smile. Seconds later he collapsed and, in spite of prolonged efforts at resuscitation, he died.

48 While I don’t presume to know any more about his particular clinical history than has been published in the papers, I do know this: So-called “skipped” heart beats are common. We all experience them from time to

time. Some of those are recorded on the electrocardiogram (ECG) as premature ventricular contractions, or PVCs. If one of those PVCs occurs precisely at the onset of the T wave of the ECG, the heart is especially prone to a fatal shift of its rhythm. A normal rhythm can suddenly switch to ventricular fibrillation - a random motion of muscle fibers which is incompatible with life because the heart can no longer propel blood. It is my assumption that this is what happened to Hank Gathers. The same can happen, regardless of physical conditioning, to any of us at any time.

49 Every day of life is a precious gift from God. I sincerely believe these words of King Benjamin:

If you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, ...

If ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another - I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.

And behold, all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; and he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments ye should prosper in the land.^h

50 That scripture teaches the importance of humility, gratitude, obedience, and faith in promised blessings.

51 It reminds us of how fortunate we are to be touched by the majestic spirit of Rex E Lee, president of Brigham Young University. His example of courage and candor, fidelity and love, constitutes a model worthy of our emulation. He teaches us to keep our vision on the eternities ahead, yet to live and enjoy each day as if it were our last.

52 We can learn much from such courageous men and women of greatness. Though our eyes are fixed on distant goals, we do today's work today. We can pay our bills on the day we receive them. Today, we can really treat our neighbors as we would like to be treated. We can tell our partners of our love daily.

53 Occasionally I awaken in the night and tenderly run my fingers through the curly hair of the companion lying beside me. I'm so grateful for her. I suppose some of that gratitude stems from long periods of separation imposed upon us from time to time. How I missed her when I served in the Army on duty overseas! How I missed her when spending tedious nights rendering emergency surgical care at the hospital! And now those long and lonely nights must be endured again when I have assignments overseas for the Church.

54 Your spiritual self-evaluation is of great importance. Most of you will practice law on a fee-for-service basis. Collect that fee to enable you to serve others. Don't collect the fee as the reason for your service. And, occasionally, you will wish to render service without a fee. That is a great privilege—one of the refreshing distinctions between a profession and a trade.

55 Your professional work is to support your family. Your family does not exist to support your work.

56 Your profession will necessarily bring you into contact with the corrupted, which can be corrupting in itself. Your own spiritual strength must be your safeguard.

57 A society with no other scale than a legal one is not worthy of sons and daughters of God. Any morality based solely on the letter of the law falls short of the great potential of the human soul.

58 So I plead for a proper balance between fundamentals and initiatives. Actions based on eternal principles enlarge the soul. Through such actions we literally can become more like the Lord. We need not be boastful, but we can literally achieve the goal Jesus Christ expressed for us. "What manner of men ought ye to be?" he asked. Then he answered his own question: "Even as I am".ⁱ As we so build we will

be exhilarated, enlarged, ennobled, and magnified beyond our fondest dreams.

59 Please know of our deep love for you and of our great confidence in you. Our prayers are with you and your loved ones for your success now and always. I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you as I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that his restored church provides the pathway by which we can achieve balanced growth in this life and eternal glory in the life to come. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Thus Shall My Church Be Called - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of April 1990 General Conference.

TODAY I would like to speak about a name. We are all pleased when our names are pronounced and spelled correctly. Sometimes a nickname is used instead of the real name. But a nickname may offend either the one named or the parents who gave the name.

2 The name of which I shall speak is not a personal name, yet the same principles apply. I refer to a name given by the Lord:

3 "Thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."^a

4 Note carefully the language of the Lord. He did not say, "Thus shall my church be *named*." He said, "Thus shall my church be *called*." Years ago, its members were cautioned by the Brethren who wrote: "We feel that some may be misled by the too frequent use of the term 'Mormon Church.'"^b Before any other name is considered to be a legitimate substitute, the thoughtful person might reverently consider the feelings of the Heavenly Parent who bestowed that name.

5 Surely every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord is precious. So each word in this name must be important—divinely designated for a reason. If we study the key words in that name, we can better understand the name's full significance.

Saints

6 The last word in the title is *Saints*. I smile when I remember a comment made after my call to the Quorum of the Twelve. A doctor friend relayed a report made at a professional meeting that "Dr. Nelson was no longer practicing cardiac surgery because his church had made him 'a saint.'"

7 Such a comment was not only amusing but revealing. It evidenced unfamiliarity with the language of the Bible, in which the word *saint* is used much more frequently than is the term *Christian*.

a D&C 115:4

b Member-Missionary Class—Instructor's Guide, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982, p. 2

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8 The word *Christian* appears in only three verses of the King James Version of the Bible. One verse describes the historical fact that “disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”;^c another quotes a sarcastic nonbeliever, King Agrippa;^d and the third indicates that one known as “a Christian” must be prepared to suffer.^e

9 In contrast, the term *saint* (or *saints*) appears in thirty-six verses of the Old Testament and in sixty-two verses of the New Testament.

10 Paul addressed an epistle “to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.”^f

11 To recent converts there he said, “Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”^g

12 In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul used the word saint at least once in every chapter!

13 Despite its use in ninety-eight verses of the Bible, the term saint is still not well understood. Some mistakenly think that it implies beatification or perfection. Not so! A saint is a believer in Christ

and knows of His perfect love. The giving saint shares in a true spirit of that love, and the receiving saint accepts in a true spirit of gratitude. A saint serves others, knowing that the more one serves, the greater the opportunity for the Spirit to sanctify and purify.

14 A saint is tolerant, and is attentive to the pleadings of other human beings, not only to spoken messages but to unspoken messages as well. A saint is different from an individual whose response to a concern might be a selfish “What do I care” attitude. A real saint responds, “What? I do care!” *Do* is an action verb, and it becomes the driving force in the reply of one who will care for another in need.^h

15 A saint “refrain[s] from idleness”ⁱ and seeks learning by study, and also by faith. Education not only helps in communication with others, but it enables one to discern truth from error, particularly through studying the scriptures.^j

16 A saint is honest and kind, paying financial obligations promptly and fully, treating others as she or he would want to be treated.^k

c Acts 11:26

d Acts 26:28

e 1 Pet. 4:16

f Eph. 1:1

g Eph. 2:19; Eph. 3:17–19

h 1 Cor. 12:25–27; 2 Cor. 7:12

i Alma 38:12

j D&C 88:118

k Matt. 7:12; 3 Ne. 14:12; D&C 112:11

17 A saint is an honorable citizen, knowing that the very country which provides opportunity and protection deserves support, including prompt payment of taxes and personal participation in its legal political process.^l

18 A saint resolves any differences with others honorably and peacefully and is constant in courtesy—even in traffic at the rush hour.

19 A saint shuns that which is unclean or degrading and avoids excess even of that which is good.

20 Perhaps above all, a saint is reverent. Reverence for the Lord, for the earth He created, for leaders, for the dignity of others, for the law, for the sanctity of life, for chapels and other buildings, are all evidences of saintly attitudes.^m

21 A reverent saint loves the Lord and gives highest priority to keeping His commandments. Daily prayer, periodic fasting, payment of tithes and offerings are privileges important to a faithful saint.

22 Finally, a saint is one who receives the gifts of the Spirit that God has promised to all His faithful sons and daughters.ⁿ

Latter-day

The term *latter-day* is an expression especially difficult for translators who labor in languages in which there is not a good equivalent term. Some translations may suggest *last* day.

23 It is true that scriptures foretell the final days of the earth's temporal existence as a telestial sphere. The earth will then be renewed and receive its paradisiacal, or terrestrial, glory.^o Ultimately, the earth will become celestialized.^p But its *last* days must be preceded by its *latter* days!

24 We live in those latter days, and they are really remarkable. The Lord's Spirit is being poured out upon all inhabitants of the earth, precisely as the Prophet Joel foretold. His prophecy was of such significance that the angel Moroni reaffirmed it to the Prophet Joseph Smith.^q

25 For millennia, methods of farming, travel, and communication were largely unchanged from ancient techniques. Developments since the birth of Joseph Smith, however, have risen in remarkable contrast.

26 Joseph Smith had long been foreordained as God's prophet for the restoration of the gospel in the fulness of times.^r Twen-

l D&C 134:5
 m Lev. 19:30; Alma 47:22; D&C 107:4; D&C 134:7
 n Joel 2:28–29; Acts 2:17–18
 o A of F 1:10
 p Rev. 21:1; D&C 77:1; D&C 88:25–26
 q Joel 2:28–32; JS—H 1:41
 r 2 Ne. 3:7–15

ty-five years after his birth, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was officially organized.

27 Later in that same century, the telegraph was developed, the Atlantic Ocean was first crossed by a steamship, and the telephone, the automobile, and motion pictures were invented.

28 The twentieth century has been even more extraordinary. Farming has become mechanized.

29 Modern transportation allows travel to nearly any destination in the world within a day or two.

30 Computers have been developed that allow the Church to serve living members and to organize information relative to progenitors who live on the other side of the veil. People throughout the world, once little concerned with family history, now search for roots of their ancestral heritage using technologies unavailable a century ago.

31 Long-distance telephone, telefax, radio, television, and satellite communications have become routine. In these latter days it is possible for the word of the Lord to be broadcast from world headquarters of His Church and heard in the most remote areas of the globe.

32 The divine promise is being fulfilled that this restored “gospel shall be preached unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”^s

33 Political changes have occurred recently in many countries. Previous restrictions of personal liberties have been relieved. The shell of spiritual confinement has been shattered. Swelling shouts of freedom fill the air. Surely the hand of the Lord is apparent. He said, “I will hasten my work in its time”;^t and that time of hastening is now.

Jesus Christ

34 By divine directive, the title of the Church bears the sacred name of Jesus Christ, whose church this is.^u He so decreed more than once. Nearly two thousand years ago, the Lord said, “Ye shall *call* the church in my name; ...

35 “And how be it my church save it be *called* in my name?”^v

36 We worship God the Eternal Father in the name of His Son by the power of the Holy Ghost. We know the premortal Jesus to be Jehovah, God of the Old Testament. We know Him to be “the chief corner stone” upon which the organization of His Church is based.^w We know Him to be the Rock from whom rev-

s D&C 133:37
 t D&C 88:73
 u D&C 115:3–4
 v 3 Ne. 27:7–8; italics added
 w Eph. 2:20

the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

48 "Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in."^a

49 Through the ordinance of baptism, we take upon ourselves the name of the Lord and covenant to be saints in these latter days. We covenant to live by the doctrines of the Church as recorded in sacred scriptures and as revealed to prophets, ancient and modern.

50 "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."^b

51 These revelations include fundamental truths essential to our everlasting happiness and joy. They teach of priorities with eternal potential, such as love of God, family, mother, father, children, and home; self-mastery; care of the poor and needy; service; and thoughtful consideration for others.

52 This church, established under the direction of Almighty

God, fulfills promises made in biblical times. It is part of the "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."^c It has been restored and given a name by the Lord Himself.

53 He issued this solemn warning: "Let all men beware how they take my name in their lips." "Remember," He added, "that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care."^d Therefore, just as we revere His holy name, we likewise revere the name that He decreed for His church.

54 As members of His church, we are privileged to participate in its divine destiny. May we so honor Him who declared, "Thus shall my church be *called* ... The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 4

Liberty, License, and Law - Delivered as an address at America's Freedom Festival in Provo, Utah on 1 July 1990 along with nine other apostles.

MY dear companion, Dantzel, and I are deeply grateful for the privilege of being with you on this significant occasion. Perhaps as never before we sincerely rejoice in commemorating our heritage of freedom at this time of the year.

a Mosiah 18:8–9

b A of F 1:9

c Acts 3:21

d D&C 63:61, 64

2 Many of us take our foundation of freedom for granted until it isn't there. Dantzel and I visited Havana, Cuba, thirty-eight years ago when, as tourists, we were enjoying the services of our English-speaking guide, whom we called George. He was driving us to see the sights of Havana when he was summoned to stop by a police-man. When their animated Spanish conversation cooled off, George opened his wallet and paid some money to the police officer, who then went on his way. After we resumed our sightseeing, we asked George why he had been arrested. We were not aware of speeding or violation of any traffic law. We shall never forget George's reply.

3 He said something like this: "You folks from the U.S.A. are all alike. You don't understand your liberty. You live in a land governed by law. *That* gives you your freedom. Here in Havana our society is regulated by men. If I want to survive as a tourist guide, I have to submit to requests of the police, even when I have done nothing wrong. The police officer merely notified me that if I wanted to continue to be your guide, I would have to pay him for that privilege."

4 We came away from that experience with a deeper appreciation for the Constitution of the United States of America, and for a government that provides liberty based on law.

5 Freedom festivals in our beloved country may be a little different this year. Since the last Fourth of July, remarkable political changes have taken place. In many nations of the earth, communism has fallen. Throughout the world, shouts of freedom fill the air. The old shell of spiritual confinement is being burst by newfound feelings of freedom. This gives additional cause for celebration tonight.

6 It is highly significant that the English language has these two wonderful words – *freedom* and *liberty* – to describe precious privilege that we enjoy. In contrast, most European languages have only one word, such as German, *freiheit*; French, *liberte*; or Russian, *svoboda*.

7 But we who love the word of God need not depend on the dictionary alone for our understanding of the concept of freedom. We can study the scriptures to gain spiritual insight. In analyzing the standard works in the English language, I find that the word *freedom* appears in thirty-three verses of holy scripture. Twenty-seven of those thirty-three verses are in the Book of Mormon. To me, it is quite remarkable that the number of verses with the terms *freedom* or *liberty* in the Book of Mormon is nearly double that of the other books of scripture combined!

8 May we cite a sample or two from the Book of Mormon:

Moroni was...a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country.^e

9 Here is another:

Remember, remember, my brethren, that whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free.^f

10 Biblical scriptures pertaining to liberty and freedom, though less numerous than those in the Book of Mormon, are just as precious. I especially treasure this passage from the book of Galatians:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.^g

11 The Book of Mormon contains promises unique to this land of America:

This land is consecrated unto him whom [the Lord] 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.^h

12 A similar promise was made to an earlier generation of Americans:

Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ.ⁱ

13 Even with these marvelous scriptural insights, the fulness of the freedom’s glory is somewhat difficult to comprehend, especially by one who has never been without it.

14 Distinguished leaders have attempted to describe the limitations of democracy’s relationship to freedom. Czechoslovakia’s new president, Vaclav Havel, recently said: “As long as people are people, democracy in the full sense of the word will always be no more than an ideal.”^j

15 Even Winston Churchill declared democracy as “the worst form of government, except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”^k

16 Freedom is, strictly speaking, not an absolute but a comparative idea. In a way, it is like health. Both freedom and health can be described with deep emotional conviction only by those who have known the contrast,

f Helaman 14:30

g Galatians 5:1

h 2 Nephi 1:7; 2 Nephi 10:11-14; D&C 10:50-51

i Ether 2:12

j Address to a joint session of the United States Congress, February 21, 1990

k House of Commons, 11 November 1947, cited in The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, third edition, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 150

having once been denied their freedom or their health.

17 A person who lies helplessly in a hospital bed hungers for health. Similarly, a person who cannot move because he is pinned under the weight of political confinement yearns for freedom much more than someone who has never known that awful feeling of constraint.

18 Democracy alone cannot promise perfect freedom, but its freedoms promise opportunity. And those freedoms legitimize the privilege of an individual's pursuit of happiness.

19 Yet freedom does nothing to guide that search. It is much easier to advocate freedom than it is to determine what to do with it. That is one of the challenges facing newly liberated countries.

20 Indeed, Fourth of July celebration will be different this year. Throughout our lifetimes, many have understood freedom solely in terms of an ideological struggle. We have been taught to contrast freedom to bondage, liberty to totalitarianism, capitalism to communism, or democracy to despotism.

21 Now as communism has collapsed in some nations, and as new democracies have arisen, the tempo in the battle of ideology winds down. President Havel described 1989's "revolutionary changes in Europe as

those which will enable us to escape from the rather antiquated straightjacket of this bi-polar view of the world."¹

22 The remarkable crumbling of communism now brings us to a new era of freedom without the foe to which we have been accustomed virtually all of our lives. But as the zealous fervor for communism wanes, so might the zealous fervor for democracy also fade. That risk is real.

23 There is also another risk. It relates to personal freedom, which differs from the political freedom provided by democracy. And the risk stems from personal freedom's license too often misused. Here as well as abroad are evidences that precious personal freedoms are being surrendered. The warning signs are clear.

24 Personal freedom is lessened when pornography enters our homes. Personal freedom is eroded when legal and illegal drugs inflict harm on our loved ones. Addiction to such mental and physical snares cause one to surrender the freedom to choose. Pornography's parasitic power and the insidious incursion of drugs first endanger and then limit personal freedom. In time, they can literally disconnect an individual from his or her own will! Truly but sadly, personal freedom thus misused can be self-destructive.

1 Address to joint session of the United States Congress, February 21, 1990

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25 I'll not say more about pornography, but I would like to comment further on our special moment in history when "freedom" to addict oneself through so-called "substance abuse" has spawned a new challenge to our society. Indeed, drugs have become the modern "mess of pottage" for which souls are sold. Friends and relatives near and dear are all at risk.

26 In December 1989 the American Medical Association declared that substance abuse was this country's number one public health problem. According to research data compiled by experts, legal drugs – such as alcohol and nicotine – and illegal drugs – such as cocaine and heroin – now contribute to approximately 25 percent of all deaths in the United States each year.^m

27 What a travesty! In this land of the free and home of the brave, one death in four now comes from drugs!

28 It is odd that more people die from addiction to legal drugs than from the use of illicit drugs. In the United States of America, more than 350,000 people die each year as a consequence of addiction to cigarettes. More than 100,000 die annually of alcoholism. Deaths associated with illegal drugs, however, number approximately 20,000

each year. This is not to minimize the tragic and serious consequence of addiction to cocaine or heroin. These data, however, place into proper perspective the more significant problems associated with addiction to alcohol and/or tobacco. They not only take their terrible toll, but they constitute the gateway to the use of illicit drugs.

29 Drugs impose an enormous economic burden. One recent study concludes that substance abuse costs the American taxpayers more than \$160 billion per year in lost productivity, health care costs, work-related accidents, and crime.ⁿ

30 Whether freedom is lost through personal physical addiction or from political decree, such painful enslavements evoke a deep yearning to be free from bondage once again. People denied the privileges of freedom of expression, freedom of religion, or freedom from addiction ultimately plead for the sweet perfume of the peaceful rose of freedom. But they must understand that this precious bloom must first be cultivated and then protected.

31 Indeed, the root of freedom is responsibility. The stem of freedom is discipline. The flower of freedom is vigilance.

^m David E. Smith, "Addiction Medicine," *The Western Journal of Medicine*, vol. 152, May 1990, p. 500

ⁿ John H. Osterlow and Charles E. Becker: "Chemical Dependency and Drug Testing in the Work Place," *The Western Journal of Medicine*, vol. 152, May 1990, pp. 506-13

32 Responsibility, discipline, and vigilance can be dispensed neither from the U.S. Treasury nor from private donations. This perception was shared by the Deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, with whom my associates and I spoke earlier this year. When we asked what specific aid could be rendered to Czechoslovakia's new democratic government, he replied: "We don't need material goods or technology. We need a new spirit. We need moral values. We need the Judeo-Christian ethic back in our curriculum. Please help us to make this a time of spiritual renewal for our nation."

33 In April of this year, we met with the Minister of Education in the Republic of Estonia. We asked him a similar question. He replied that the Estonian economy is changing rapidly. He noted an urgent need to educate his people differently. He said: "There is much work to be done in rewriting our text books. We have the hope that religion can be taught in all of the schools and that the spirit of Christianity can be woven withing the fabric of our curriculum."

34 As he made those remarks I thought of the irony that strong forces in these United States are trying to eradicate all evidences of religion or piety from our public schools. Meanwhile, citizens in these European nations that have been so deprived of religious influence now feel the detrimental impact of that loss.

35 Leaders in Hungary and Poland have likewise expressed new hope for their future. These nations, now wishing to enter the land of economic prosperity, plead for a revival of religious ideals and individual responsibility.

36 Many in these countries of middle and eastern Europe feel a real sense of frustration. Their search for meaning in life, while never easy, has become more difficult as their political ideology has changed. Concepts they previously considered dependable have failed, leaving many of their people searching for standards that endure.

37 In news conferences and in other interviews, I have observed that these people hunger and thirst for knowledge regarding spiritual and moral values. Their eagerness for information is so great that it is often difficult to terminate those discussions. It is not easy for us to comprehend the degree of spiritual starvation the people suffer.

38 Libraries around the world bulge with books on how to make the transition from capitalism to communism. Yet I am not aware of comparable treatises on how to make the liberating leap from communism to capitalism. In February of this year we met with a cabinet-level official of the Republic of Romania. In essence he said: "I find myself as a leader in a government now liberated from the despotic dictatorship that I have known most of my life. Now we need a new

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constitution, but we don't know how to write one. Not only that, we don't know where to turn for help. Our libraries contain no information on this subject."

39 As we consider where and how help may be given, who will do it? Everyone talks about keeping alive the eternal flame of freedom, but few offer to pay the gas bill.

40 Where and how will these freedom-loving people learn to change from a top-down form of government to a bottom-up mode of administration? The most apparent source of help for these nations struggling in their new quest for democracy and freedom is here in America. Obvious questions are, should we help: And, can we help?

41 My answer—a resounding yes! Patterns of the past can be followed once again. President Woodrow Wilson helped Czechoslovakia's first president, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, establish the republic of Czechoslovakia on the same principles on which the United States of America has been founded. Masaryk's manuscripts, held by the U.S. Library of Congress, testify to that reality.

42 John Quincy Adams, when he was Secretary of State of the United States of America in 1821, made this statement: "Wherev-

er the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will be America's heart, her benedictions, and her prayers. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all."^o

43 President Joseph F. Smith once said: "[God's] hand has been over this nation, and it is his purpose and design to enlarge it, make it glorious...to the end that those who are kept in bondage and serfdom may be brought to the enjoyment of the fullest freedom and liberty of conscience possible for intelligent men to exercise in the earth."^p

44 Our conscience, our compassion, and our commitment direct us to share what we have with neighbors in need. And we need not necessarily start with "big ticket" items. We can begin by relating. Precious divine law that defines the duty of government while yet preserving individual liberty. Heed a portion of that scripture:

Religion is instituted of God; and...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

^o Cited by Ken Adelman, *The American Enterprise*, Jan-Feb 1990, p. 24

^p *Gospel Doctrine*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 409

freedom and preserve us from the yoke of bondage. Children of God cannot be weaklings. Surely, discipline is requisite to discipleship.

52 To develop self-discipline, we must confine our individual actions within the delimiting bounds prescribed by the law of the land, moral law, and divine law. When one's individual actions are sternly disciplined to conform within those limits, then the full exercise of one's freedom can be enjoyed. In a genuine democracy, there is obedience even to the unenforceable. This concept was so beautifully expressed by Katherine Lee Bates:

*America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
They **liberty** in law.^r*

4. Faith in God

53 Men and women can best honor one another by treating one another as brothers and sisters – all children of one Heavenly Father. He is our Creator. It is He who has made us free. Obedience to His law is essential to liberty. Faith in God is requisite to full freedom of the soul. Our founding fathers understood this well.

54 Now we are justifiably concerned because of the indications of increasing hostility to religion in this country. Threats of

litigation recently caused cancellation of prayers that have long been traditional at high school graduations. That we could so disregard Deity who gave us freedom is indeed a pitiful parody. We would do well to heed these words of President Wilford Woodruff:

The God of Heaven, who created this earth and placed his children upon it, gave unto them a law whereby they might be exalted and saved in a kingdom of glory...Whatever law anyone keeps, he is preserved by that law, and he receives whatever reward that law guarantees unto him. It is the will of God that all his children should obey the highest law, that they may receive the highest glory that is ordained for all mortal beings. But God has given all his children an agency, to choose what law they will keep.^s

55 Our Creator has granted to us the privilege of choice. But He also holds us accountable for our choices. Faith in God will inspire us to be responsible, disciplined, and vigilant in nurturing the sweet flower of freedom and in sharing it with neighbors near and far.

56 My closing quotation could best be a prayerful echo of these words of Samuel F. Smith:

*Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing;*

r "America the Beautiful" Hymns, no. 338; emphasis added
s The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, ed. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946], p. 10. See also D&C 88:34-39.

*Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light.
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King!^a*

57 I so pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 5

Choices - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 1990 General Conference.

NOT long ago a beautiful young mother asked me for guidance with a very difficult decision she was facing. It pertained to an important surgical operation that was being considered. Consequences of her choice would affect her husband and her family as well. She said, "Decisions are really hard for me. I even have trouble choosing what to wear each morning."

2 "You are not so different," I replied. "Each of us must make choices. That is one of life's great privileges."

3 I told this lovely mother that my fellow physicians are regularly asked questions about the human body. Some questions relate to surgical intervention to save a life or to save a part of the body. Other questions relate to elective procedures to alter the body's structure or function. In recent years, many questions relate to the "choice" to abort the life of a newly forming human being. Ironically, such "choice" would deny that developing in-

dividual both life and choice.

4 I reminded her that questions regarding our bodies represent only an important fraction of life's most challenging choices. Others include "Where shall I live?" "What shall I do with my life?" "To which cause should I commit my effort and my good name?" These are but a few of the many choices that we must make each day.

5 I will not disclose the name of the sister, nor the specific operation she was contemplating. To do so might divert our attention to a specific topic and away from those fundamental principles that pertain to important decisions generally.

6 Because challenging choices face all of us from time to time, I invite others to join with us as I extend my conversation with this young mother.

7 I would suggest three questions you might ask yourself as you consider your options. Whether they are once-in-a-lifetime or routine daily decisions, serious reflection on these three questions will help clarify your thinking. You might wish to review these questions first alone and then with your husband. They are:

"Who am I?"

"Why am I here?"

"Where am I going?"

a "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," Hymns, no. 339

8 Truthful answers to these three questions will remind you of important anchors and unchanging principles.

9 As you consider these fundamental questions, it will become clear that decisions you first thought to be purely personal virtually always impact the lives of others. In answering these questions, then, you must be mindful of the broader circle of family and friends who will be affected by the consequences of your choice. This self-evaluation will be a silent examination. No one else will hear your replies. Though I will suggest some answers, the ultimate responses must be uniquely yours.

“Who Am I?”

10 Remember, you are a daughter of God, just as your husband is a son of God. Our Heavenly Father loves you. He has created you to be successful and to have joy.

11 “He created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness.”^b

12 These bodies, created in God’s image, are to be preserved, protected, and well cared for. I feel as did the Apostle Paul, who likened the human body to a temple:

13 “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

14 “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”^c

15 You are one of God’s noble and great spirits, held in reserve to come to earth at this time.^d In your premortal life you were appointed to help prepare the world for the great gathering of souls that will precede the Lord’s second coming. You are one of a covenant people. You are an heir to the promise that all the earth will be blessed by the seed of Abraham and that God’s covenant with Abraham will be fulfilled through his lineage in these latter days.^e

16 As a member of the Church, you have made sacred covenants with the Lord. You have taken upon yourself the name of Christ.^f You have promised to always remember Him and to keep His commandments. In return, He has agreed to grant His Spirit to be with you.^g

17 Having briefly considered some answers to question number one, let us turn our attention to question number two.

b D&C 20:18; Gen. 1:26–27; Mosiah 7:27; Alma 18:34; Alma 22:12; Ether 3:15; Moses 2:27

c 1 Cor. 3:16–17

d D&C 86:8–11

e 1 Ne. 15:18; 3 Ne. 20:25

f D&C 18:28; D&C 20:29, 37

g Moro. 4:3; Moro. 5:2; D&C 20:77

Thus, it was opposed by Satan,^l but affirmed by the Lord^m and reaffirmed through prophets in ancient and in modern times.ⁿ

25 The proper exercise of moral agency requires faith. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel.^o Because of Him, you have your agency. He must be the very foundation of your faith, and the testing of that faith is a fundamental reason for your freedom to choose.

26 You are free to develop and exercise faith in God and in His divine Son, faith in His word, faith in His Church, faith in His servants, and faith in His commandments.

27 Facing difficult challenges is neither new nor unique. Centuries ago, Joshua spoke of a choice his family faced. He declared:

28 “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; ... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”^p

29 Cultivation of that faith will entitle you to the companionship of the Holy Ghost, who will help you make wise decisions.^q

30 Many may profess a measure

of faith in God, but without sincere repentance, faith cannot be fully operative. This concept was made known to the Nephites:

31 “Many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth, ... and are led to believe the holy scriptures, ... which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them.”^r

32 Faith, repentance, and obedience will qualify you for sublime gifts of justice and mercy, which are bestowed upon those worthy of the blessings of the Atonement.^s

33 Yes, every test, every trial, every challenge and hardship you endure is an opportunity to further develop your faith.^t

34 Faith can be fortified through prayer. Prayer is the powerful key to making decisions, not only concerning your physical body, but concerning all other important aspects of your life. Humbly seek the Lord in prayer with a sincere heart and real intent, and He will help you.^u

35 Remember that faith and prayer alone are seldom suf-

l Moses 4:3

m Moses 4:2

n D&C 58:26–28; Moses 6:56; Moses 7:32

o A of F 1:4

p Josh. 24:15; Moses 6:3

q 2 Ne. 2:27–28; D&C 14:8

r Hel. 15:7

s Alma 34:16–17

t D&C 63:11; D&C 101:4

u Alma 33:23; Moro. 7:9; Moro. 10:4; D&C 9:7–9

ficient. Personal effort is usually necessary to accomplish your heart's desire. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."^v

36 The answers to question number two emphasize that you are here to exercise faith, to pray, and to work hard.

37 Now let's turn our attention to question number three.

"Where Am I Going?"

38 This question reminds us that eventually you (and I) are going to die, be resurrected, be judged, and be awarded a place in eternal realms.^w With each passing sunset, you are closer to that inevitable day of judgment. Then you will be asked to account for your faith, your hopes, and your works. The Lord said:

39 "Every man may act in doctrine and principle ... 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."^x

40 As all will be resurrected, your physical body will then be restored to its proper and perfect frame.^y The day of your resurrection will be a day of judgment that will determine the kind of

life you shall have hereafter.

41 That judgment will consider not only your actions, but also your innermost intent and heartfelt desires. Your everyday thoughts have not been lost. Scriptures speak of the "bright recollection"^z and "perfect remembrance"^{aa} that your mind will provide in times of divine judgment.

42 The Lord knows the desires of our hearts. At the time of judgment, surely the special yearnings of single sisters and childless couples, for example, will be given compassionate consideration by Him who said:

43 "I, the Lord, will judge all ... according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts."^{ab}

44 He will know of your longings as a wife and mother who tried diligently to serve your family and society properly.

45 As I listen to those who argue for causes contrary to the commandments of God and observe individuals who revel in the pleasures of the world with apparent disregard for eventual judgment, I think of this divine description of their folly:

v James 2:17; James 2:18, 20, 26; Alma 26:22

w 1 Cor. 15:22; Alma 12:24; Alma 21:9; Hel. 14:16-17; D&C 138:19

x D&C 101:78; Mosiah 3:24

y Alma 11:43; Alma 40:23

z Alma 11:43

aa Alma 5:18

ab D&C 137:9; Heb. 4:12; Alma 18:32; D&C 6:16; D&C 33:1; D&C 88:109

46 “They despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, ... their heart went after their idols.”^a

47 Interviews, as for temple recommends, with your bishop and members of your stake presidency are precious experiences. And, in a way, they could be considered meaningful “dress rehearsals” for that grand colloquy when you will stand before the Great Judge.

48 After the resurrection and judgment, you will be assigned to your everlasting home on high. The revelations liken the glory of those dwelling places to the differing lights of heavenly bodies. Paul said:

49 “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.”^b

50 The Lord revealed more to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who wrote of the *telestial* glory, where those will ultimately abide “who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus” while in this life.^c

51 The Prophet taught of the *terrestrial* glory as the abode for the “honorable ... of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men,” who rejected the gospel while on the earth.^d

52 And then he wrote of the *celestial* glory, which “glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all.”^e There the faithful will dwell together with their families, enjoying exaltation with our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son. With them will be those who have been obedient to ordinances and covenants made in holy temples, where they were sealed to predecessors and posterity.

53 As you continue to face many challenging choices in life, remember, there is great protection when you know who you are, why you are here, and where you are going. Let your unique identity shape each decision you make on the path toward your eternal destiny. Accountability for your choices now will bear on all that lies ahead.

54 May each of us choose wisely and with faith in Him who created us, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 6

Standards of Standard Bearers of the Lord - Delivered 6 January 1991 as a Devotional at BYU Provo

SISTER Nelson and I are happy to be with you. I convey love and best wishes for a happy New Year from the First Presi-

a Ezek. 20:16
 b 1 Cor. 15:41
 c D&C 76:82
 d D&C 76:75
 e D&C 76:70

to teach these things freely unto your children, saying:

That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the [atoning] blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory;

For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified;

Therefore it is given to abide in you.^h

7 But before one can comprehend the *atonement* of Christ, one must first understand the fall of Adam. And before one can comprehend the fall of Adam, one must first understand the Creation. These three pillars of eternity relate to one another.

8 In the beginning God created the earth and all that was upon it. He created man in his own image, male and female created he them.ⁱ Adam and Eve were first created with bodies of flesh

and spirit, without blood, and were unable to die or beget children. Thus we might describe this as a *paradisiacal creation*, one that initially equipped Adam and Eve to live in the Garden of Eden, which was in a state of everlasting paradise.^j

9 Adam and Eve's subsequent fall effected a change upon their bodies. Although I don't understand completely the chemistry of that change, somehow it permitted blood to circulate in their veins. It provided for processes of aging and death to come upon their tabernacles of flesh. And in a marvelous manner, it allowed the blessing of procreation, so that myriads of awaiting spirits could be born and thus obtain mortal bodies. The fall was a necessary part of Heavenly Father's plan for his children. Indeed, "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy".^k The so-called fall of Adam might thus be termed the *mortal creation*. It allowed mankind to attain and endure the mortal experience, to enjoy posterity, and then to leave this period of probation through the portal of death.

10 Adam and Eve's fall, however, and subsequent sins of their posterity, cut mankind off from the presence of God. An atonement, or reconciliation, had to be made. And only God could make it. Even before the Creation was

h Moses 6:58–61

i Genesis 1:27; 5:2; D&C 20:18; Moses 2:27; 6:9

j Moses 4:28

k 2 Nephi 2:25

completed, the premortal Jehovah understood the need for an atonement. Even before breath was put into the man Adam, the Christ knew that a Savior would be required. He understood his responsible role. He was to be born into mortality to suffer, to bleed, and to die.

11 Why?

12 That each of us might ultimately be at one (atoned) with God after our mortal experience, that we might be able to live with him once again, as we did as spirit beings before our birth. His atonement would allow our resurrection from the dead. Then our bodies would be changed to those of flesh and spirit and be able to dwell in the presence of God. The effects of the atonement might thus be expressed as the *immortal creation*, for “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”.¹

13 No serious student of the life of Christ can fail to be deeply moved by the Lord’s own personal testimonies of his atoning experience. Even though he knew what was required, the record states that he felt “sore amazed, and to be very heavy”.^m

14 His high commission he completed at Gethsemane and on Calvary’s cross. There he gave this last testimony: “It is finished”.ⁿ The plan was consum-

mated. He had fulfilled his earlier prophecy: “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world”.^o

15 It is not surprising that the Lord Jesus personally testified of this atoning experience in these latter days when the gospel was restored. He spoke these words and caused them to be recorded for *all of us* to comprehend:

Wherefore, I command you to repent, and keep the commandments which you have received by the hand of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., in my name;

And it is by my almighty power that you have received them;

Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer

1 1 Corinthians 15:22
m Mark 14:33,35–36
n John 19:30
o John 18:37

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both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.^p

16 It seems almost beyond comprehension to think that he paid this enormous price for me and for each of you. And yet, as far as we are concerned individually, unless you and I do our part, his atonement will have been in vain. It is that covenant relationship—that mutual trust—that makes his atonement such a personal gift. It brings us protection, perennial hope, and the promise of joy.

Standard-Bearers

17 Standard-bearers march at the vanguard of a worthy cause. They represent that which is good and noble. They often carry flags or other symbols to express identity, purpose, and unity.

18 Speaking of such standard-bearers, I was told a tender account during the holiday season just past. While children reenacted the Christmas story, one child held high a star wrapped in aluminum foil, mounted on a broomstick. Later, someone commended the child for his stamina in holding that star so high for such a long period of time. The child, who had spoken no lines, joyfully replied, “I

had the most important part in the play. I showed people how to find Jesus.”

19 As his standard-bearers, we are to help the honest in heart to find Jesus. We don’t wave flags. And generally we don’t carry stars mounted on broomsticks. Instead, as standard-bearers for Jesus the Christ, we willingly and gratefully take his sacred name upon us. We enlist in his cause by covenant.

20 Each standard-bearer has accepted this scriptural charge:

If ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, . . . by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water [of baptism], . . . then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; . . . then can ye speak with the tongue of angels.^q

21 So, standard-bearers first qualify by entering the covenant of baptism. They are thereby blessed with the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then they can speak effectively in leading others to the Lord.^r

22 Standard-bearers of the Lord regularly renew their qualifying covenant of baptism. When the sacrament is administered, words of recommittal are offered

p D&C 19:13–19
q 2 Nephi 31:13
r D&C 11:21

camp, and every man by his own standard".^u

31 More frequently cited, both in ancient and in modern scripture, are spiritual standards.

32 One week after Solomon had dedicated the first house of the Lord built on Mount Moriah, the Master personally came to that temple and accepted it as his holy house. Then and there he taught the importance of abiding by his standards of personal righteousness. He said:

If thou wilt walk before me, . . . and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments;

Then will I [establish] the throne of thy kingdom.^v

33 By way of reinforcement, the Master Teacher then added this warning:

But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, . . .

Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight.^w

34 But the ability of the people

to hear and obey was stunted by their lack of conviction. Jeremiah recorded this stern reprimand of the Lord:

How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.^x

35 Protective standards of righteousness were similarly stressed in New Testament times. Paul recorded this charge:

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.^y

36 Book of Mormon prophets likewise emphasized the importance of correct standards. One so wrote:

u Numbers 1:52
v 2 Chronicles 7:17–18
w 2 Chronicles 7:19–20
x Jeremiah 4:21–22
y Ephesians 6:14–17; D&C 27:15–18

abbreviated way, specific standards. Although much is included, much more could have been and is not. Sufficient detail is included to allow each of you to know what the Lord expects of you. In addition, you may studiously and prayerfully consult with parents, teachers, and advisors when additional guidance is deemed necessary.

42 You know in a very real way the prevalence of immorality. You are aware that drugs, alcohol, steroids, and other harmful substances are readily available.

43 As you live in the midst of much that would harm you, heed this verse of warning that closes chapter four of the Book of Mosiah. A prophet of the Lord is speaking:

If ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard. . . , even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, . . . remember, and perish not.^{ae}

44 No prophet, no parent, no loving partner or person wants you to “perish.” If you are to be preserved, you must take the responsibility to *watch yourself*, precisely as the scripture commands.

45 For your protection, this little publication lists twelve standards. May I review them briefly

and offer a comment about each of these important standards.

1. Dating

46 Begin with the end in mind, and let your beginnings be bright. The end you seek is a celestial family, enabled by your being sealed in the temple to one you love. So for now, choose companions who make you better when you are with them—those who are willing to take upon themselves the sacred name of the Lord, live his commandments, and join with you in being one of his standard-bearers.

2. Dress and Appearance

47 This topic concerns the importance of personal choice. As you clothe yourself modestly and groom yourself attractively, your ability to make wise choices will be enhanced. Please pre-think your decisions. Your body is a temple of God; honor it. Don’t get caught in the squeeze of opposing pressures. Downward pressure to be worldly is contrary to the uplifting pressure to live in accord with the Lord’s standards. Step aside from the squeeze and let the elevating power of the Lord lift you without restraint to your loftiest heights.

3. Friendship

48 Cultivate the companionship of good friends. But also seek to broaden your circle. Reach and teach widely without fear. Enjoy opportunities to learn more from others. Share your testimo-

ae Mosiah 4:30

ny often and be a good friend to all you know. Don't forget to take advantage of choice friendship moments with parents, adults, advisors, and bishops. They will welcome your conversation. Surely, silent treatment is beneath the dignity of those who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ. And play your own part in helping to make your home a place of partnership, prayer, and peace.

4. *Honesty*

49 Personal standards should honestly govern every action. The honest person needs to remember only one version of an event. Those who don't obey standards they profess are called "hypocrites." While the world will always be full of them, recognize them for what they are and resolve to avoid their dishonest pattern of behavior. And remember, the payment of tithing will help discipline your mind to be an honest one.

5. *Language*

50 Language has the power to inspire and edify. You have the potential to speak with the tongue of an angel. Speak kindly of others. Don't be vulgar or profane. And for exciting new opportunities in life, study the language of people in lands other than your own.

6. *Media*

51 This topic pertains to movies, television, radio, videocassettes, books, magazines, and all other

means that compete for the attention of your precious sight and hearing. Purveyors of pornography would enslave you by making their addicting snares seem desirable. But don't put all the blame on the media. The person who patronizes smut must bear ultimate accountability.

7. *Mental and Physical Health*

52 I have lived long enough now to witness the demise of classmates and colleagues who unwisely chose to disobey the Word of Wisdom^{af} and other divine counsel regarding the care of their bodies. I promise that as you keep the commandments of your Heavenly Creator and follow instructions that he has decreed for your benefit, you will be blessed in this life now and forever more.

8. *Music, Dancing, and Other Recreation*

53 The Lord expects us to seek after things that are "virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy".^{ag} Enjoy them and discern between uplifting influences and those that might lead you away from standards of the Lord.

9. *Sexual Purity*

54 What does that mean? It means you take upon yourself the name of the Lord and reserve use of his gift of procreative powers exactly as he has decreed. These powers are not to be abused in lust, adultery, fornication, or perverted behav-

Horizontal lines for writing notes on the right side of the page.

af D&C 89
ag Articles of Faith 1:13

ior. The purpose of the Lord's atonement is to qualify you for eternal marriage and everlasting joy with your predecessors and posterity. Satan would like to destroy the family and all that holds it together. While the world descends to the level of concern for "safe sex," your standard is sacred sex—within the bounds of holy matrimony as intended by the Lord.

55 General terms used in the booklet such as "moral cleanliness," "sexual purity," and "high standards" will become personally applicable only when you literally take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ and do as he would have you do.

10. *The Sabbath Day*

56 I plead with you to do more than passively follow lists of do's and don'ts compiled by others. Generate your own policies and live by them. Follow the standard of the Lord, who centuries ago said: "My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a *sign* between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you".^{ah}

57 Additional guidance has been given in our dispensation, recorded in section 59 of the Doctrine and Covenants.^{ai}

58 Questions regarding appropriate behavior on the Sabbath are easily resolved when you

study these scriptures and then determine what sign you choose to give to God of your regard for him.

11. *Spiritual Help*

59 Standard-bearers of the Lord have qualified by covenant to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. There can be no greater guide to assure spiritual help through all your days.

12. *Repentance*

60 We all make mistakes. They are an important part of our maturing experience. But there is a real difference between a mistake and sin. Verses from modern revelation help distinguish the two:

And inasmuch as they erred it might be made known. . . .

And inasmuch as they sinned they might be chastened, that they might repent;

And inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time.^{aj}

61 The humble and prayerful person can be blessed with discernment and be made strong. And through the atonement of Jesus Christ, we can repent and be forgiven. For serious wrongdoing, or sin, confession to one's bishop is necessary. And remember, repentance is not repentance

ah Exodus 31:13, italics added; Ezekiel 20:20

ai D&C 59:9–13

aj D&C 1:25–28

listen, then listen to learn from children. A wise father once said, "I do a greater amount of good when I listen to my children than when I talk to them."^f

3 When our youngest daughter was about four years of age, I came home from hospital duties quite late one evening. I found my dear wife to be very weary. I don't know why. She only had nine children underfoot all day. So I offered to get our four-year-old ready for bed. I began to give the orders: "Take off your clothes; hang them up; put on your pajamas; brush your teeth; say your prayers" and so on, commanding in a manner befitting a tough sergeant in the army. Suddenly she cocked her head to one side, looked at me with a wistful eye, and said, "Daddy, do you own me?"

4 She taught me an important lesson. I was using coercive methods on this sweet soul. To rule children by force is the technique of Satan, not of the Savior. No, we don't own our children. Our parental privilege is to love them, to lead them, and to let them go.

5 The time to listen is when someone needs to be heard. Children are naturally eager to share their experiences, which range from triumphs of delight to trials of distress. Are we as eager to listen? If they try to express

their anguish, is it possible for us to listen openly to a shocking experience without going into a state of shock ourselves? Can we listen without interrupting and without making snap judgments that slam shut the door of dialogue? It can remain open with the soothing reassurance that we believe in them and understand their feelings. Adults should not pretend an experience did not happen just because they might wish otherwise.

6 Even silence can be misinterpreted. A story was written of "a little boy [who] looked up at his mother and said, 'Why are you mad at me?' She answered, 'I'm not angry at you. What makes you say that?' 'Well, your hands are on your hips, and you are not saying anything.'"^g

7 Parents with teenage youth may find that time for listening is often less convenient but more important when young people feel lonely or troubled. And when they seem to deserve favor least, they may need it most.

8 Wise parents and teachers, listen to learn from children.

Parents

9 Children of all ages, learn to listen, and listen to learn from parents, as Elder Oaks taught us this morning. Spiritually or physically, it can be a matter of life and death.

^f George D. Durrant, "Take Time to Talk," *Ensign* (Apr. 1973), p. 24. See also James 1:19.

^g Florence B. Pinnock, "Let's Listen," *Improvement Era* (Oct. 1964), pp. 872-73.

10 Several years ago, I was invited to give an important lecture at a medical school in New York City. The night before the lecture, Sister Nelson and I were invited to dinner at the home of our host professor. There he proudly introduced us to an honor medical student—his beautiful daughter.

11 Some weeks later, that professor telephoned me in an obvious state of grief. I asked, “What is the matter?”

12 “Remember our daughter whom you met at our home?”

13 “Of course,” I replied. “I’ll never forget such a stunning young lady.”

14 Then her father sobbed and said, “Last night she was killed in an automobile accident!” Trying to gain composure, he continued: “She asked permission to go to a dance with a certain young man. I didn’t have a good feeling about it. I told her so and asked her not to go. She asked, ‘Why?’ I simply told her that I was uneasy. She had always been an obedient daughter, but she said that if I could not give her a good reason to decline, she wanted to go. And so she did. At the dance, alcoholic beverages were served. Her escort drank a bit—we don’t know how much. While returning home, he was

driving too fast, missed a turn, and careened through a guardrail into a reservoir below. They were both submerged and taken to their death.”

15 As I shared my feeling of sadness, he concluded: “My grief is made worse because I had the distinct feeling that trouble lay ahead. Why couldn’t I have been more persuasive?”

16 This experience will not have been in vain if others can listen and learn from it. Children, honor your parents,^h even when they cannot give a satisfactory explanation for their feelings. Please have faith in this scripture, which applies to all age groups: “Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.”ⁱ

17 Parents have a divine duty to teach their children to love the Lord.^j Children have an equal obligation to “obey [their] parents in the Lord.”^k

18 Wise children, listen to learn from parents.

Partners

19 Husbands and wives, learn to listen, and listen to learn from one another. I was amused to read of an experience recorded by Elder F. Burton Howard in his biography of President Mar-

h See Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Matt. 15:4; Matt. 19:19; Mark 7:10; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Eph. 6:2; 1 Ne. 17:55; Mosiah 13:20.

i Prov. 1:8

j See Lev. 10:11; Deut. 4:10; Deut. 6:7; Deut. 11:19; Mosiah 1:4; D&C 68:25, 28; Moses 6:57–58.

k Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20

ion G. Romney: “His good-humored love for Ida was manifested in many ways. He delighted in telling of her hearing loss. ‘I once went to see a doctor about her hearing,’ he would say. ‘He asked me how bad it was, and I said I didn’t know. He told me to go home and find out. The doctor instructed me to go into a far room and speak to her. Then I should move nearer and nearer until she does hear. Following the doctor’s instructions, I spoke to her from the bedroom while she was in the kitchen—no answer. I moved nearer and spoke again—no answer. So I went right up to the door of the kitchen and said, “Ida, can you hear me?” She responded, “What is it, Marion—I’ve answered you three times.”’”^l

20 Even with normal hearing, some couples seem not to listen to one another. Taking time to talk is essential to keep lines of communication intact. If marriage is a prime relationship in life, it deserves prime time! Yet less important appointments are often given priority, leaving only leftover moments for listening to precious partners.

21 Keeping the garden of marriage well cultivated and free from weeds of neglect requires the time and commitment of love. It is not only a pleasant

privilege, it is a scriptural requirement with promise of eternal glory.^m

22 Wise partners, listen to learn from one another.

Neighbors

23 Learn to listen, and listen to learn from neighbors. Repeatedly the Lord has said, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour.”ⁿ Opportunities to listen to those of diverse religious or political persuasion can promote tolerance and learning. And a good listener will listen to a person’s sentiments as well. I learned much from Brother David M. Kennedy as we met with many dignitaries in nations abroad. When one of them spoke, Brother Kennedy not only looked eye to eye and listened with real intent, but he even removed his reading glasses, as if to show that he wanted nothing in the way of his total concentration.

24 The wise listen to learn from neighbors.

Church Leaders

25 Members, learn to listen, and listen to learn from Church leaders. Faithful members love the Savior and honor His servants, having faith in the Lord’s declaration that “whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”^o

l F. Burton Howard, Marion G. Romney: His Life and Faith, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, pp. 144–45.

m Eph. 5:25, 33; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:1; Jacob 3:7; D&C 132:19.

n Lev. 19:18; Matt. 19:19; Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8; Mosiah 23:15; D&C 59:6.

o D&C 1:38

26 One day in Italy I met a wonderful priesthood leader and his wife. In him I saw a man with great potential. But my language was foreign to them. Through an interpreter, I challenged them to study the English language. They listened obediently and studied diligently. Now six years later, ably sustained by his wife, Carolina, Vincenzo Conforte is faithfully serving his *second* assignment as a mission president, interviewing missionaries well in Italian or in English.

27 President Ezra Taft Benson has proclaimed the importance of studying the Book of Mormon. People throughout the earth are being blessed as they follow this and other counsel he has given.

28 Gratefully we thank God for a prophet to guide us in these latter days. But many turn a deaf ear to his teachings, oblivious to his prophetic position. They do so at great risk, for scriptures contain this warning:

29 "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you ... ; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. ...

30 "Every soul, which will not

hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."^p

31 President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said, "We do not lack a prophet; what we lack is a listening ear."^q Words of the Lord are taught by His disciples.^r Wise members listen to learn from Church leaders.

The Lord

32 Above all, God's children should learn to listen, then listen to learn from the Lord. On several sacred occasions in the world's history, our Heavenly Father has personally appeared to introduce His divine Son with a specific charge to "*hear him*."^s

33 Jesus taught this first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."^t

34 Scriptures recorded in all dispensations teach that we show our love of God as we *hearken* to His commandments and *obey* them.^u These actions are closely connected. In fact, the Hebrew language of the Old Testament in most instances uses the same term for both *hearkening* (to the Lord) and *obedience* (to His

p Acts 3:22–23; Jer. 5:21; D&C 1:14.

q J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "Not a Prophet—but a Listening Ear," Improvement Era (Nov. 1948), p. 685.

r D&C 1:4

s Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; 3 Ne. 11:7; JS—H 1:17; italics added.

t Matt. 22:37

u Ex. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; Deut. 7:9; Deut. 11:1; Deut. 30:16; Josh. 22:5; Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4; John 14:15; John 15:10; 1 Jn. 5:2–3; 2 Jn. 1:6; Mosiah 13:14; D&C 42:2; D&C 46:9; D&C 124:87

word).^v

35 In addition to hearing the word of the Lord obediently, we manifest our love for God through prayer. And listening is an essential part of prayer. Answers from the Lord come ever so quietly. Hence He has counseled us to “be still and know that I am God.”^w

36 President Spencer W. Kimball

said, “It would not hurt us, either, if we paused at the end of our prayers to do some intense listening—even for a moment or two—always praying, as the Savior did, ‘not my will, but thine, be done.’”^x

37 In a world scarred by scourges of tyranny and war, many of its inhabitants earnestly pray for inner peace. For example, not long ago a beautiful young

v That term was (*shâma'*), which means “to hear intelligently.” The term was used hundreds of times in the Hebrew Old Testament, as Israel was counseled to hearken to the word of the Lord and obey it. Different terms were used in some instances in the Hebrew text whenever reference was made to hearing or responding without implied obedience. Examples: “They have ears, but they hear not.” (Ps. 135:17; see also Ps. 140:6; italics added.) (*âzan*) to give ear—to listen “I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth.” (Hosea 2:21; italics added.) (*ânâh*) to pay attention—to answer “Lift up thy voice, O daughter ... : cause it to be heard.” (Isa. 10:30; italics added; see also Ps. 10:17.) (*qâshav*) to give heed Still different terms were employed in the Old Testament when referring to obedience not to Deity but to other people. Examples: “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother.” (Prov. 30:17; italics added.) (*yiqqâhâh*) obedience, to obey “The children of Ammon shall obey them.” (Isa. 11:14; italics added.) (*mishma'ath*) audience—obedience That link between listening and obedience is found not only in Hebrew, but in Latin and Greek. The word obey comes from two Latin roots: the prefix *ob* “to” or “toward,” and the root *audio*, *audire* “to hear” or “to listen.” This root occurs in words such as *audio*, *audience*, or *auditorium*. Literally, then, the word obey means “to hear or to listen toward,” that is, “to comply.” The word for obey in Greek, (*hupakouo*), literally means “listen under,” from *hypo* “under” as in *hypo-dermic*, also “in subjection or subordination” and the root *akouo* “hear, listen” as in acoustics. In New Testament times, its use was gradually broadened to less sacred realms, including expressions such as “children, obey parents” (see Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20), “wives, [obey] husbands” (see 1 Pet. 3:1), “servants, obey ... masters” (see Col. 3:22), and so on. A parallel pattern is found in the Book of Mormon. Use of terms such as listen, hear, and hearken, written at the time of the Old Testament, generally carried the same implication of obedience to Deity. Those terms in Book of Mormon scriptures written after the earthly advent of Christ were also broadened to include the more familiar usage, as in the language of the New Testament.

w D&C 101:16

x Luke 22:42; Spencer W. Kimball, “We Need a Listening Ear,” *Ensign*, (Nov. 1979), pp. 4–5.

mother named Svetlana developed an intense desire to obtain a Bible. But in her city of Leningrad, a Bible was very rare and expensive. Frequently and fervently she prayed for a Bible. Ultimately, she and her husband were impressed to travel with their small child to Helsinki, Finland, with that hope in mind. There one day while walking in a park, she stumbled across an object buried under the cover of autumn leaves. She picked it up and found it to be a Bible written in the Russian language! Excitedly she recounted the story of this great discovery to another mother who was also in the park with her youngster. The second mother rejoiced with Svetlana and added, "Would you like to have *another* book about Jesus Christ?" Svetlana, of course, answered in the affirmative. The other mother provided Svetlana with a copy of a Russian-language edition of the Book of Mormon and invited the family to church. She eagerly embraced the teachings of the missionaries and shortly thereafter joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Then they returned to their home, where they have helped pioneer the work in the Leningrad Branch of the Church.^y

38 Her experience typifies this

promise of the Savior to those who seek Him: "Thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who *hearken* unto my precepts, and *lend an ear* unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more."^z

39 While stressing the importance of listening well, I am mindful of those who cannot hear. Many labeled as deaf have received the Spirit "by the hearing of faith."^{aa} The example of Rachel Ivins Grant is inspiring to me. She never complained about her own deafness. Though most women in their seventies would be completely worn out while rearing six growing children of another mother, she undertook that task. Rachel's deafness seemed to save her from the wear and tear of noise. Sometimes, when two were arguing, Rachel would burst out laughing. She said they had no idea how funny it was to see their angry faces and hear none of their words.

40 Before her son, Heber J. Grant, became the seventh President of the Church, she declared, "Of course the greatest trial I have is that I cannot hear, but I have so many blessings I cannot com-

^y Steven R. Meham, president of the Finland Helsinki Mission, personal communication to the author, 26 Apr. 1990. Svetlana's last name is Artemova. The name of the other mother is Raija Kempainen, wife of Jussi Kempainen, who at that time was president of the Baltic District of that mission.

^z 2 Ne. 28:30; italics added; D&C 29:7

^{aa} Gal. 3:2; For example, see Anne C. Bradshaw, "Listen with Your Heart," (New Era, Mar. 1989), pp. 28–31.

plain, but if we only will live so that we may receive the instructions of God, there is nothing we are called to pass through but will be for our good.”^a

41 The Redeemer loves such faithful souls: “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.”^b

42 They qualify for this prophetic promise: “Before they call, I [the Lord] will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”^c

43 To all of God’s children, either able to hear or deaf to mortal sound, He offers this reward: “Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live.”^d

44 Your soul will be blessed as you learn to listen, then listen to learn from children, parents, partners, neighbors, and Church leaders, all of which will heighten capacity to hear counsel from on high.

45 Carefully listen to learn from the Lord through the still small voice—the Holy Spirit—which leads to truth.^e Listen to learn by

studying scriptures that record His holy mind and will.^f Listen to learn in prayer, for He will answer the humble who truly seek Him.^g

46 The wise listen to learn from the Lord. I testify of Him and certify that as we “hearken and ... hear the voice of the Lord,” we will be blessed, “for the hour of his coming is nigh”,^h in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 8

*“These...Were Our Examples” -
Delievered October 1991 in the
Sunday Morning session of General
Conference*

IN June of this year, Sister Nelson and I had the great privilege of accompanying the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on its historic concert tour in Europe. We are grateful to the First Presidency for that assignment. Much has been written regarding the success of the choir and of its favorable influence that will yet continue. Members and friends of the Church worldwide join with me in expressing appreciation to the officers, staff, directors, accompanists, and to all vocalists for their wonderful service. I

a Woman’s Exponent, (1 and 15 Dec. 1902), p. 52. Earlier, at age 67, she wrote: “I look for the time when I will be able to hear by the power of God.” (Ibid., 15 Aug. 1888, p. 46.)

b 1 Pet. 3:12

c Isa. 65:24

d Isa. 55:3; Mosiah 2:9; Alma 5:41; Alma 36:3; 3 Ne. 23:5.

e 1 Kgs. 19:12; 1 Ne. 17:45; D&C 85:6.

f John 5:39; Alma 14:1; Alma 33:2.

g Mosiah 9:18; Mosiah 23:10; Alma 9:26; D&C 19:23; D&C 112:10; Abr. 2:19; JS—H, footnote, para. 5, p. 59

h D&C 133:16–17

choir could sing in cities such as Warsaw, Budapest, Prague, Leningrad, and Moscow long before such dreams seemed plausible. Then in January 1991, hopeful plans were seriously threatened when war erupted in the Persian Gulf. Even then, our leaders decided against canceling the tour. They knew of its potential for good and had faith that countless obstacles could be overcome. Often they prayed that the choir's tour might be successfully accomplished.

10 Those prayers were answered!

11 Think of the timing. In one thousand years of Russia's existence, its first popular national election ever to be held occurred in June 1991. Six days later, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed in Moscow! That very night, after the strains of "Come, Come, Ye Saints"^o had resounded from the Bolshoi Theater, the vice president of the republic announced that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been granted recognition in the Republic of Russia. On the eve of a supreme crisis that was yet ahead, Russian people heard songs of faith, courage, hope, and love.

12 That faith of our Church leaders filled the hearts of members, families, and friends of the choir as well. Real were the risks of separation of husbands and

wives, of parents and children. Hundreds of dependents were temporarily deprived of moms or dads for almost a month. Thanks be to all who cared for those families—in faith. If each of us could muster that same faith in the service we are called to render, we would also be blessed.

Virtue

13 Virtue radiated from the choir. Each member seemed to exemplify President Brigham Young's counsel: "Learn the will of God, keep His commandments and do His will, and you will be a virtuous person."^p

14 They applied the word of God^q not only in song but in sermons of example. After one concert, I was greeted by an individual who expressed gratitude in an unusual way. He said, "I am thankful for the choir's message."

15 I asked, "What message did you receive?"

16 His answer: "The choir was trying to teach me a better way to live."

17 That comment seemed profound to me. What inspired him to feel such a force for good? Was it complicated classical music or the excellence of its rendition? I doubt it. I believe it was more likely communication by the

o Hymns, 1985, no. 30

p Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, p. 194

q Alma 31:5

always temperate and well disciplined, not from without but from within. Completely obedient to the Word of Wisdom, they were blessed with health and strength. Keeping a schedule that left little time for leisure, their grueling pace allowed them to perform for audiences that otherwise might have been excluded.

26 Repeatedly, scriptures teach that we be “temperate in all things.”^w Temperance can protect each of us from the aftermath of excess.

Patience

27 Patience is one of the most practiced attributes of choir members. Checking into a hotel with a group of five hundred travelers and more than a thousand pieces of luggage provided practice in patience nearly every day. One dear sister never did receive her baggage. Her patience flowered into ingenuity as she attempted to feel fresh with the same clothing day after day.

28 Patience is a divine attribute. The Book of Mormon invites us to “come to a knowledge of the goodness of God, and his matchless power, and his wisdom, and his patience, and his long-suffering towards the children of men.”^x

29 Although choir members are

not perfect, each one seemed to epitomize scriptural counsel to “continue in patience until ye are perfected.”^y If they can do it, each of us can also develop that precious talent of patience.

Brotherly Kindness

30 Brotherly kindness was a hallmark of this tour. Never did I hear a disparaging remark. Especially did I watch those heroic members of the choir with serious physical disabilities. Some have severe visual handicaps and can read music only with their fingers. Others walk solely with the aid of crutches or appliances. Their great courage was superbly matched by the courtesy of companions who gave much that all might triumph together. Indeed, they typified this scriptural analogy:

31 “The whole body fitly joined together ... according to the effectual working ... of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”^z

32 Brotherly kindness overcomes the rudeness of selfish intent. Each of us can develop brotherly kindness at home, at school, at work, or at play.

Charity

33 The Book of Mormon defines charity as the pure love of Christ.^{aa} It further teaches that the “Lord God hath given a com-

w 1 Cor. 9:25; Alma 7:23; Alma 38:10; D&C 12:8

x Mosiah 4:6

y D&C 67:13

z Eph. 4:16

aa Moro. 7:47

mandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love."^{ab}

34 I saw choir members extend that love to countless souls. For those in need, members quietly contributed money, food, and goods. They shared freely of their precious time and talent without any thought of personal acclaim or recompense. Truly, "charity never faileth" any of us.^{ac}

Humility

35 The choir's humility seemed to increase throughout their journey. Though their mounting successes gave them much to be proud of, members grew into this scriptural pattern:

36 "They did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts."^{ad}

37 Choir members became "subject one to another"^{ae} and imparted "the word of God, one with another"^{af} as true disciples do. They were humble and teachable, as submissive Saints should be.^{ag} Their examples of humility should ennoble our souls.

Diligence

38 Diligence was demonstrated by all members of the choir, but extraordinarily so by one precious mother whom I shall never forget. Just five days after the choir had left America, I was asked to inform her that her beautiful 37-year-old daughter had died after a long illness. The leaders of this sorrowing mother offered means for her to return home from Europe. She declined the offer. She and her family had already anticipated this possibility. Their decision had been made. It was not to be interpreted as a pattern for anyone else to follow, but for her alone. Her children and grandchildren had pleaded that she remain on assignment. So she continued in all diligence, never missing a single concert! She nobly fulfilled this scriptural counsel: "Therefore be diligent ... in whatsoever difficult circumstances [you] may be."^{ah}

39 Her example can bless each of you, just as it did her family and me.

Godliness

40 Godliness is an attribute that seems as difficult to define as it is to attain. Scriptures refer to "the mystery of godliness."^{ai} Because it is so special, I have chosen to speak of it last.

ab 2 Ne. 26:30; Ether 12:34

ac 1 Cor. 13:8; Moro. 7:46

ad Hel. 3:35

ae 1 Pet. 5:5

af Alma 1:20

ag Mosiah 3:19; D&C 105:12

ah D&C 6:18

ai 1 Tim. 3:16; D&C 19:10

41 Simon Peter counseled us “to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God.”^a

42 “The power of godliness is manifest” in the ordinances of the priesthood.^b Godliness is not a product of perfection; it comes of concentration and consecration.

43 Godliness characterizes each of you who truly loves the Lord. You are constantly mindful of the Savior’s atonement and rejoice in His unconditional love. Meanwhile you vanquish personal pride and vain ambition. You consider your accomplishments important only if they help establish His kingdom on earth.

44 The Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s songs helped to convey their uncommon spirit of godliness. From their hearts the choir sang one number which bore testimony of love so amazing, so divine. Tears moistened the faces of more than a few as they expressed personal feelings of conversion and commitment to godliness. This song which the choir will soon sing includes these verses penned by Isaac Watts:

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood. ...*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love, so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!*

45 Such are lessons taught by those who “serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.”^c Unitedly members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir testify of the living Lord and of His Church restored in these latter days, as do I. May God bless us to lift our lives by their example, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 9

Drama on the European Stage - Published in the December 1991 Ensign magazine. Adapted from an untitled 13 November 1990 Ricks College devotional. Reprinted in the May 1992 Tambuli Magazine.

BECAUSE of the remarkable events that have occurred with the Church in middle and eastern Europe in the last five years, the Ensign staff has asked that I write a review of those events from my personal perspective. That part of the world has been the stage of much drama lately. Before considering the drama, I would like first to establish a few fundamental concepts by way of introduction:

a 2 Pet. 3:11–12
b D&C 84:20
c Heb. 8:5

And he knew that people who were taught correct principles and who were loyal to their civil leaders and observing of their local laws would be most able to enjoy the blessings of the gospel.

8 And so they have during this period of remarkable political change. It would be inappropriate to attempt analysis of such, except to note that efforts of Church leaders in these nations have preceded and not waited for those important political developments. Suffice it to say that nations of Europe have been subjected to political pressures, ideological tensions, and challenges of communication imposed by a babel of different languages. Boundaries have been altered by wars and treaties. Cities have been ravaged by bombings, but rebuilt by the indomitable spirit of dauntless citizens who yearn for a better future.

9 We have been keenly aware of this history. Europe is important to the Church. It was the fatherland for progenitors of many present leaders. Early missionary work, especially in the British Isles and in the northern portions of Europe, brought powerful stalwarts into the Church who gave strength and stability during the struggles of its fledgling years.

10 The progress of the Church in Europe in recent years is far too broad to consider adequately in this article. Therefore it becomes necessary to limit countries and circumstances to be described. Thus, a charge of omission of

many important details is one to which I plead guilty at the outset.

11 When we attend a movie or a play, we note a list of credit lines appropriately acknowledging the cast of characters and names of individuals whose work behind the scenes has been essential. Space limitations require that I forgo that obligation. But I acknowledge the untiring and selfless efforts of General Authorities who have served in the Europe Area Presidency from late 1985 to mid-1991: Elders Joseph B. Wirthlin, Carlos E. Asay, Hans B. Ringger, Derek A. Cuthbert, John Sonnenberg, Russell C. Taylor, John R. Lasater, Albert Choules, Jr., and Spencer J. Condie. Courageous couples and pioneering missionaries all deserve much credit. The exemplary behavior of the Saints of the German Democratic Republic and of Czechoslovakia is especially important. Because of the excellence of their righteous example, positive recommendations were given by their governments to inquiring leaders of other nations.

12 I will frequently refer to Elder Hans B. Ringger of the Seventy. He has been the member of the Europe Area Presidency with assigned responsibility for these special countries of middle and eastern Europe. Elder Ringger is a native of Switzerland, a professional architect and electrical engineer. His partnership with me on these assignments has been most unusual to governmental leaders who were accustomed to

dealing with professional clergymen. In fact, our uniqueness has at times been disarming. Invariably, our hosts have been startled, to say the least, when they have been introduced to an American heart surgeon and a Swiss architect, now joined in giving full-time service to their Church. I pay special tribute to Elder Ringger.

13 Elder Dennis B. Neuenchwander of the Seventy was recently released after serving four years as president of the Austria Vienna East Mission. His pioneering efforts have been monumental in nearly all the nations of this report. Of eleven new missions created in Europe in the past two years, six (Czechoslovakia Prague, Finland Helsinki East, Greece Athens, Hungary Budapest, Poland Warsaw, and Bulgaria Sofia) have been created from districts of his mission during his period of presidency. No doubt more will come. That is a remarkable record.

14 Sister Beverly Campbell, President Ralph W. Hardy, Jr., and other members of the Church's Washington, D.C., public affairs committee have been especially helpful in establishing contacts with ambassadors and magistrates there and abroad. They and their companions and fellow workers have earned our deepest gratitude.

15 Unitedly and thankfully, we all acknowledge the hand of the Lord in these remarkable accomplishments, for it is His errand on which we have been called.

Geography

16 This report will focus on ten countries in Europe's middle and eastern sectors. Their geographical classifications are as follows:

17 Middle Europe includes the countries of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and, until 3 October 1990, the German Democratic Republic. On that date, the German Democratic Republic became united with the Federal Republic of Germany. Its sovereign existence previously as the German Democratic Republic was a very important part of this drama.

18 Five countries comprise the Balkan states, so named because they are situated on the Balkan Peninsula. They are Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece.

19 At the time this report was written, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics consisted of fifteen republics, three of which were the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which border on the Baltic Sea. No doubt this will be changed by the date of publication.

20 The eastern boundary of Europe is defined by the Ural Mountains. The Soviet Union east of the Ural Mountains is classified geographically with the Asian continent. The area west of the Ural Range is therefore part of eastern Europe.

21 The term central Europe has not been used. To the European,



there is no designated “center” of this continent.

22 Now let us put the Church on the stage and turn the clock backward. President Ezra Taft Benson became the thirteenth President of the Church on 10 November 1985. The Thursday after he was set apart as President of the Church, the First Presidency gave certain assignments to each member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Mine included that of first contact responsibility for the work in all of Europe, succeeding Elders Thomas S. Monson and Neal A. Maxwell. Elder Monson, now of the First Presidency, had shepherded affairs in middle and eastern Europe for about two decades. Elder Maxwell had been serving as first contact for the remainder of Europe, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Africa as well.

23 At that time, Church activities in middle and eastern Europe

were limited. Elder Spencer J. Condie, now of the Seventy, was then president of the Austria Vienna Mission. A few courageous “friendshipping” missionary couples labored under his direction. One couple served in Poland, another went in and out of Hungary (from Austria), another couple or two served in Yugoslavia, and one or two couples were in Greece. Of course, we had none called to the U.S.S.R.

24 Meanwhile, faithful members of the Church had resided in the German Democratic Republic and in Czechoslovakia during decades of political duress. Of course, no missionary couples served there. Members’ activities were limited by the restrictive regimes of those lands. For example, the first time Sister Nelson and I visited Czechoslovakia in 1975, I had been invited to participate in a medical capacity. While in Prague, we met with a few Saints in a member’s apartment, which we accessed

came from the area more recently known as the German Democratic Republic. Karl G. Maeser, for example, was born in Meissen, near Dresden. Since the end of World War II, our members have cautiously and quietly carried on with great devotion. The very careful leadership of President Monson, Elder Wirthlin, Elder Asay, Elder Ringger, and other General Authorities engendered a level of earned respect among governmental leaders. They found our members to be upright and honest citizens. Literally, the moral integrity and devout faith of these Saints brought them their temple in Freiberg.

32 Henry Burkhardt was called as president of that temple, and his wife, Inge, was called as matron. For many years the Burkhardts have been beloved leaders of the Saints in the German Democratic Republic. On one occasion when President Monson presided at a regional conference there, he asked for a show of hands of all who at some time in their lives had received a blessing from, or been called, set apart, or counseled helpfully by President Burkhardt. The majority of the members of the congregation raised their hands! The influence of the Burkhardts has been incalculably great.

33 On 28 October 1988, President Monson and I, accompanied by Elder Ringger, President Burkhardt, and other Church

leaders, met with governmental officials in East Berlin. We made two forthright requests. We asked permission for expatriate missionaries to enter the German Democratic Republic. Moreover, we asked permission for our worthy elders in the German Democratic Republic to leave for two years to serve missions elsewhere in the world. The answer ultimately given to both questions was yes! What a historic moment that was!ⁱ

34 The government paid a remarkable tribute to President Monson, who had asked if they wished to designate any particular countries to which their departing missionaries should or should not be sent. After private consultation on this matter, their spokesman simply replied, "President Monson, we trust you! You may send them anywhere you like." Those first ten outgoing elders were assigned to England, the U.S.A., Canada, Argentina, and Chile. They have all successfully completed their missions and have since returned with honor to their homes.

35 Our first small group of incoming missionaries entered the German Democratic Republic 28 March 1989, under the leadership of President Wolfgang Paul. Their numbers have now increased substantially. In the ensuing year and a half, more than 1,100 convert baptisms have taken place there.

i Thomas S. Monson, "Thanks Be to God," *Ensign*, May 1989, pp. 50-53

36 When President and Sister Paul first moved to Dresden, their children were required to study Russian, so a female tutor was provided for them. In due course, this tutor was converted and baptized into the Church. Later her parents followed that same course.

37 In November 1989, the Berlin Wall opened, and events subsequently led to the unification of Germany on 3 October 1990. Less than three weeks later, on October 21, President Monson, Elder Ringger, and I returned to Berlin for reorganization of the Church in this part of Germany. Nearly 2,500 people attended the general session of that conference in Berlin. The Saints were so grateful to be together once again! There was hardly a dry eye in the congregation. Then we also met with more than 150 missionaries in Berlin.

38 This mission was divided 1 July 1991, and the new Germany Berlin Mission was established, with Manfred H. Schütze serving as president, replacing President Paul, whose pioneering efforts we gratefully acknowledge. President Magnus R. Meiser replaced President Paul in the Germany Dresden Mission.

39 Now Germany and its people are politically reunited; members of the Church are not only temporally but spiritually unified in the cause of the Master, whom they love and serve.

Czechoslovakia

40 The road to recognition in this

country has been both difficult and frustrating. Since receiving our European assignments, Elder Ringger and I have traveled to Czechoslovakia at least once each year to meet with governmental officials in Prague. Two transoceanic journeys were rewarded only with failed appointments or hopes dashed with the empty statement that “your request for recognition is still being studied.” When we returned to Prague on 6 February 1990, however, we found that the official with whom we had been dealing had been removed from his chair. When his successor heard our complete story, he said, “Your request for recognition will be approved this very month. Your people may again worship in full dignity. Your missionaries may again return to this country.” Recognition was granted February 21, effective 1 March 1990.

41 When that important declaration was made, I sensed that the real hero in this story was our district president in Czechoslovakia, Jiri Snederfler. Some two and one-half years earlier, Elder Ringger and I had learned that recognition could be formally requested only by a Czechoslovakian member of the Church. So we went to the home of Brother and Sister Snederfler. We explained that we had just received that information from the chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs. Knowing that other Czechoslovakian leaders and thinkers had been imprisoned or put to death for religious or dissident belief, we told Brother Snederfler that



we, as his Church leaders, could not and would not make that request of him. After contemplating only a brief moment, Brother Snederfler humbly said, "I will go! I will do it!" As he spoke, his wife, Olga, shed a tear. They embraced and said, "We will do whatever is needed. This is for the Lord, and His work is more important than our freedom or life."

42 Some months later, when the papers were properly prepared, Brother Snederfler submitted them personally. He and our members were then subjected to strict surveillance. The Saints continued in courage and faith. Ultimately, after periodic fasting and prayer and complete compliance with all requirements, that glorious announcement of recognition came. How I admire the Snederflers and all these stalwart members who endured so much interrogation and risk!

43 Brother Snederfler has been called to preside over the Freiberg Germany Temple effective 1 September 1991, succeeding President Burkhardt, who has given more than six years of devout and faithful service. Sister Olga Snederfler will serve as temple matron, succeeding Sister Inge Burkhardt.

44 On 1 July 1990, a mission in Czechoslovakia, forbidden for forty years, was again opened, with Richard W. Winder as president of the Czechoslovakian Mission. He had served in that country on his first mission as a young man. His wife, Barbara,

was released as general president of the Relief Society to accompany her husband on this crucial assignment for which they alone were so uniquely qualified.

Hungary

45 Upon authorization by the First Presidency, I was privileged to dedicate the land of Hungary on Mt. Gellért in Budapest, Easter Sunday, 19 April 1987. Two days later, Elder Ringger and I met with the chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs, Imre Miklos. Our reception at first was a bit tense. It was clear that we were neither welcome nor wanted. Things were not going particularly well. But then I felt impressed to let this leader know that two days prior to this meeting, I had offered a special apostolic prayer for his country and for its people. As this was mentioned, his countenance changed. Now he was listening. A meeting planned for thirty minutes lasted an hour and a half. From that point forward, he became our friend and advocate. Several subsequent meetings were successfully held. Fourteen months later, Elder Ringger and I returned to Budapest for formal ceremonies with Mr. Miklos on 14 June 1988 that confirmed official recognition for the Church in Hungary.

46 In October 1989, the annual seminar for all European mission presidents and their partners was held in Budapest. President Thomas S. Monson and Sister Frances J. Monson joined us. On the very date of that sem-

inar, October 17, the Hungarian Parliament changed the name of their country from the Hungarian People’s Republic to the Republic of Hungary. That country had now become a democracy.

47 A new mission was opened 1 July 1990, with James L. Wilde serving as president. Our chapel in Budapest was dedicated by President Monson, and several congregations are developing there and in other centers of strength.

Yugoslavia

48 President Monson dedicated this land on 31 October 1985, just prior to his call to the First Presidency. My first visit to that country as a Church leader was in April 1987. Elder Ringger and I met with governmental directors of religious affairs for Serbia and Croatia, as well as for Yugoslavia. Our interpreter was Kresmir Cosic, once a star basketball player for Brigham Young University. Brother Cosic had become a national sports hero in Yugoslavia. Governmental officials confessed that they weren’t particularly eager to meet with leaders of the “Mormon” Church, but they were excited to meet Brother Cosic, whom they admired and watched regularly on television.

49 We now have a legally recognized chapel in Zagreb, and congregations in other major cities. Elders and couple missionaries serving in Yugoslavia are currently assigned from the Austria

Vienna Mission. Earnestly we pray for peaceful resolution of the civil discord that besets this nation at the present time. So many choice souls reside in this beautiful land.

Romania

50 Elder Ringger and I first went to Bucharest, Romania, in October 1987, at which time we became acquainted in a preliminary fashion with governmental officials.

51 We returned in February 1990, five weeks after the bloody revolution that had brought down the country’s long-standing dictatorship. On February 9, as authorized by the First Presidency, I dedicated the land of Romania in Çismigiu Park—which, translated, means the park of “one who carries water.” That seemed significantly symbolic when one considers the message the Lord gave to the woman at the well in Samaria. Jesus said unto her, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

52 “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”^j

53 We asked the new governmental leaders what we as a church might do to be of help to them. They requested assistance with their orphans. We were told that there were more than thirty thousand orphans in the city

of Bucharest alone. We visited one of the orphanages. I have seen a lot of pathetic sights in my day, having worked in charity hospitals in Bombay, India, and having performed surgical operations under difficult conditions in the People's Republic of China and elsewhere. But no situation had ever seemed quite so tragic as that seen in this institution.

54 To afford relief, members of the Church responded in a most generous and humanitarian manner. Particularly do I pay tribute to the Saints in Europe who loaded countless numbers of trucks with needed goods to ease the plight of these unfortunate children.

55 Several mature, well-trained, and professionally prepared Latter-day Saints have responded to calls for special service in Bucharest, rendering voluntary relief, just as Ammon did in the days of the Book of Mormon. Certainly their efforts are as historic as those of other pioneers in the annals of Church history.

56 These missionaries now serve under the direction of the president of the Hungary Budapest Mission. Congregations of members and interested friends worship regularly in Romania.

Bulgaria

57 When Elder Ringger and I first arrived in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 30 October 1988, we had been led to believe, through our indirect "third-party" contact, that we would be met at the airport

and that proper appointments had been made. (Incidentally, it had been our experience that most leaders in these totalitarian governments did not confirm any arrangements in writing.) So we went to Bulgaria in faith. We arrived late at night. No one was there to greet us. We took a taxi, which delivered us to the wrong hotel. Once we made that discovery, we trudged, luggage in hand, through a snowstorm until we finally found our correct accommodations. Our frustration continued the next day as bilingual telephone operators at the hotel were not able to help us identify either the office or the leaders with whom we needed to meet. We were at a complete dead end. All we could do was to pray for help.

58 Our prayers were answered. In a marvelous way, a day later, at 10:00 A.M., we met with Mr. Tsviatko Tsvetkov, head of the religious affairs department for the country. He had just returned to the city, and his interpreter was available also. Incredible!

59 At first, the atmosphere was pretty cold. He didn't know we were coming. Through his interpreter, he scolded, "Nelson? Ringger? Mormons? I've never heard of you."

60 I replied, "That makes us even. We have never heard of you, either. It's time we got acquainted." Everyone laughed, and we went on to have a great meeting.

61 Elder Ringger and I returned

to Sofia in February 1990, at which time, as authorized by the First Presidency, an apostolic dedicatory prayer was given on February 13 at Park Na Svobodata, which means "Liberty Park."

62 On this visit we again met with Mr. Tsvetkov and other governmental leaders and also with many representatives of the media. The director of the International Foundation in Bulgaria asked if we could help provide teachers of English. We assured him that we could. Capable teachers were called and sent to fulfill that request. This director came to Salt Lake City in October 1990 to continue our friendship. With gratitude, he praised the work of our missionary sisters and couples who had begun teaching in Bulgaria. Their contacts have provided excellent referrals, and several individuals have since joined the Church.

63 A new mission, the 268th mission of the Church, was created on 1 July 1991. Kiril Kiriakov now serves as president of the Bulgaria Sofia Mission. President and Sister Kiriakov were both born in Bulgaria. Official recognition for the Church was granted by the Bulgarian government on 10 July 1991. Congregations of Saints and friends are growing in Bulgaria.

Greece

64 From the time of my first assignment to Athens in December 1985 to the present, growth of the Church in Greece has been steady. The Greece Athens Mission was opened 1 July 1990, with

R. Douglas Phillips as president. Mission branches in Greece had previously been under the direction of the Austria Vienna and, later, the Austria Vienna East missions. Our members there are thrilled now to have their own full-time missionaries to teach their friends and strengthen their branches. They are accomplishing a mighty work in this land blessed by personal ministrations of Apostles both ancient and modern.

Albania

65 This nation outlawed religion and declared the country officially atheist in 1967.

66 Notwithstanding, Elder Dalin H. Oaks and Elder Ringger visited Tirane, capital of Albania, in April 1991 and became acquainted with leaders and circumstances in this small nation that only recently overturned its long-established constitutional provision for atheism. Opportunities for its people to be blessed by the gospel and the generosity of Church members appear better now than at any time in many decades.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.)

67 The U.S.S.R. was a union of fifteen republics, one of which was the Republic of Russia. Others included Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and the Baltic states.

68 Although I had been to the Soviet Union three times before as a surgeon, Elder Ringger and I first went to Moscow

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as Church leaders in June 1987 on a very important fact-finding journey. We met with the chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs and with leaders of other religious denominations, including the Russian Orthodox, Protestant, and Jewish faiths. At the invitation of the chief rabbi, Adolph Shayevich, we attended a bar mitzvah service at the synagogue in Moscow.

69 We returned in August of 1989 to participate, along with philanthropists Dr. Armand Hammer of California and Jon M. Huntsman of Utah, in signing an agreement, August 8, for the Church to assist in relief efforts for victims of the disastrous earthquake of December 1988 in Armenia. May I digress to express gratitude for the faith and generosity of members of the Church who contributed funds generously and spontaneously for this cause. Though the Church never solicited a single coin, valuable donations have been voluntarily contributed by members throughout the world, either directly or via their own bishops and branch presidents.

70 In both of those visits to the Soviet Union, we met with the chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs and learned that recognition of a church was not given on a federal basis but was granted locally. A petition was required from a minimum of twenty adult members of the Church, all Soviet citizens residing in a given political district. Also, as in many of these countries, open preaching of the gos-

pel was not allowed because that was deemed to be an infringement on the rights of others who chose not to believe in any religion. Thus, we were left with a real dilemma. Without missionaries, how could we get a congregation of twenty members in any district? And how could we teach the gospel without first having twenty members so that we could obtain legal recognition? But remember: "With God nothing shall be impossible." Within a few months we had a congregation of twenty and more members in Leningrad!

71 The conversion of these pioneer members of the Church is truly a marvelous study in the workings of the Lord. Our branch president and his wife found the Church and were baptized on 1 July 1989 while in Budapest, Hungary. Russian-speaking home teachers from Helsinki, Finland, were assigned to visit these new converts upon their return to Leningrad. Another woman temporarily left Leningrad to find the Church in a miraculous manner. This beautiful young mother named Svetlana had importuned the Lord in prayer to make it possible for her to obtain a Bible written in the Russian language. Such a Bible is rare, precious, and very expensive. In the fall of 1989, she and her husband and their young child went to Helsinki in quest for a Bible. While walking through a park in Helsinki, she stepped upon an object hidden beneath the ground cover of autumn leaves. She picked it up and found it to

chosen, which overlooks the city of Tallinn and the Baltic Sea, bears the name Laululava. Some Estonians say the soul of their country resides there. It has a natural amphitheater where people come in large numbers to sing. On the brow of the hill above, early in the morning, that special prayer of dedication was offered under cover of large evergreen trees.

78 In due course, people from Lithuania and Latvia will also find the Church and its precious gospel of salvation, although we have no branches in those countries at present.

79 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was given official recognition by the Republic of Russia on 28 May 1991. This historic decision was announced in Moscow on 24 June 1991 by the vice president of the republic, Alexander Rutskoi. Russia thus joined Estonia as the second of the fifteen republics formerly in the U.S.S.R. to grant recognition to the Church.

80 To assist members in the U.S.S.R. in their new faith and in their missionary zeal, full-time missionaries were called. Initially they entered on tourist visas, rendered their help, and then returned to headquarters (Helsinki or Vienna) after a brief period of three to four days or so. Missionaries first entered Tallinn on 8 December 1989, Leningrad on 19 January 1990, Kiev on 7 October 1990, and Moscow on 18 Oc-

tober 1990. As of July 1991, each of those cities has two branches.

81 The first baptism of an LDS Russian convert by an LDS Russian priest occurred in Leningrad on 17 February 1990. Meanwhile, many Soviet citizens found the Church while temporarily located in distant countries and have since returned to seed the growing Church in their home cities. They illustrate the fact that opportunities to establish the Church worldwide surely develop for those who regard newcomers among them as "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."^k

82 Members now reside in Kurgan, Leningrad (recently renamed St. Petersburg), Moscow, Sochi, Vyborg, and Zelenograd, Russia; Tallinn, Estonia; Kiev, Ukraine; Sukhumi, Georgia; and other cities.

83 In June 1991, the Republic of Armenia donated land to the Church for the construction of a facility in its capital city, Yerevan, in gratitude for relief efforts extended in Armenia by the Church and its members worldwide. For example, Jon M. Huntsman, his wife, Karen, and their family have contributed funds and personal commitment to relieve thousands of homeless victims of the disastrous earthquake of December 1988. David M. Horne, a building contractor from Salt Lake City, responded

to a special mission call from the Church to donate his time and skills to help build safe homes for these victims. A precast concrete fabrication facility, dedicated in Yerevan on 24 June 1991, will generate enough units to erect 6,500 apartments and provide housing for 25,000 people annually.

84 The Republic of Armenia was dedicated on 24 June 1991 by Elder Dallin H. Oaks. He and I stood arm in arm on a peak overlooking the city of Yerevan near the monument representing the mother of Armenia. Not far in the distance, we could see the snow-covered peak of Mount Ararat, where Noah's Ark once had come to rest.¹

85 In June 1991, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir made its historic concert tour of eight countries of Europe. Included in their itinerary were performances in Warsaw, Poland; Friedrichsdorf, Frankfurt, Dresden, and Berlin, Germany; Budapest, Hungary; Prague, Czechoslovakia; and Moscow and Leningrad in the U.S.S.R. Concerts were also presented in Strasbourg, France; Zurich, Switzerland; and Vienna, Austria. Hearts were touched wherever they sang their beautiful songs of faith and devotion. The impact of this important tour has been well reported in articles appearing in the Ensign.^m

86 Elder Oaks and I were privileged to join the choir on that significant journey. Upon our return, we reported to President Ezra Taft Benson on 3 July 1991 the success of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's tour. Then we showed him certified copies of documents that attested to full recognition for the Church in the Republic of Russia. We shall never forget his look of joy. That has become one of our most cherished memories shared since our call to the Quorum of the Twelve in 1984. Poignantly, we recalled that President Benson had often referred to his own unforgettable experience when he had courageously spoken from the pulpit of a church in Moscow on 1 October 1959, telling the congregation:

87 "Our Heavenly Father is not far away. He can be very close to us. God lives, I know that He lives. He is our Father. Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the World, watches over this earth. He will direct all things. Be unafraid, keep His commandments, love one another, pray for peace and all will be well."

88 President Benson noted that "as each sentence was translated for the congregation, I saw the women take their handkerchiefs and as one observer put it begin to 'wave them like a mother bidding permanent

1 Gen. 8:4

m Jay M. Todd, Ensign, Oct. 1991, pp. 32-53; and Russell M. Nelson, Ensign, November 1991, pp. 59-61

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goodby to her only son.”ⁿ

89 This prophet, who presided over the Church during the period described in this report, who had preached for freedom and pled with people everywhere to study the Book of Mormon and “sweep the earth as with a flood”^o with its precious pages, lived to reap part of his harvest with news that the Church was fully recognized in the Republic of Russia!

*Prospective and Retrospective
Thoughts*

90 This article is in some respects both a summary and a concluding personal report of an assignment. It reviews eyewitness excerpts of my ministry in Europe during more than five important years. The First Presidency has now changed assignments of members of the Quorum of the Twelve. They know that each member of that sacred quorum, as he moves through the chairs of succession and seniority, must be broadened by knowledge of the Church and its people in all aspects of the work, and in all parts of the world. Accordingly, on 1 December 1990, the baton of first contact responsibility for Europe was passed to the capable hand of Elder Dallin H. Oaks. He has already made many remarkable contributions in that capacity.

91 During my numerous assignments to Europe (and other continents), my sweet companion, Dantzel, and our family have sustained me with their prayers of faith. They have not murmured, no matter the risk or the hostility likely to have been encountered in some of these ventures. I gratefully acknowledge their support.

92 The drama that I have documented (at the rate of growth of the Church, no doubt this article will be somewhat outdated at the time of publication) has focused merely on a portion of the European theater. Meanwhile, apostolic prayers of dedication have been offered recently in many other countries in Africa, South America, Central America, the South Pacific, and Asia.

93 As the work expands at a rate that many have described as “unbelievable,” we should recall a remarkable admonition given by the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith on 11 September 1831 to the elders of the Church assembled at the Morley Farm near Kirtland, Ohio. There the Master simply said: “Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.”^p

n Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire—The Eight Years with Eisenhower*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962, pp. 486–87. See also Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987, pp. 342–45

o Moses 7:62

p D&C 64:33

94 President Wilford Wooruff recorded more about that incident. He wrote: "On Sunday night the Prophet called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house they had there. It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland. ... When we got together the Prophet called upon the Elders of Israel with him to bear testimony of this work. ... When they got through the Prophet said, "Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight. But I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it. ... [It] will fill North and South America—it will fill the world."^a

95 The Prophet knew the destiny of this Church. We are now experiencing part of the growth he envisioned more than a century and a half ago.

96 I pray that we all may have that same understanding and faith. I bear witness that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His church, and His work will fill the world to bless its people in the Lord's due time.

CHAPTER 10

Jesus the Christ - Our Master and More - Delivered 2 February 1992 as a devotional at BYU Provo

SISTER Nelson and I are very grateful to be with you. And we are a bit surprised to see so many here to commemorate Groundhog Day! We appreciate the attendance of President Rex E. Lee, President Kerry Romesburg, their companions, and associates from Brigham Young University and the Utah Valley Community College. We are also thankful for stake presidents and bishops and their partners and all who give so much that students and welcome visitors may be edified here.

2 Tonight's meeting concludes the annual Book of Mormon Symposium, which has focused intensively on the book of Helaman and the first ten chapters of 3 Nephi. I find it intriguing that scholars can feast for days on a banquet based on less than sixty printed pages. It is somewhat reminiscent of another phenomenon that I have also found to be most fascinating. I once regularly attended meetings of the American Heart Association, mingling with thousands of fellow scientists from many institutions and diverse disciplines, all congregated to learn more about the human heart. Surely God's gifts are great, and their importance is infinite! How blessed we are to be recipients of his word and of his works.

a In Conference Report, 6 April 1898, p. 57; see also Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, ed. G. Homer Durham, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946, 1990, pp. 30–31, citing Millennial Star 54[1892]:605

3 My lifelong interest in the human heart took an unexpected turn in April 1984, when I was called to leave the operating room of the hospital and enter the upper room of the temple. There I became an ordained apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. I did not seek such a call but have humbly tried to be worthy of that trust and privilege of being his representative, now hoping to mend hearts spiritually as I previously did surgically.

4 So I come to you as one who has been called, sustained, and ordained—one of the twelve special witnesses of our Lord and Master. In speaking with you, I sense our mutual desire and sacred responsibility to follow this vital theme from the Book of Mormon:

We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, [and] we prophesy of Christ.^b

5 We honor him as the most important individual ever to live on Planet Earth. He is Jesus the Christ—our Master and more. He has numerous names, titles, and responsibilities, all of eternal significance.^c Under the heading “Jesus Christ,” the Topical Guide in the King James Version of the LDS edition of the Holy Bible has eighteen pages^d filled with references listed under fifty-seven subheadings. In the

time allotted we could not fully consider or comprehend all of these important facets of his life. But this evening I would like to review, even briefly, ten of those mighty responsibilities of Jesus the Christ. You may choose to number them in your notes, but I will not do so—not wanting to imply any order of priority—because all that he accomplished was equally supernal in scope.

Creator

6 Under the direction of the Father, Jesus bore the responsibility of Creator. His title was the *Word*—spelled with a capital W. In the Greek language of the New Testament, that *Word* was *Logos*, or “Divine Expression.” It was another name for the Master. That terminology may seem strange, but it is so reasonable. We use words to convey our expression to others. So Jesus was the “Word” or “Expression” of his Father to the world. The gospel of John begins with this important proclamation:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.^e

b 2 Nephi 25:26

c for example, see Daniel H. Ludlow, “Jesus Christ Is Basis of LDS Beliefs,” Church News, 29 March 1980

d pp. 240–58

e John 1:1–3; D&C 93:21

7 The book of Helaman records similar testimony declaring that “Jesus Christ [is] the Creator of all things from the beginning”.^f

8 Another clarifying quotation came from Moses:

The Lord God said unto Moses: For mine own purpose have I made these things. . . .

And by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.

And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.^g

9 In modern revelation, Jesus’ responsibility as Creator of many worlds is again affirmed:

Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation —

The light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men.

The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him.^h

10 This hallowed Creator provided that each of us could have a physical body, uniquely individual, yet in many respects comparable to every other human body. Just as a well-educated musician can recognize the composer of a symphony by its style and structure, so a well-educated surgeon can recognize the creator of human beings by the similarity of style and structure of our anatomy. Individual variations notwithstanding, this similarity provides additional evidence and deep spiritual confirmation of our divine creation by our same Creator. It enhances the understanding of our relationship to him:

The Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.

And the Gods said: We will bless them.ⁱ

11 Indeed, they have blessed each of us. Our bodies can repair and defend themselves. They regenerate new cells to replace old ones. Our bodies carry seeds that allow reproduction of our own kind with our unique individual characteristics. Little wonder our Creator is also known as the Great Physicianⁱ—able to heal the sick,^k restore sight

f Helaman 14:12

g Moses 1:31–33

h D&C 93:8–10; see also Hebrews 1:2; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Nephi 9:5; 3 Nephi 9:15; D&C 76:23–24; 88:42–48; 101:32–34

i Abraham 4:27–28

j Matthew 9:12

k 3 Nephi 9:13; D&C 35:9; 42:48–51

to the blind,^l unstop ears of the deaf,^m and raise the dead.ⁿ And in these latter days, he has revealed a code of health known as the Word of Wisdom that has blessed the lives of all who have obeyed those teachings in faith. So we honor Jesus as our Creator, divinely directed by his Father.

Jehovah

12 Jesus was Jehovah. This sacred title is recorded only four times in the King James version of the Holy Bible.^o The use of this holy name is also confirmed in modern scripture.^p *Jehovah* is derived from the Hebrew word *hayah*, which means “to be” or “to exist.” A form of the word *hayah* in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament was translated into English as “I AM”.^q Remarkably, *I AM* was used by Jehovah as a name for himself.^r Listen to this intriguing dialogue from the Old Testament. Moses had just received a divine appointment that he did not seek—a commission to lead the children of Israel out of bondage. The scene takes place atop Mount Sinai:

Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? . . . [No doubt Moses felt inadequate for his calling, even as you and I

may feel when given a challenging assignment.]

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever.^s

13 Jehovah had thus revealed to Moses this very name that he had meekly and modestly chosen for his own premortal identification—I AM.

14 Later, in his mortal ministry, Jesus occasionally repeated this name. Do you remember his terse response to tormenting questioners? Note the double meaning in his reply:

The high priest asked him, . . . Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

l	John 9:1–11
m	Isaiah 35:5; 3 Nephi 26:15
n	Matthew 9:23–26; John 11:5–45
o	Exodus 6:3; Psalms 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4
p	Moroni 10:34; D&C 109:68; 110:3; 128:9
q	Exodus 3:14
r	D&C 29:1; 38:1; 39:1
s	Exodus 3:11, 13–15

For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

I pray for them.^z

21 He is also known as the mediator of the new testament or covenant.^{aa} Comprehending him as our advocate-intercessor-mediator with the Father gives us assurance of his unequaled understanding, justice, and mercy.^{ab}

Immanuel

22 Jesus was foreordained to be the promised Immanuel. Remember Isaiah's remarkable prophecy?

The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.^{ac}

23 Fulfillment of that prophecy was not just unlikely—it was humanly impossible! Incredible! Everyone knew that a virgin could not bear a child. And then for that child to be given such a pretentious name was doubly daring! The Hebrew name that Isaiah announced—*Immanuel*—literally means “with us [is] God!”

24 That holy name was subsequently given to Jesus in the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants.^{ad}

25 Immanuel could be such only at the will of his Father.

Son of God

26 Jesus alone bore his responsibility as the Son of God—the Only Begotten Son of the Father.^{ae} Jesus was literally “the Son of the Highest”.^{af} In more than a dozen verses of scripture, the solemn word of God the Father bears testimony that Jesus was truly his Beloved Son. That solemn testimony was often coupled with God's pleading for mankind to hear and obey the voice of his revered Son.^{ag} Through the condescension of God, that most unlikely prophecy of Isaiah had become reality.

27 The unique parentage of Jesus was also announced to Nephi, who was thus instructed by an angel:

*Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.
... Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!^{ah}*

z John 17:6–9

aa Hebrews 9:15; 12:24

ab Alma 7:12

ac Isaiah 7:14

ad Matthew 1:23; 2 Nephi 17:14; D&C 128:22

ae John 1:14, 18; 3:16

af Luke 1:32, 35

ag Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 2 Peter 1:17; 2 Nephi 31:11; 3 Nephi 11:7; 21:20; D&C 93:15; Moses 4:2; JS–H 1:17

ah 1 Nephi 11:18,21

comes.^{ap} So you may add either of these titles to signify your adoration for Jesus—as “the Christ” or as “the Messiah,” anointed by God for that supernal responsibility.

Savior and Redeemer

33 Jesus was born to be Savior and Redeemer of all mankind.^{aq} He was the Lamb of God,^{ar} who offered himself without spot or blemish^{as} as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.^{at} Later, as the resurrected Lord, he related that sacred responsibility to the meaning of the gospel, which he described in one powerful passage:

Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross.^{au}

34 Thus Jesus personally defined the gospel. This term comes from the Old English *godspell*, which literally means “good news.”

The good news is that Jesus Christ has made a perfect atonement for mankind that will redeem all mankind from the grave and reward each individual according to his/

her works. This atonement was begun by his appointment in the premortal world but was worked out by Jesus during his mortal sojourn.^{av}

35 His atonement had been foretold long before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Prophets had so prophesied his advent for many generations. Since this year’s Book of Mormon Symposium’s spotlight is focused on the book of Helaman, let us sample from its record, written some thirty years before the Savior’s birth:

Remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world.^{aw}

36 His atonement blesses each of us in a very personal way. Listen carefully to this explanation from Jesus:

For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to

ap 2 Nephi 25:20
 aq Isaiah 49:26; 1 Nephi 10:5
 ar 1 Nephi 10:10
 as 1 Peter 1:19
 at John 1:29
 au 3 Nephi 27:13–14
 av Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Gospels,” p. 682
 aw Helaman 5:9

works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

. . . Therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.^{ba}

41 The Book of Mormon sheds further light on how that judgment will occur. So does the temple endowment. When we approach the threshold of the eternal court of justice, we know who will personally preside:

The keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.

And whoso knocketh, to him will he open.^{bb}

42 Scriptures indicate that the Lord will receive apostolic assistance when exercising judgment upon the house of Israel.^{bc} Your personal encounter at judgment will be aided by your own “bright recollection”^{bd} and “perfect remembrance”^{be} of your deeds, as well as by the desires of your heart.^{bf}

Exemplar

43 Another responsibility of the Lord is that of Exemplar. To the people of the Holy Land, he said,

I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done.^{bg}

44 To the people of ancient America, he again emphasized his mission as Exemplar:

I am the light; I have set an example for you.^{bh}

45 In his sermon on the mount, Jesus challenged his followers with this admonition:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.^{bi}

46 Sinless and flawless as Jesus was in mortality, we should remember that he viewed his own state of physical perfection as being yet in the future.^{bj} Even he had to endure to the end. Can you and I be expected to do any less?

47 When the crucified and resurrected Lord appeared to the people in ancient America, he again stressed the importance of his example. But now he included himself as a perfected personage:

ba 3 Nephi 27:14–15
bb 2 Nephi 9:41–42
bc 1 Nephi 12:9; D&C 29:12
bd Alma 11:43
be Alma 5:18
bf D&C 137:9
bg John 13:15; see also 14:6; 1 Peter 2:21
bh 3 Nephi 18:16; see also 27:27; 2 Nephi 31:9, 16
bi Matthew 5:48
bj Luke 13:32

the American Continent".^a From these centers he will direct the affairs of his church and kingdom. Then he "shall reign for ever and ever".^b

53 In that day he will bear new titles and be surrounded by special Saints. He will be known as "Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that [will be] with him [will be those who] are called, and chosen, and faithful" to their trust here in mortality.^c

54 He is Jesus the Christ—our Master and more. We have discussed but ten of his many responsibilities: Creator, Jehovah, Advocate with the Father, Immanuel, Son of God, Anointed One, Savior and Redeemer, Judge, Exemplar, and Millennial Messiah.

55 As his disciples, you and I bear mighty responsibilities, too. So I now speak in a very personal tone. In my lifetime I have visited all fifty states in the USA. I have also set foot upon the soil of eighty-six other countries of the earth. Wherever I walk, it is my divine calling and sacred privilege to bear fervent testimony of Jesus the Christ. He lives! I love him. Eagerly I follow him, and willingly I offer my life in his service. As his special witness, I solemnly teach of him. I testify of him.

56 I also express my deep admi-

ration and affection for each of you, my beloved brothers and sisters, along with my hope and blessing that you will bear your responsibility to know the Lord, love him, follow him, serve him, teach and testify of him, as do I. His church has been restored to the earth in these latter days to prepare the world and its people for his second coming. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

Doors of Death - Delivered April 1992 in the Sunday Afternoon session of General Conference. Reprinted in the Friend magazine June 1994

THIS morning Elder Boyd K. Packer spoke of the "fountains of life." This afternoon, I should like to speak of the "doors of death." Both are crucial components of life.

2 Recently at the funeral of a friend, I visited with two distinguished brothers—former surgical colleagues of mine—whose lovely companions had both passed away. They said they were going through the most difficult period of their lives, adjusting to the almost unbearable loss of their partners. These wonderful men then told of their cooking breakfast for each other once a week—sharing that rotation with their sister—trying to

a Articles of Faith 1:10; Ether 13:3–10; D&C 84:2–4

b Revelation 11:15; Exodus 15:18; Psalms 146:10; Mosiah 3:5; D&C 76:108

c Revelation 17:14; 19:16

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

9 “A time to be born, and a time to die.”^j

10 Think of the alternative. If all sixty-nine billion people who have ever lived on earth were still here, imagine the traffic jam! And we could own virtually nothing and scarcely make any responsible decisions.

Plan of Happiness

11 Scriptures teach that death is *essential* to happiness: “Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would *destroy* the great plan of happiness.”^k

12 Our limited perspective would be enlarged if we could witness the reunion on the other side of the veil, when doors of death open to those returning home. Such was the vision of the psalmist who wrote, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”^l

Spiritual Death

13 But there is another type of separation known in scripture as spiritual death.^m It “is defined

as a state of spiritual alienation from God.”ⁿ Thus, one can be very much alive physically but dead spiritually.

14 Spiritual death is more likely when goals are unbalanced toward things physical. Paul explained this concept to the Romans: “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”^o

15 If physical death should strike before moral wrongs have been made right, opportunity for repentance will have been forfeited. Thus, “the [real] sting of death is sin.”^p

16 Even the Savior cannot save us in our sins. He will redeem us from our sins, but only upon condition of our repentance. We are responsible for our own spiritual survival or death.^q

Coping with Trials

17 Physical and spiritual trials provide continuing challenges in life. Each of you could provide illustrations from personal experience. Many of you, for instance, are at the twilight of life and endure long and difficult days. You know well the meaning of that divine injunction to

j Eccl. 3:1–2; Alma 12:27

k Alma 42:8; italics added; 2 Ne. 9:6

l Ps. 116:15

m 2 Ne. 9:12; Alma 12:16; Alma 42:9; Hel. 14:16, 18

n Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56, 2:217

o Rom. 8:13

p 1 Cor. 15:56

q Rom. 8:13–14; Hel. 14:18; D&C 29:41–45

“endure to the end.”^r

18 The Savior of the world repeatedly asked that we pattern our lives after His.^s So we must endure trials—as did He. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.”^t

19 When hardship heaps its heavy load upon us, good may yet be gleaned. Shakespeare so wrote:

*Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.*

20 The Lord’s expression is even more explicit: “After much tribulation come the blessings.”^u

Postmortal Life

21 Mortality, temporary as it is, is terminated by the doors of death. Questions then come to searching minds of those left behind. “Where is my loved one now?” “What happens after death?” While many questions cannot be fully answered with available knowledge, much is known.

Paradise

22 The first station in postmortal life is named paradise. Alma

wrote: “Concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me ... that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, ... are taken home to that God who gave them life. ...

23 “The spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace.”^v

Resurrection and Immortality

24 Some facetiously state that nothing is as permanent as death. Not so! The grip of physical death is temporary. It began with the fall of Adam; it ended with the atonement of Jesus the Christ. The waiting period in paradise is temporary, too. It ends with the resurrection. From the Book of Mormon we learn that the “paradise of God must deliver up the spirits of the righteous, and the grave deliver up the body of the righteous; and the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls.”^w

25 A few years ago, our stake president and his wife had a wonderful son taken in his youthful prime because of an

r Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13; 1 Ne. 13:37; 1 Ne. 22:31; 2 Ne. 31:16; 2 Ne. 33:4; Omni 1:26; 3 Ne. 15:9; D&C 14:7; D&C 18:22; D&C 24:8

s John 13:15; John 14:6; 1 Pet. 2:21; 2 Ne. 31:9, 16; 3 Ne. 18:16; 3 Ne. 27:27

t Heb. 5:8

u D&C 58:4

v Alma 40:11–12

w 2 Ne. 9:13

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automobile accident. We are consoled by the knowledge that the very laws that could not allow his broken body to survive here are the same eternal laws which the Lord will employ at the time of the Resurrection, when that body “shall be restored to [its] proper and perfect frame.”^x

26 The Lord who created us in the first place surely has power to do it again. The same necessary elements now in our bodies will still be available—at His command. The same unique genetic code now embedded in each of our living cells will still be available to format new ones then. The miracle of the resurrection, wondrous as it will be, is marvelously matched by the miracle of our creation in the first place.

Judgment

27 Our resurrection will not be an end but a new beginning. It will prepare us for judgment by the Lord, who said, “As I have been lifted up [upon the cross] by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works.”^y

28 Even before we approach that threshold of the eternal court of justice, we know who will personally preside: “The keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he

cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.

29 “And whoso knocketh, to him will he open.”^z

Family Ties

30 Loving relationships continue beyond the doors of death and judgment. Family ties endure because of sealings in the temple. Their importance cannot be overstated.

31 I remember vividly an experience I had as a passenger in a small two-propeller airplane. One of its engines suddenly burst open and caught on fire. The propeller of the flaming engine was starkly stilled. As we plummeted in a steep spiral dive toward the earth, I expected to die. Some of the passengers screamed in hysterical panic. Miraculously, the precipitous dive extinguished the flames. Then, by starting up the other engine, the pilot was able to stabilize the plane and bring us down safely.

32 Throughout that ordeal, though I “knew” death was coming, my paramount feeling was that I was not afraid to die. I remember a sense of returning home to meet ancestors for whom I had done temple work. I remember my deep sense of gratitude that my sweetheart and I had been sealed eternally to each other and to our children, born and reared in the covenant. I realized that our marriage in

x Alma 40:23; Alma 11:42–45

y 3 Ne. 27:14

z 2 Ne. 9:41–42

loved ones may be just as close as the next room—separated only by the doors of death.

39 With that assurance, brothers and sisters, love life! Cherish each moment as a blessing from God.^a Live it well—even to your loftiest potential. Then the anticipation of death shall not hold you hostage. With the help of the Lord, your deeds and desires will qualify you to receive everlasting joy, glory, immortality, and eternal lives. For this I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 12

Where Is Wisdom? - Delivered October 1992 in the Saturday Morning session of General Conference

TODAY I would like to pose a question asked long ago by Job: “Where shall wisdom be found?”^b

2 Leaders of this Church have repeatedly emphasized the importance of education. It is a vital component of wisdom. Not long after the pioneers began construction of their temple in Illinois, they established the University of the City of Nauvoo. The First Presidency proclaimed that this university “will enable

us to teach our children wisdom, to instruct them in all the knowledge and learning, in the arts, sciences, and learned professions.”^c

3 A similar scene followed after the persecuted pioneers entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Less than three years later, on 28 February 1850, they instituted the University of the State of Deseret.^d Later several academies of learning were established.

4 Now as Church membership worldwide exceeds eight million, it is evident that a direct role of the Church in secular education is no longer feasible. Yet our commitment to education remains constant.

5 Scriptures teach that “the glory of God is intelligence.”^e They also teach that individual “intelligences ... were organized before the world was.”^f “Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.”^g

6 Our personal intelligence is everlasting and divine. I believe Thomas Jefferson felt that dignity of the human spirit when he wrote: “I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility

a Mosiah 2:21

b Job 28:12

c History of the Church, 4:269

d Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 28 Feb. 1850, pp. 1–2.

e D&C 93:36

f Abr. 3:22

g D&C 93:29

against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.”^h

Seek Education

7 Because of our sacred regard for each human intellect, we consider the obtaining of an education to be a religious responsibility. Yet opportunities and abilities differ. I believe that in the pursuit of education, individual desire is more influential than institution, and personal faith more forceful than faculty.

8 Our Creator expects His children everywhere to educate themselves. He issued a commandment: “Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”ⁱ And He assures us that knowledge acquired here will be ours forever.^j

9 Measured by this celestial standard, it is apparent that those who impulsively “drop out” and cut short their education not only disregard divine decree but frustrate the realization of their own potential.

10 I remember my moment of resolution many years ago when, as an untrained teenager, I secured temporary employment at Christmastime. The work was monotonous. Each hour and each day passed slowly. I resolved then and there that

I must obtain an education that would qualify me better for life. I determined to stay in school and work for an education as though my very life depended upon it.

11 Later as stake president I was questioned by many young people about their own educational pursuits. Some asked me how long it took to become a doctor of medicine. “The general pattern would be four years at a university, followed by four years in medical school,” I replied. “And if you choose to become a specialist, that could take another five years or more, depending upon your desire.”

12 That occasionally evoked a reaction: “That adds up to thirteen years—and maybe *more*? That’s too long for me!”

13 “It all depends,” I would respond. “Preparation for your career is not too long if you know what you want to do with your life. How old will you be thirteen years from now if you *don’t* pursue your education? Just as old, whether or not you become what you want to be!”

14 So my counsel then—and now—is to continue your education wherever you are, whatever your interest and opportunity, however you determine you can best serve your family and society.

h Elbert D. Thomas, *Thomas Jefferson, World Citizen* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1942), p. 251

i D&C 88:118

j D&C 130:18–19

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Beware of Unbalance

15 Choose what you will learn and whose purposes you will serve. But don't place all your intellectual eggs in one basket of secular learning. Remember this warning from the Book of Mormon:

"O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

"But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God."^k

16 That scripture reminds me of a friend who proudly boasted that his climb toward wealth had come from tireless work and lessons learned in the "school of hard knocks." But his fortune had come at the expense of his spiritual development. When it was too late, he regretfully discovered that his ladder of success had been leaning against the wrong wall. He had never read this instruction from his Maker:

"Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich."^l

17 Mankind's unfamiliarity with the scriptures has sometimes brought sorrow to great numbers of people over long periods of time. The suffering that has resulted from such ignorance is truly tragic. May I illustrate with excerpts from history that pertain to the spread of infection.

18 In the nineteenth century, health officials and others were concerned about pollution of the air, not by visible smoggy hydrocarbons of today, but by an invisible miasma that was blamed for almost any infection. In 1867, for example, Lord Lister indicted bad air as the chief cause of infection.^m Because of that, in 1869 Simpson from Edinburgh urged that hospitals be taken down and rebuilt every few years.ⁿ Such an extravagant practice was also advocated by other experts.^o

19 Even Florence Nightingale, a living legend following her heroic efforts in the Crimean War,

k 2 Ne. 9:28–29

l D&C 6:7; D&C 11:7

m J. Lister, "On a New Method of Treating Compound Fracture, Abscess, etc., with Observations on the Conditions of Suppuration," *Lancet*, 1 (1867): 326

n J. Y. Simpson, "Our Existing System of Hospitalism and Its Effects," *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, 14 (1869): 817

o L. A. Stimson, "Bacteria and Their Influence upon the Origin and Development of Septic Complications of Wounds," *New York Medical Journal*, 22 (1875): 144

failed to recognize the transmission of infection from one patient to another—this despite her careful notations that wound infection accounted for 40 percent of postoperative mortality.^p

20 But others missed the connection, too. For centuries, lives of innumerable mothers and children were claimed by “childbirth fever”—infections unknowingly transmitted among the innocent by unwashed hands of attendants.^q

21 It was only a short century ago that the great work of Koch, Pasteur, and others proved that infection could be caused by bacteria in contaminated body fluids—or infected issues—passed from one individual to another.

22 With these highlights of history in mind, may I quote the word of the Lord recorded long ago in Leviticus, chapter fifteen:

“The Lord spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying,
“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean.
“And this shall be his uncleanness *in his issue*. ...

“Every bed, whereon he lieth that hath the issue, is unclean: and every thing, whereon he sitteth, shall be unclean.

“And whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water. ...

“And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water.”^r

23 Several verses follow which re-emphasize and illustrate those important principles. Then we read this conclusion:

“And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue; then he shall ... wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean.”^s

24 Thus, our loving Heavenly Father had clearly revealed principles of clean technique in the handling of infected patients more than three thousand years ago! These scriptures are in complete harmony with modern medical guidelines.^t But during those many millennia, how many mothers needlessly perished? How many children suffered because man’s quest for knowledge had failed to incorporate the word of the Lord?

p Edward Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913), 1:352–438

q Ignaz Philipp Semmelweiss, *Die Aetiologie, der Begriff und die Prophylaxis des Kindbettfiebers*, reprinted from 1861 ed. (New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1966), pp. 102–13

r Lev. 15:1–5, 7; emphasis added

s Lev. 15:13

t *Isolation Techniques for Use in Hospitals* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1970), p. 9.

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Contemporary Challenges

25 In our day, many challenges face us. Some are new, some are old—simply clothed in modern attire. The epistles of Paul include prophecies pertaining to our day. Do these descriptions sound familiar?

“In the last days perilous times shall come.

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, [and the list of insidious qualities goes on] ...

“Without natural affection, ...

“Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: ...

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”^u

26 Paul’s warnings describe apostasy and other dangers of our day. Some of these perils are contrary to God’s purposes and are championed by persuasive people possessing more ability than morality, more knowledge than wisdom. Their rationalization breeds justification. The Bible affirms that the “way of a fool is right in his own eyes.”^v Indeed, individuals with malignity of purpose often wear the mask of honesty. So we must constantly be on guard.

27 To build a house straight and strong, you do not choose crooked boards. So to build your eternal destiny, you cannot—you

must not—limit lessons only to those warped to exclude revelation from God. The Book of Mormon offers this note of caution and hope:

“Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works.”^w

28 Remember the terrible price paid for ignorance of divine instruction. Until the turn of this century, infection was spread as if no one had ever read or taken seriously the fifteenth chapter of Leviticus. Where is wisdom?

29 Today we are seriously concerned with the increasing incidence of human infection with HIV (Human Immunosuppressive Virus) and variant viruses and the associated outbreak of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). An epidemic has been forecast—a plague fueled by a vocal few who exhibit greater concern for civil rights than for public health, a plague abetted by the immoral. Some live in lust as though God’s commandment to be chaste was written with an asterisk, exempting them from obeying. And regrettably, as in previous plagues, many innocent victims are doomed to suffer. Where is wisdom?

30 Avoidable deaths and mount-

u 2 Tim. 3:1–5, 7

v Prov. 12:15

w Jacob 4:10

34 Divine light and wisdom continue to increase when love for Deity grows:

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”^a

“He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.”^b

35 Where is wisdom? It pulses and surges with the Lord’s light of truth! With that light He lifts us toward eternal life, I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 13

Integrity of Heart - Delivered 23 February 1993 as a devotional at BYU Provo

THANK you, President Lee and Sister Lee. We appreciate your limitless leadership and are grateful to acknowledge the presence of Sister Lee’s parents, Brother and Sister Griffin. I thank Brother Staheli and the singers for their wonderful music—it was beautiful.

2 Dear fellow students and friends—beloved brothers and sisters—you look mighty good to Sister Nelson and me. We admire and respect you. Many of you attended the Sunday night fireside recently (7 February

1993) when President Howard W. Hunter spoke. We commend you for your conduct during that shocking confrontation by an adversary. Your spontaneous song of faith was inspired and effective. And you witnessed the great courage of that wonderful man whom we sustain as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. How we honor him!

3 The title of my message today is “Integrity of Heart.” I hope you will permit me to draw on my experience as a cardiac surgeon to illustrate this important topic.

4 Let me begin with this picture of the mitral valve. It is one of four valves within the heart. Isn’t it beautiful? This delicate and durable structure is situated between the left atrium and the left ventricle. It is a check valve, regulating the flow of freshly oxygenated blood from the lungs into the heart’s powerful pump. Your own mitral valve opens and closes about 100,000 times a day—36 million times each year. It consists of soft billowing tissue, cords, and attachments below.

5 In a way it is like a parachute, which also consists of three important components: the flexible sail, cords, and attachments below. When in operation the parachute’s sail billows to form a pocket of resistance that slows the descent of the passenger

a D&C 50:24; D&C 88:67

b D&C 93:28

tethered to it by strong cords.

6 The mitral valve opens widely to let blood enter the pump, and then it snaps securely shut when blood is ejected from the heart. The work of the heart goes on day after day, year after year, with or without your awareness.

7 But things can go wrong with the mitral valve. If for any reason the mitral valve doesn't close completely, blood is regurgitated backwards. The high pressure exerted by the heart is then impelled directly back to the lungs. If that were to go on very long, it would result in failure of both the heart and the lungs. Let me describe one condition that can create just such a problem.

8 One of the mitral valve's cords may rupture spontaneously. When that occurs, stress on the adjoining cords is immediately increased. Then the neighboring cords are much more prone to rupture. And when they break, the entire mitral valve loses its competence, and the patient's life is in serious jeopardy.

9 That concept is familiar to anyone who has lined up a row of dominoes. When one falls, the next one goes, and so on. You ladies may have watched a similar scene, much to your dismay. It doesn't take very long for a snag to become a run in your nylons.

10 Cardiac surgeons speak of the heart in terms of its structural integrity. The word integ-

riety is related to the word integer, which means "entire" or "whole." Integrity may be defined as "unimpaired." Integrity also means "incorruptible," a firm adherence to a code of values. Integrity denotes a state of completeness. If any component of the heart loses its integrity, the heart is impaired and a vicious cycle ensues. An anatomical flaw leads to improper function, and improper function leads to further failure. Therefore, the ultimate objective of any cardiac operation is to restore structural integrity to the heart.

11 Fishermen also understand the danger of sequential stress as it relates to integrity of their nets. To the untrained, a small tear may seem to be relatively insignificant. But the experienced fisherman knows about sequential stress. A broken strand in his net may allow the loss of a fish or two but, more important, it causes undue strain on adjacent strands. Before long a small hole becomes larger and larger. Eventually the entire net is worthless.

12 Most of you will not be cardiac surgeons or professional fishermen, so you may wonder why I use such teaching models at a devotional assembly. The reason comes from scripture. The Lord said that "all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal".^c

13 He is our Creator. Thus, temporal or physical laws that re-

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c D&C 29:34

late to our divine creation often have a spiritual application. This should come as no surprise because “all [of God’s] kingdoms have a law given; . . . And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions”.^d

14 The Lord taught that anyone “who hath seen any or the least of these [kingdoms] hath seen God moving in his majesty and power”.^e Because he is the Creator of both the physical and spiritual components of our being, examples of the importance of structural integrity can teach much about the importance of spiritual integrity.

15 Applying the mitral valve or parachute analogy, let us depict a model of spiritual integrity. Let the sail of integrity be tethered by cords attached to you as an individual. Let us label each cord with a spiritual quality. For example, I have chosen specific attributes of character mentioned in the thirteenth article of faith—being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, doing good, and seeking things of good report. Many other qualities of character could be listed, but these will suffice to illustrate the principle. As you study this illustration, think of someone you admire greatly—someone with spiritual integrity. His or her integrity is characterized by the strength of each of these

cords of character. So this model is unimpaired; the sail, cords, and attachments are all secure.

16 Imagine now that one of those supporting cords is broken—the cord of honesty, for example. If that cord breaks, the law of sequential stress immediately imposes additional strain on the neighboring cords of chastity, virtue, benevolence, and so on.

17 In familiar scripture, we have been warned of such risk:

And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; . . . yea, lie a little, take the advantage of . . . thy neighbor; . . .

Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach after this manner, false and vain and foolish doctrines.^f

18 Those teachings are dangerous because they are hazardous to your precious integrity. Yet some people are so easily tempted to lie a little, to cheat a little, to steal a little, or to bear false witness—just a little. You cannot commit a little sin without being subject to the consequences. If you tolerate a little sin today, you tolerate a little more tomorrow, and before long, a cord of integrity is broken. Sequential stress will follow, putting at risk adjacent cords of chastity, virtue, being true, and so on.

19 Brigham Young had strong feelings about such matters. On

d D&C 88: 36, 38
e D&C 88:47
f 2 Nephi 28:8–9

one occasion, he said:

Many want to shade a little, rather than to work hard for an honest living. Such practices must be put away, and this people must become sanctified in their affections to God, and learn to deal honestly, truly, and uprightly with one another in every respect, with all the integrity that fills the heart of an angel. They must learn to feel that they can trust all they possess with their brethren and sisters, saying, "All I have I entrust to you: keep it until I call for it." . . . That principle must prevail in the midst of this people: you must preserve your integrity to each other.^g

20 His statement strikes a sympathetic response in me when I reflect upon days our nine daughters enjoyed as college co-eds dating their boyfriends. As a young suitor would call at our door, I might silently ask myself: "Would he one day call me 'Dad'? Would he help to care for me in my old age?" And sometimes I wondered—knowing so well the history of Jacob, son of Isaac—if any of these boyfriends would follow the biblical precedent of Jacob, who kissed Rachel on their first date. Not only that, Jacob kissed Rachel's father.^h I can report to you that the boys successfully resisted any such temptation—at least as far as a kiss for me was concerned.

21 I trusted each young man to be a man of integrity. So I echo those thoughts expressed by Brigham Young: "All I have I entrust to you: keep it until I call for it." Now, some years later, I am pleased to state that our nine sons-in-law have earned and have honored that trust we placed in them. Each one possesses integrity of heart, as do our daughters and our son, currently serving as a missionary in Russia. Integrity safeguards family love, and love makes family life rich and zestful—now and forever.

22 But none of us is immune to temptation, and the adversary knows it. He would deceive, connive, or contrive any means to deprive us of potential joy and exaltation. He knows that if one little cord of control can be snapped, others are likely to give later under increased strain. Then there would be no integrity. Then there would be no eternal life. Then Satan's triumph would be assured.

23 Isaiah warned of this. He cautioned that "a little one shall become a thousand".ⁱ If this domino-like deterioration causes a "run in your spiritual stocking," qualities of character are lost and your cherished integrity is gone.

24 The Savior warned us of the lethal wages of sin.^j But he didn't limit his caution to major

g JD 6:47
 h Genesis 29:11–13
 i Isaiah 60:22
 j Romans 6:23

transgression alone. He specifically warned against breaking “one of these least commandments”.^k His admonitions were meant to protect and preserve your precious integrity.

25 A surgeon can repair or replace a mitral valve that has lost its integrity. But no surgical procedure can be performed for loss of spiritual integrity of heart. Such break down is under individual control. Isaiah observed that “thou . . . didst debase thyself”.^l

26 The wise fisherman inspects his nets regularly. Should any flaw be detected, he repairs the defect, without delay.

27 An old saying teaches that “a stitch in time saves nine.” Recorded revelation gives similar instruction. The Lord said, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works”.^m

28 So the wise assess personal cords of integrity on a daily basis. You are the one to identify any weakness. You are the one to repair it.

29 Indeed, you have an obligation to do so. Words of Isaiah, though referencing service to others, apply equally to ourselves. He said: “Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are

of a fearful heart, Be strong”.ⁿ

30 A good time for introspection is during private personal prayer. In the morning it might include a prayer for honesty, chastity, virtue, or simply being of service to others. In the evening there may be another quick checkup on all of those attributes. First, you pray for the preservation of your spiritual integrity, and then you work for it. Should any flaw be found, you will want to begin the process of prompt repair that will protect further disintegration of that threatened cord.

31 Self-assessment is not done as a formal “final exam,” or as a major “mid term.” It is done best in many little steps. For example, ask yourselves questions such as these:

32 What do you do when you make a mistake? (If you don’t make mistakes, you must have died long ago.) Do you admit your error and apologize? Or do you deny it? Or do you blame others?

33 When in a group, if ideas or activities are promoted that you know to be wrong, what do you do? Do you endorse error by your silence? Or do you take a stand?

34 If employed to do a job, are you totally true to your employ-

k Matthew 5:19

l Isaiah 57:9

m Revelation 2:5

n Isaiah 35:3–4; see also D&C 81:5

er? Or do you let yourself be less than loyal?

35 How do you keep the Sabbath day, obey the Word of Wisdom, honor your mother and your father?

36 If you have made sacred covenants in the temple, how do you react when you hear evil-speaking of the Lord's anointed? Do you honor all covenants made there? Or do you allow exceptions and rationalize your behavior to suit your preconceived preferences?

37 How do you honor your word? Can your promises be trusted? President Karl G. Maeser once said to students,

I have been asked what I mean by word of honor. I will tell you. Place me behind prison walls—walls of stone ever so high, ever so thick, reaching ever so far into the ground—there is a possibility that in some way or another I may be able to escape, but stand me on that floor and draw a chalk line around me and have me give my word of honor never to cross it. Can I get out of that circle? No, never! I'd die first!^o

38 I agree with Brother Maeser. A promise is binding either until fulfilled or until one is released from it. Now please don't be discouraged or depressed by your shortcomings. No one is without

weakness. That's part of the divine plan—to determine if you will master that weakness or let that weakness master you. Proper diagnosis is essential to proper treatment. The Lord gave us this remarkable assurance: "Because thou hast seen thy weakness, thou shalt be made strong".^p But wishing for strength won't make it so. It takes faith and work to shore up a weakened cord of integrity.

39 That process of repair you know as repentance, and, mercifully, you don't have to begin it alone. Help can be received through counsel with trusted parents and Church leaders. But their aid is more likely to be helpful if you will seek it not merely to satisfy a formality, but with "real intent" to reform yourself and to come closer to Christ. He is the Ultimate Physician. Real faith in him will provide real relief—and glorious rewards. He said, "Because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father".^q Mistakes may mar our worthiest intentions. And serious sin can stain with scarlet the slate of pristine white that was once ours. As none of us may escape sin, none of us may escape suffering. Repentance may not be easy, but it is worth it. Repentance not only bleaches, it heals!

40 Now for some more good

o Alma P. Burton, Karl G. Maeser: Mormon Educator (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1953), p. 71

p D&C 135:5

q Ether 12:37; 12:27, 2 Corinthians 12:9

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news: Not only can your integrity of heart be maintained, it can actually become strengthened. A testimony of the gospel is one of the most important fortifiers we know. So taught Elder Orson Pratt, who faced the burden of leadership imposed upon him. He knew that “it required a witness independent of the testimony of others”.^r So Brother Pratt once confided:

I sought for this witness. I did not receive it immediately, but when the Lord saw the integrity of my heart and the anxiety of my mind—when He saw that I was willing to travel hundreds of miles for the sake of learning the principles of the truth, He gave me a testimony for myself, which conferred upon me the most perfect knowledge that Joseph Smith was a true prophet, and that this book, called the Book of Mormon, was in reality a Divine revelation, and that God had once more, in reality, spoken to the human family. What joy this knowledge gave me! No language that I am acquainted with could describe the sensations I experienced when I received a knowledge from Heaven of the truth of this work.^s

41 Just as Orson Pratt’s unshakable testimony fortified him for great trials ahead, your personal testimony will strengthen you for challenges that are yet to come.

42 Challenges face a heart sur-

geon every day. From many years of experience I learned that the integrity of my team’s performance was absolutely essential to the success of an operative procedure. Any serious misstep, even though unintentional, could nullify the fervent prayers of a patient even when fortified by great faith of family and friends. I learned that desired blessings come only when all necessary laws are obeyed. Hence, the demands of obedience can be painful. Sanctification is neither simple nor quick. Speaking of his Saints in the latter days, the Lord said that “they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son. For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified”.^t

43 Repentance, strengthening, and sanctification are part of that cherished prize—integrity of heart. If President Brigham Young were here speaking to you now, he might counsel you as he did those of his day. These are his words:

In all your business transactions, words, and communications, if you commit [a wrong] act, repent of that immediately, and call upon God to deliver you from evil and give you the light of His spirit. Never do a thing that your conscience, and the light within you, tell you is wrong. Never do a wrong, but do all the good you

r JD 12:85
 s JD 12:85
 t D&C 101:4–5

possibly can. Never do a thing to mar the peaceable influence of the Holy Spirit in you; then whatever you are engaged in—whether in business, in the dance, or in the pulpit— you are ready to officiate at any time in any of the ordinances of the House of God. If I commit an overt act, the Lord knows the integrity of my heart, and, through sincere repentance, He forgives me.”^u

44 Please note that President Young linked the integrity of his heart to forgiveness from the Lord. And that can be earned only through full repentance. Truly, the miracle of forgiveness finalizes the healing of ruptured cords of spiritual integrity.

45 Your personal integrity will be protected by prior commitments. Job secured his commitment to integrity before facing a challenge. He wrote, “All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. . . . till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me”.^v Job knew he would face his Maker one day in judgment. He recorded this hope: “Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity”.^w Shakespeare gives reason for a strong prior commitment to integrity in lines he penned for his character Tarquinius in

the poem *The Rape of Lucrece*. As Tarquinius contemplates the conquest of a woman in lust, he argues against himself:

*What win I if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.*

*Who buys a minute’s mirth to
wait a week?*

Or sells eternity to get a toy?

*For one sweet grape who will the
vine destroy?”^x*

46 Commitments to integrity are learned from parents. The Lord said to Solomon, “Walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and. . . keep my statutes and my judgments”.^y

47 A proverb teaches that “the just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him”.^z Speaking of parents, permit me to share a personal experience. On President Spencer W. Kimball’s eighty-fifth birthday, a large dinner party was given for him. Sister Nelson and I were privileged to attend with my parents. When President Kimball walked toward the head table, he saw us. After greeting Sister Nelson and me, he put his arms around my mother and gave her a big kiss. He said, “Thank you for being the mother of the surgeon who saved my life.” Then

u JD 12:103

v Job 27:3–5

w Job 31:6

x *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), lines 211–15

y 1 Kings 9:4

z Proverbs 20:7

he embraced my father and gave him a kiss. President Kimball said, "Thank you for teaching your son to be a man of integrity."

48 The Prophet Joseph Smith appreciated the integrity of his faithful brother Hyrum. So did the Lord, who said: "Blessed is my servant Hyrum Smith; for I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me".^{aa} The Prophet Joseph then added:

Blessed of the Lord is my brother Hyrum for the integrity of his heart; he shall be girt about with strength, truth and faithfulness shall be the strength of his loins. From generation to generation he shall be a shaft in the hand of his God.^{ab}

49 That prophecy has been fulfilled. Direct descendants of Hyrum Smith stand as strong leaders of the Church today. Likewise, integrity you develop now will be a model for your own children. Generations yet unborn will be influenced by your integrity of heart.

50 The board of trustees of BYU subsidizes this school with sacred tithing funds of the Church. So each of us must be concerned with institutional integrity—our commitment to academic and spiritual excellence. That integrity can only be safeguarded as

each teacher and each student remains individually strong. The integrity of this institution can never be stronger than that of its representatives.

51 Dear brothers and sisters, if I could have the fondest wish of my heart granted, it would be that you could know who you really are—that you were from premortal realms,

also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God.

Even before [you] were born, [you], with many others, received [your] first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.^{ac}

52 Your precious identity deserves your precious integrity! Guard it as the priceless prize that it is. To you I would give such counsel as the Prophet Joseph Smith gave his friends:

Seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields. Follow the directions of the Book of Mormon, and pray over, and for your families, . . . and all things that you possess; ask the blessing of God upon all your labors, and everything that you engage in. Be virtuous and pure; be men [and women] of integrity and truth; keep the commandments of God;

aa D&C 124:15
ab Teachings, p. 40
ac D&C 138:55–56; Abraham 3:22

of my message pertains to that protocol.

Types of Organizations

5 Differences exist in practice and organization between the Lord’s Church and man-made institutions. Men and women may form associations for and among themselves and be governed by stipulations that are mutually acceptable.

6 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, however, is neither a democracy nor a republic. His is a kingdom—the kingdom of God on earth. His is a hierarchical church, with ultimate authority at the top. The Lord directs His anointed servants. They testify to all the world that God has again spoken. The heavens have been opened. A living linkage has been formed between heaven and earth in our day.

7 That supreme authority is supported by a firm foundation following an organizational pattern established anciently. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, with Apostles and prophets and all the gifts, powers, and blessings that characterized the Church in earlier days.^f

Leaders and Titles

8 Secular and spiritual institutions have differing patterns of leadership. Man-made organizations are governed by officers

with titles that designate rank or accomplishment. A military officer, judge, senator, doctor, or professor is properly addressed by title. We appropriately honor individuals who have attained such positions.

9 In contrast, the kingdom of God is governed by the authority of the priesthood. It is not conferred for honor, but for a ministry of service. Priesthood titles are not created by man; neither are they for adornment, nor do they express mastership. They denote appointment to service in the work of the Lord. We are called, sustained, and ordained—not by ourselves, but “by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.”^g

10 Titles pertaining to the holy priesthood deserve our utmost care and respect. Each member of the First Presidency is addressed and spoken of as “President.”^h The title “President” is also used when referring to the presidency of a stake or mission, and in reference to a quorum or branch president. The title “Apostle” is sacred. It has been given of God and belongs only to those who have been called and ordained as “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world.”ⁱ An Apostle speaks in the name of Him whose special

f 1 Cor. 12:28
g A of F 1:5; see also Heb. 5:4
h D&C 107:22, 24, 29
i D&C 107:23

witness he is. This hallowed title is not used in ordinary forms of address. The preferred title for one of the Twelve is "Elder" or "Brother."

11 The title "Bishop" is also expressive of presidency; the Bishop is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood in his ward and the presiding high priest of the ward organization. Reverently we refer to him as "the bishop."

12 "Elder" is a sacred title shared by all who bear the Melchizedek Priesthood.

General Counsel

13 May I offer counsel of a general nature, first with comments about General Authorities. We recognize them as instruments in the hand of the Lord, yet realize that they are ordinary human beings. They require haircuts, laundry services, and occasional reminders just like anyone else. President Benson once shared with us a story to illustrate. He said:

14 "Orson F. Whitney ... was a great man to concentrate. One day when he was traveling by train, he was so preoccupied that he did not notice the train pass the station where he was to get off. So he had to [be driven] back to where he should have been. Meanwhile the stake president waited and waited. ... Finally when he decided that something had more than likely happened

to Brother Whitney and he was not going to make it, they commenced the meeting. As Elder Whitney approached, he was greeted by the opening hymn, which was 'Ye Simple Souls Who Stray.'"^j

15 We honor such a man because of his extraordinary calling. His official acts are valid on earth and in heaven. Well do I remember the first time I met one of the General Authorities. It was a feeling beyond description. Though I was but a boy, immediately—almost instinctively—I rose to my feet. Even now I feel that same way when one of the Brethren enters the room. A General Authority is an oracle of God.

16 Often we speak of *keys* of priesthood authority. Fifteen living men—the First Presidency and the Twelve—have been ordained as Apostles and have had *all* keys of priesthood authority conferred upon them. President Gordon B. Hinckley recently explained that "only the President of the Church has the right to exercise [those keys] in their fulness. He may delegate the exercise of various of them to one or more of his Brethren. ...

17 "Such agency has been given by President Benson to his Counselors and to the Twelve according to various responsibilities delegated to them."^k

j "The Unique Commission of a General Authority," General Authority Training Meeting, 2 Oct. 1985, p. 1

k Ensign, Nov. 1992, p. 54

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18 Under assignment from the First Presidency and the Twelve, General Authorities confer the appropriate keys upon presidents of stakes and of missions, who in turn confer the needed keys upon bishops and upon quorum and branch presidents.

19 Assigned to each one who bears the priesthood is a loving leader, because “mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.”^l

20 That order also defines bounds of revelation. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “it is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instruction for those in authority, higher than themselves.”^m That same principle precludes receiving revelation for anyone outside one’s defined circle of responsibility.

21 Honoring the priesthood also means to honor your personal call to serve. A few do’s and don’ts may be helpful:

- Do learn to take counsel. Seek direction from file leaders and receive it willingly.
- Don’t speak ill of Church leaders.
- Don’t covet a calling or position.
- Don’t second-guess who should or should not have been called.

- Don’t refuse an opportunity to serve.
- Don’t resign from a call. Do inform leaders of changing circumstances in your life, knowing that leaders will weigh all factors when prayerfully considering the proper timing of your release.

22 The one who extends *and* the one who receives a call are both under obligation of accountability. I quote from Elder James E. Talmage:

23 “Those through whom the call came to him ... are as surely held answerable for their acts as is he for his; and of every one shall be demanded a strict and personal accounting for his stewardship, a report in full of service or of neglect, of use or abuse in the administration of the trust to him committed.”ⁿ

24 Some aspects of the priesthood are *not* related to position or title. Authority to administer a priesthood blessing, for example, is dependent only upon ordination and worthiness. The Lord would not withhold blessings from any of His children for want of one with a particular calling. Every elder in the Church holds the same priesthood as the President of the Church.

25 Brethren, please remember: The highest degree of glory is available to you only through

l D&C 132:8
m Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 21
n Messages of the First Presidency, 4:306

31 “The members of the stake did not necessarily want to go overtime. ... They were upset, however, because the local membership, who would have other opportunity to hear from their local leaders, would never again, and in fact never did again, have an opportunity to hear from this venerable apostle. In short, the speakers did not respect the presiding officer.”^q

32 When a presiding General Authority has spoken, no one speaks following him. After the meeting has concluded, presidents and bishops, remain at the side of your file leader until excused. He may be impressed to give additional teaching or direction. And you may also prevent problems. For example, if a member asks a question of your leader that should not be directed to him, you are there to respond.

33 Now for comments about the **stake high council**. It has no president. It has no autonomy and meets, even when divided into committees, only upon call from the stake presidency. Although high councilors may be seated in the order of their call to the council, no one member has seniority over another.

34 In contrast, **seniority** is honored among ordained Apostles—even when entering or leaving a room. President Benson related to us this account:

35 “Some [years] ago Elder Haight extended a special courtesy to President Romney while they were in the upper room in the temple. President Romney was lingering behind for some reason, and [Elder Haight] did not want to precede him out the door. When President Romney signaled [for him] to go first, Elder Haight replied, ‘No, President, you go first.’

36 “President Romney replied with his humor, ‘What’s the matter, David? Are you afraid I’m going to steal something?’”^r

37 Such deference from a junior to a senior Apostle is recorded in the New Testament. When Simon Peter and John the Beloved ran to investigate the report that the body of their crucified Lord had been taken from the sepulchre, John, being younger and swifter, arrived first, yet he did not enter. He deferred to the senior Apostle, who entered the sepulchre first.^s Seniority in the apostleship has long been a means by which the Lord selects His presiding High Priest.

Rebuke and Repentance

38 Brethren, these matters are important. More than a century and a half ago, the Lord issued a sharp rebuke to His people. These are His words:

39 “Verily, condemnation resteth upon you, who are appoint-

q James E. Faust, “A Seventy Is a General Authority,” Special Training Session for the Seventy, 29 Sept. 1987, p. 4

r “The Unique Commission of a General Authority,” p. 9

s John 20:2–6

The inscriptions on the plates were written in a Semitic language, using a modified Egyptian type of script. Some critics have scoffed at such a linguistic mix. May I tell you of Doctor Moses Maimonides, one of the greatest rabbis and Jewish philosophers of the Middle Ages. He died in A.D. 1204. He served as a court physician in Cairo and is one of the most famous figures in the early history of medicine. Hospitals are named after him today. In Cairo he read and pondered the words of earlier Muslim thinkers and wrote his philosophical books in Arabic using the Hebrew alphabet. This is but one of many instances from ancient and medieval periods in which the script of one language has been used to write in another language.^f Indeed, history confirms that such a linguistic mix was not unusual at all.

4 I am intrigued that Joseph Smith—an unschooled young man in rural America—could have translated this Semitic language mix into the English language. That unlikely scenario relates to Isaiah’s remarkable prophecy:

“I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder.”^g

5 The Hebrew text of the Old Testament from which that phrase was translated uses the

word *pele*, meaning “miracle.” Thus one could also accurately interpret “a marvellous work and a wonder” as a “miraculous miracle.”

6 Truly, this latter-day work is precisely that. Think of the short time Joseph took to translate the Book of Mormon. Working from April to June of 1828, Joseph translated the 116 pages that Martin Harris later lost. Joseph began translating again on Tuesday, April 7, 1829, with Oliver Cowdery as scribe. The manuscript was completed eighty-five days later, on June 30 of that year. Of course, not all of that time was spent working on the translation. The Prophet and his scribes also took time to eat, to sleep, to seek employment, to receive the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods, to make at least one (and possibly two) trips to Colesville thirty miles away, to receive and record thirteen revelations that are now sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, to move from Harmony to Fayette, to acquire the Book of Mormon copyright, and to begin making arrangements for the publication of the Book of Mormon. Conservatively estimated, this left sixty-five or fewer working days on which the prophet and his scribes translated this book, which contains 531 pages in its current edition.^h That calculates to an average of eight pages per day. Consider this when

f Daniel C. Peterson, *Abraham Divided; An LDS Perspective on the Middle East*, Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1992, p. 205

g Isa. 29:14

h John W. Welch, *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, pp. 46–47

you translate a book, or as you schedule your own reading of the Book of Mormon.

7 As Oliver Cowdery testified a few years later: “These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated ... the history or record called ‘The Book of Mormon.’”ⁱ

8 The details of this miraculous method of translation are still not fully known. Yet we do have a few precious insights. David Whitmer wrote:

“Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear.

Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.”^j

9 Emma Smith, who acted as an earlier scribe for Joseph, gave this account in 1856:

“When my husband was translating the Book of Mormon, I wrote a part of it, as he dictated each sentence, word for word, and when he came to proper names he could not pronounce, or long words, he spelled them out, and while I was writing them, if I made any mistake in spelling, he would stop me and correct my spelling although it was impossible for him to see how I was writing them down at the time. Even the word Sarah he could not pronounce at first, but had to spell it, and I would pronounce it for him.

“When he stopped for any purpose at any time he would, when he commenced again, begin where he left off without any hesitation, and one time while he was translating he stopped suddenly, pale as a sheet, and said, ‘Emma, did Jerusalem have walls around it?’ When I answered, ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘Oh! [I didn’t know.] I was afraid I had been deceived.’ He had such a limited knowledge of history at that time that he did not even know that Jerusalem was surrounded by walls.”^k

i JS—H 1:71n

j David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Richmond, Mo.: n.p., 1887, p. 12

k Edmund C. Briggs, “A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856,” *Journal of History*, Jan. 1916, p. 454

10 On another occasion, Emma Smith recorded:

“The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen tablecloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book.”¹

11 Although the Prophet would polish his skills over the years, Emma acknowledged that Joseph possessed only rudimentary literacy at the time he translated the gold plates:

“Joseph Smith ... could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, it is marvelous to me, ‘a marvel and a wonder,’ as much so as to any one else.”^m

12 Because the Book of Mormon is a translation of a modified Hebrew language, it contains many Hebraisms. We might list a few examples because they are so unlike the language that would have been familiar to a young man in rural New York at that time:

- Nouns followed by descriptive phrases—such as “altar of stones,” “plates of brass,” “mist of darkness.”
- Prepositional phrases used instead of adverbs—such as “with harshness,” “with joy,” “with gladness,” “in diligence.”
- Cognate accusative constructions—“dreamed a dream,” “cursed with sore cursing,” “work all manner of fine work.”
- Hebrew words with double meaning—such as *Nahum*, meaning “mourning,” and *Jershon*, meaning “inheritance.” Events involving those specific actions took place at locations bearing those meaningful names.

Chiasms

13 This term is derived from the Greek letter *Chi* (or the English x), which describes text written in an inverted parallel structure. As a young LDS missionary, John Welch discovered that many chiasms exist in the Book of Mormon as well as in the Bible. I am told that emphasis in these ancient languages was not provided by punctuation. Therefore, other devices, such as chiasm, were used occasionally to stress important thoughts.

14 Sister Nelson and I have a close friend and former neighbor, Sami Hanna, who was born in Egypt. He is a scholar with special expertise in Semitic languages. As a linguistic exercise, he translated the Book of Mor-

¹ “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald*, 1 Oct. 1879, p. 290; spelling modernized

^m *Ibid*

mon from English into Arabic. The exercise converted him to the divinity of the Book of Mormon. Among the many linguistic features that convinced him of the book's divinity was this unusual sentence in Helaman, chapter 3, verse 14.ⁿ This would hardly be an expression of a 24-year-old man from the New York frontier:

15 "But behold, a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, yea, the account of the Lamanites and of the Nephites, and their wars, and contentions, and dissensions, and their preaching, and their prophecies, and their shipping and their building of ships, and their building of temples, and of synagogues and their sanctuaries, and their righteousness, and their wickedness, and their murders, and their robbings, and their plundering, and all manner of abominations and whoredoms, cannot be contained in this work."

16 That single sentence has eighteen *ands*. Now, if you were a teacher of English you might tend to downgrade the composition of that sentence. Yet my scholarly Egyptian friend said that every one of those *ands* was an important element in the construction of that sentence, allowing his translation to flow smoothly back to a Semitic language.

17 Of course the great worth of the Book of Mormon lies not in its miraculous translation, won-

drous as it was, nor in its stories that we read to our children. The great worth of the Book of Mormon is that it is another testament of Jesus Christ. All four of its major authors—Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and Moroni—were eyewitnesses of the Lord, as was His inspired translator of that book. The Book of Mormon is the great clarifier of doctrine. It refutes many myths, and at the same time affirms truths previously obscured. And it reveals many glorious doctrines lost or previously unknown.

18 First let us examine a few myths the book refutes or denies. The Book of Mormon refutes the doctrine of predestination. It refutes the *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing") idea of creation. It refutes the false but pervasive notion of original sin. It refutes the fable of faith without works. It refutes the adequacy of goodness alone without exalting ordinances. It refutes the practice of infant baptism. It refutes methods of baptism other than that of immersion by one bearing proper authority. It refutes the arbitrary restriction that revelation from God ended with the Bible.

19 There are some things that the Book of Mormon is not. It is not a text of history, although some history is found within its pages. It is not a definitive work on ancient American agriculture or politics. It is not a record of *all* former inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere, but only of particular groups of people.

n Hel. 3:14

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20 Resoundingly, the Book of Mormon affirms, among many eternal truths, the existence of a living and loving Father in Heaven. It affirms the nature of our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation, happiness, and mercy. It declares, as another testament, the generation and divinity of Jesus the Christ. It teaches of His ministry, and of His atonement. While doubts about Jesus exist among today's ministers and scholars, the Book of Mormon stands as an international beacon of divine truth. The Lord said:

21 "The testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another. ... And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also."^o

22 The Book of Mormon affirms the sublime status of man's moral agency and sets forth stern standards of accountability and responsibility for our choices. It affirms the reality and inevitability of our impending judgment, which will be done with a perfect blending of the justice and mercy of God.^p It deepens our understanding of the Master's statement once made near Galilee's shore:

23 "Be ye therefore perfect, even

as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."^q

24 To the Nephites Jesus reaffirmed that commandment, but then as the resurrected Lord, He listed Himself as having recently achieved that state of perfection.^r

25 The Book of Mormon affirms that the people in the Western Hemisphere were among the "other sheep" to whom Jesus had earlier referred.^s And it affirms the existence of another society to whom Jesus would minister—those we know as the lost tribes of Israel.

26 It affirms the reality of pre-mortal life.

27 It reaffirms the sanctity of and the necessity for the sacrament, as taught in the Bible.

28 In addition to the refutation of myths and the clarification of concepts previously unclear, the Book of Mormon reveals glorious truths heretofore lost or unknown to the mind of man:

29 It reveals the state of the soul between death and resurrection.

30 It reveals the endless nature of the priesthood of God and the foreordination of choice spirits called and prepared from the foundation of the world for lead-

o 2 Ne. 29:8
 p Alma 12:15
 q Matt. 5:48
 r 3 Ne. 12:48
 s John 10:16; 3 Ne. 15:17, 21.

36 The Book of Mormon reveals that the keeper of the gate at Judgment will be Jesus, the holy one of Israel. There each one of us will stand before Him to be judged.

37 The Book of Mormon contains many insightful and stunning gems. The late Elder Robert E. Sackley of the Seventy attributed his conversion to this brilliant passage of scripture, which he memorized while hospitalized as a young military commander—even prior to his baptism:

“The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.”^z

38 Elder Sackley’s life was never to be the same after his decision to live in accord with that remarkable single sentence of scripture.

39 To me, the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon is most evident in the mighty change that comes into the lives of those who read it “with a sincere heart, with real

intent, having faith in Christ.”^{aa} Many of them forsake much that they held dear to be true to their new commitment to abide by the precepts of that book.

40 The Book of Mormon truly is a treasured testament. There is no other book quite like it. Can you find any other book delivered by an angel? Can you think of any other book prepared for people to read centuries later? Its writers did not write it for readers of their day. No royalties accrued to its authors from sales to contemporary consumers. In fact, its authors paid dearly for their privilege of authorship, as did its translator.

41 It is a book that the Lord Jesus Christ has personally testified to be true. In the form of an oath, the Lord said—referring to the Prophet Joseph Smith’s work:

“He has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him, and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true.”^{ab}

42 You know well this promise that the Lord offers to readers of the Book of Mormon:

“If you do these last commandments of mine, which I have given you, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; for my grace is sufficient for you, and you shall be lifted up at the last day.”^{ac}

z Mosiah 3:19

aa Moro. 10:4

ab D&C 17:6

ac D&C 17:8

43 The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and his successor, President Ezra Taft Benson, has reaffirmed—that the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. It is a treasured testament of truth. It is the prophesied sign that “the Lord has commenced to gather Israel and fulfill his covenants.”^a

44 Solemnly, I add my witness to that of my Brethren. It is true! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 16

Constancy Amid Change - Delivered October 1993 in the Saturday Afternoon session of General Conference.

I echo President Monson’s compliments to Brother Peterson, Brother Komatsu, and Brother de Jager. They have earned our greatest commendation. And I, too, join with others who feel a debt of gratitude to this wonderful chorus of youth from Brigham Young University. They’re wonderful.

2 Our youth are wonderful and especially able to ask thoughtful questions. Recently I had a conversation with “Ruth” and “John.” Ruth opened the discussion. With a sigh, she lamented, “Our world is constantly changing, isn’t it?”

3 “Yes,” I replied, “ever since its

creation—geologically and geographically. And its populations are changing—politically and spiritually. You might ask your grandparents about life when they were your age and discover their thoughts.”

4 “Oh, I already have,” Ruth continued. “My grandpa summarized his opinion with a clever quip: ‘Give me the good old days—plus penicillin.’”

5 Then John expressed deep concern. “Continually changing conditions make the future shaky for us,” he said. “It’s kind of scary. We seem to be standing on shifting sand.”

6 Together they asked, “What can we trust? Is anything constant that will not change as we grow older?”

7 To that question I responded with an emphatic, “Yes! Many things!” Because Ruth and John are typical of many today who seek for unchanging constants in a changing world, I would like to address that subject, titling my remarks “Constancy amid Change.” Through the years, prophets and Apostles have spoken of many unchanging constants.^b To facilitate this discussion, I will group some of these constants into three categories: heavenly personages, plans, and principles.

a 3 Ne. 29, chapter heading

b For example, see Albert E. Bowen, *Constancy Amid Change* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1944); N. Eldon Tanner, *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, pp. 80–82.

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I. Personages

8 Our Heavenly Father has a glorified body of flesh and bone, inseparably connected with His spirit.^c Scriptures state that He is “infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God”.^d

9 His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior and the chief cornerstone of our religion.^e “He is the life and the light of the world”.^f “There shall be no other name ... nor any other way ... whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent”.^g

10 Another personage is the Holy Ghost, whose enduring influence transcends time. Scripture assures that “the Holy Ghost shall be thy *constant* companion, and thy scepter an *unchanging* scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an *everlasting* dominion, and without compulsory means it

shall flow unto thee *forever* and ever”.^h

11 Brothers and sisters, these Heavenly Beings love you. Their love is as constant as is the greatest love of earthly parents.

12 But there is another personage about whom you should be reminded. Satan also exists and seeks “that all men might be miserable like unto himself”.ⁱ

II. Plans

13 I speak now of category two—unchanging plans. A great council in heaven was once convened, in which it seems that all of us participated.^j There our Heavenly Father announced His plan. Scriptures refer to this plan of God^k by many names. Perhaps out of deference to the sacred name of Deity, or to depict its broad scope, it is also called the plan of happiness,^l the plan of salvation,^m the plan of redemption,ⁿ the plan of restoration,^o the plan of mercy,^p the plan of

c D&C 93:33; D&C 130:22

d D&C 20:17; Ps. 100:5; Morm. 9:19; Moro. 8:18; D&C 84:102

e Eph. 2:20

f Alma 38:9; Mosiah 16:9; 3 Ne. 9:18; 3 Ne. 11:11; Ether 4:12; D&C 10:70; D&C 11:28; D&C 12:9; D&C 34:2; D&C 39:2; D&C 45:7

g Mosiah 3:17; Acts 4:12; 2 Ne. 25:20; Mosiah 5:8; Alma 38:9; Hel. 5:9; D&C 18:23

h D&C 121:46; emphasis added

i 2 Ne. 2:27; 2 Ne. 2:18; Alma 41:4

j Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 348–49, 365

k 2 Ne. 9:13; Alma 34:9

l Alma 42:8, 16

m Jarom 1:2; Alma 24:14; Alma 42:5; Moses 6:62

n Jacob 6:8; Alma 12:25–33; Alma 17:16; Alma 18:39; Alma 22:13; Alma 29:2; Alma 34:16, 31; Alma 39:18; Alma 42:11–13

o Alma 41:2

p Alma 42:15, 31; 2 Ne. 9:6

eat from “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”,^{aa} their bodies would change; mortality and eventual death would come upon them.^{ab} But partaking of that fruit was prerequisite to their parenthood.^{ac}

19 While I do not fully understand all the biochemistry involved, I do know that their physical bodies did change; blood began to circulate in their bodies. Adam and Eve thereby became mortal. Happily for us, they could also beget children and fulfill the purposes for which the world was created. Happily for them, “the Lord said unto Adam [and Eve^{ad}]: Behold I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden”.^{ae} We and all mankind are forever blessed because of Eve’s great courage and wisdom. By partaking of the fruit first, she did what needed to be done. Adam was wise enough to do likewise. Accordingly, we could speak of the fall of Adam in terms of a *mortal* creation, because “Adam fell that men might be”.^{af}

20 Other blessings came to us through the Fall. It activated two closely coupled additional gifts from God, nearly as precious as life itself—agency and

accountability. We became “free to choose liberty and eternal life ... or to choose captivity and death”.^{ag} Freedom of choice cannot be exercised without accountability for choices made.^{ah}

The Atonement

21 Now we come to the third pillar of God’s plan—the Atonement. Just as Adam and Eve were not to live forever in the Garden of Eden, so our final destination was not to be planet earth. We were to return to our heavenly home.

22 Given that reality, still another change was necessary. An infinite atonement was required to redeem Adam, Eve, and all of their posterity. That atonement must enable our physical bodies to be resurrected and changed^{ai} to a bloodless form, no longer liable to disease, deterioration, or death.

23 According to eternal law, that atonement required a personal sacrifice by an immortal being not subject to death. Yet He must die and take up His own body again. The Savior was the only one who could accomplish this. From His mother He inherited power to die. From His Father He obtained power over death.

aa Gen. 2:17

ab Moses 3:17; Abr. 5:13

ac Moses 5:11

ad The Lord “called *their* name Adam” (Gen. 5:2; Moses 6:9; emphasis added)

ae Moses 6:53

af 2 Ne. 2:25; Moses 6:48

ag 2 Ne. 2:27

ah D&C 101:78; D&C 134:1

ai 1 Cor. 15:51–53; 3 Ne. 28:8

The Redeemer so explained:

24 "I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

25 "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again".^{aj}

26 The Lord declared that "this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man".^{ak} He who had created the earth came into mortality to fulfill the will of His Father^{al} and all prophecies of His atonement.^{am} And His atonement redeems every soul from penalties of personal transgression, on the condition of repentance.^{an}

27 Thus, we might speak of the Atonement in terms of the *immortal* creation. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive".^{ao}

28 I have recounted the importance of the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement, knowing that parents are accountable to teach these precepts of God's plan to their children.^{ap}

29 Before leaving our discussion

of unchanging plans, however, we need to remember that the adversary sponsors a cunning plan of his own.^{aq} It invariably attacks God's first commandment for husband and wife to beget children. It tempts with tactics that include infidelity, unchastity, and other abuses of procreative power. Satan's band would trumpet choice, but mute accountability. Nevertheless, his capacity has long been limited, "for he knew not the mind of God".^{ar}

30 I speak now of category three—unchanging principles.

III. Principles

31 Unchanging principles are so because they come from our unchanging Heavenly Father. Try as they might, no parliament or congress could ever repeal the law of earth's gravity or amend the Ten Commandments. Those laws are constant. All laws of nature and of God are part of the everlasting gospel. Thus, there are many unchanging principles. Time will permit consideration of only a few.

Priesthood

32 One of them is that of the priesthood. The Prophet Joseph

aj John 10:17-18
ak Moses 1:39
al 3 Ne. 27:13
am Rom. 5:11; 2 Ne. 25:16; Jacob 4:11, 12; Mosiah 3:5-11, 16, 18-19; Mosiah 4:2; Alma 21:9; Alma 22:14; Alma 34:8; Alma 36:17; Hel. 5:9; Moro. 7:41; Moses 7:45
an D&C 138:19
ao 1 Cor. 15:22
ap Moses 6:57-62
aq 2 Ne. 9:28
ar Moses 4:6

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Smith taught that “the Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years”.^{as}

33 We know that “the Priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed”.^{at}

34 Scriptures certify that the priesthood has continued and will continue “through the lineage of [the] fathers”.^{au} Ordination to its offices has timeless implication as well. Tenure in priesthood office may extend into postmortal realms. For example, scriptures declare that one ordained as a high priest may be a high priest forever.^{av} Promised *blessings* of the priesthood extend to men, women, and children throughout the world and may endure forever.^{aw}

35 The use of the priesthood is carefully controlled according to conditions established by the Lord, who said:

36 “No power or influence can

or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned”.^{ax}

37 “That [the rights of the priesthood] may be conferred upon [men], it is true; but when [they] undertake to cover [their] sins, or to gratify [their] pride, [their] vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, ... the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man”.^{ay}

38 While the priesthood is an everlasting principle, those privileged to exercise its authority must maintain themselves daily as worthy vessels.

Moral Law

39 Another unchanging principle is that of divine or moral law. Transgression of moral law brings retribution; obedience to it brings blessings “immutable and unchangeable”.^{az} Blessings are always predicated upon obedience to law.^{ba} So the Church teaches us to embrace the right

as Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157; Ex. 40:15; Num. 25:13; Alma 13:7

at Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157

au D&C 86:8; D&C 84:6–17; D&C 107:40; Abr. 1:2–4

av Alma 13:9, 14

aw Gen. 17:1–7; Gen. 22:16–18; Gen. 26:3–4; Gen. 28:13–14; Isa. 2:2–3; 1 Ne. 15:18; Alma 29:8; D&C 124:58; D&C 132:47; Abr. 2:11

ax D&C 121:41

ay D&C 121:37

az D&C 104:2

ba D&C 130:20–21

and to renounce the wrong—that we might have joy.^{bb}

40 The Savior and His servants^{bc} do not speak words of complacency but teach what people need to know. Through the ages, history attests that contemporary critics have pressed Church leaders to modify a decree of the Lord.^{bd} But such is eternal law, and it cannot be altered. Not even for His Beloved Son could God change the law that required the Atonement. Divine doctrines cannot be squeezed into compact molds to make them fit fashionable patterns of the day. Nor can they be fully expressed on a bumper sticker.

Judgment

41 Another unchanging principle, brothers and sisters, is that of your eventual judgment. Each of you will be judged according to your individual works and the desires of your hearts.^{be} You will not be required to pay the debt of any other. Your eventual placement in the celestial, terrestrial, or telestial kingdom will not be determined by chance. The Lord has prescribed unchanging requirements for each. You can know what the scriptures teach, and pattern your lives accordingly.^{bf}

Divine Commandments

42 Other unchanging principles include divine commandments—even those that seem to be temporal. Tithing, for example, is not temporal (or temporary); it is an everlasting principle. The Lord said:

43 “Those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them *forever*”.^{bg}

44 We know that tithing payers shall not be burned at the Second Coming.^{bh}

Truth

45 Another unchanging principle is that of truth. Scripture reminds us that “the truth abideth forever and ever”.^{bi} Even though one’s understanding of the truth may be fragmentary, truth itself does not change. Everlasting truth and wisdom come from the Lord. The first truth ever taught to man came directly from Deity. From generation to generation, God has given additional light. Whether truth comes from a laboratory of science or directly by revelation, truth is embraced by the gospel.

Family

46 May I mention one more ev-

bb 2 Ne. 2:25
 bc D&C 1:38
 bd For examples, see 1 Sam. 8:4–7; Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46; 3 Ne. 14:21
 be D&C 137:9
 bf John 14:2; 1 Cor. 15:40–41; D&C 76:50–119; D&C 98:18
 bg D&C 119:4; emphasis added
 bh D&C 64:23; D&C 85:3
 bi D&C 1:39; Ps. 100:5; Ps. 117:2

erlasting principle—the family. A family can be together forever. Though each of us will pass through the doors of death, the timing of that departure is less important than is the preparation for eternal life. Part of that preparation includes service in the Church. It is not to be a burden but a blessing to a family. The Lord said, “Thy duty is unto the church forever, and this because of thy family”.^a

47 Ruth, John, and each of you will more fully understand that concept in light of this scriptural promise:

48 “If a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them ... [they] shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, ... exaltation and glory in all things, ... which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever”.^b

49 A promise like that is worth your personal effort and endurance.

50 Constancy amid change is assured by heavenly personages, plans, and principles. Our trust can be safely anchored to them. They provide peace, eternal progression, hope, freedom, love, and joy to all who will be guided by them. They are true—now and forever—I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 17

Combatting Spiritual Drift -- Our Global Pandemic -This address was given at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, Chicago, Illinois, 2 September 1993.

DEAR colleagues and friends, it is a privilege for me to represent The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at this historic parliament. I pay tribute to those who have organized it and to all who have participated.

2 Prior to my call to full-time service as a Church leader, I worked as a medical doctor specializing in the teaching, research, and practice of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery. I performed about seven thousand operations. During nearly four decades as a student of medical sciences, I learned to distinguish between the physical and spiritual components of the human soul. A patient could be physically weak but spiritually strong, and vice versa. For example, on many occasions I watched the critically ill mobilize great spiritual strength in order to undergo a high-risk operation to correct a physical problem within the heart. In contrast, I saw individuals without physical abnormality who were seriously ill because of spiritual loss of heart.

3 Duties have taken me to approximately one hundred nations of the earth, where I have observed the physical and spiritual dualism of life on a broader

a D&C 23:3; D&C 126:3

b D&C 132:19

behavior of the majority of our religious leaders and members, inappropriate conduct by any individual identified with a specific religious movement tends to tarnish the image of all. Sadly, we have also witnessed instances of interfaith contention, maligning, and intolerance.

9 Moreover, honest people searching for answers to life's greatest questions may have turned to religion, asking, "Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?" Some may have come away unsatisfied.

10 Given these realities, religion must shoulder greater responsibility in healing the spiritual sickness that engulfs our globe.

*The Role of Religion
in the Future*

11 The dismal dusk of today's spiritual drift provides a rare opportunity for the radiance of religion to light the way to a new tomorrow. This can happen only as we proclaim eternal truths that have the power to engender spiritual strength. Human nature cannot be changed by reforming public policy; that kind of change comes by exposing the human mind and heart to the transforming teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have learned that when we teach His correct principles, people govern themselves appropriately.

12 We at this world parliament represent many religious persuasions. Because there is much that is praiseworthy in each of

our faiths, it is important for us to maintain the integrity of our religious institutions and to preserve tolerance of each other's sacred beliefs. These factors are essential to the strength of a pluralistic society. Tolerance and understanding are enhanced as we teach clearly and courteously the tenets of our religions.

13 In that spirit, and as done so well by previous speakers, I would like to speak of the organization I represent. I would like to speak of the institution and of the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sometimes known as the "Mormon" church. That is not its correct name, as many of you may know; it is only a nickname—derived from our belief in the Book of Mormon, to which I will refer later.

*The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints*

Institutional Background

14 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has endured much persecution, oppression, and hardship. From these experiences has come our genuine passion for tolerance and a sincere appreciation for feelings held sacred by others. Early members of this church were some of the great pioneers in the development of the United States of America. All eight of my great-grandparents, for example, were early converts to this church from populous nations of Europe. All eight of them immigrated to the U.S.A. and became part of the nineteenth century's

historic trailblazing trek westward.

15 Now the Church has a worldwide membership in excess of eight million people. Although its world headquarters are located in Salt Lake City, Utah, its congregations flourish throughout the world in approximately one hundred fifty nations on six continents and upon many islands of the sea.

16 Ours is a lay ministry. For example, I previously served as general president of the Sunday School of the Church for eight years, while continuing my professional work as a cardiovascular surgeon. Our religious activities throughout the world are led by male and female volunteers. We believe that everyone can be happy because everyone can serve. Congregations in Germany are led by Germans, in Peru by Peruvians, in Japan by Japanese, and so on. Government by consent of the governed is a rule of the Church.

Saints

17 Members of the Church in biblical times were addressed as saints. Likewise, members of the Church today are known as Latter-day Saints, often abbreviated as "LDS." We regard a saint as a believer in Christ, one who knows of His perfect love and

who strives to live in accord with His commandments. The term connotes a high level of commitment to following the Savior.

Articles of Faith

18 A summary of the tenets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has long been known as the Articles of Faith.^c Copies are available for any who are interested. I will quote liberally from this statement in discussing the doctrines of our church.

Godhead

19 First, "we believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost".^d We worship our Heavenly Father and pray to Him in the name of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost. We revere the Son of God as our Savior, our Redeemer, and our Master. He came into the world to do the will of His Father.^e He died for us and was resurrected from the tomb. His triumph over death brings the blessings of resurrection and immortality to all mankind.^f Our adoration for Him is typified in this passage from the Book of Mormon:

20 "We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, ... that our children may know to what

c The Articles of Faith were here printed in their entirety in Elder Nelson's manuscript, which was available to those attending the Parliament of the World's Religions.

d A of F 1:1

e 3 Ne. 27:13

f 1 Cor. 15:20-22

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source they may look for a remission of their sins".^g

21 Nothing in human history equals the wonder, the magnitude, or the fruits of the matchless life of the Son of God. He is our exemplar and the author of our faith. And one day He will again come to the earth to begin His promised millennial reign.

Prophets

22 We also believe in prophets. God has always taught His children upon the earth through prophets. In ancient times, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and many others were among those chosen by God as His prophets. Likewise, we believe that Joseph Smith was called by God as the prophet to inaugurate this present era, known as "the dispensation of the fulness of times".^h He was called and chosen to bring together all former "dispensations, and keys, and powers ... from the days of Adam even to the present time".ⁱ Previous dispensations include those identified with Adam, with Noah, with Moses, and with Jesus and His Apostles in the meridian of time.

Restitution

23 This modern dispensation of which I speak fulfills the biblical

promise of a "restitution of all things".^j It also fulfills another scriptural promise that "the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word".^k We believe in the restitution of the same organization that once existed in the early Christian Church, with Apostles, prophets, and teachers.^l Our origins did not spring from protest of any kind; hence, we are not a Protestant denomination. Rather, we understand that the church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth, established, as the Apostle Paul once declared, "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone".^m

24 God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, literally appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in April 1820. While this may be relatively unknown in the annals of history, yet it constituted an epochal event in the history of humanity—a profound demonstration of the love of God for all of His children. Because this milestone is of such importance, I would like to quote excerpts from the Prophet's written account:

25 "I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in

g 2 Ne. 25:26

h Eph. 1:10; D&C 112:30; D&C 121:31; D&C 124:41; D&C 128:18, 20; D&C 138:48

i D&C 128:18

j Acts 3:21; see also Rev. 14:6, 7

k Alma 29:8

l A of F 1:6

m Eph. 2:20

teachings the Lord gave to His prophets who lived in the Old World, the Book of Mormon contains teachings the Lord gave to His prophets who lived in the American hemisphere. This record covers a period of about a thousand years, from approximately 600 B.C. to A.D. 400 (although there is reference to other migrations and peoples preceding that time). The Book of Mormon bears record of the personal ministry of Jesus Christ, as the resurrected Lord, to inhabitants of ancient America. Prophets recorded His teachings among them. Hence, the Book of Mormon is "Another Testament of Jesus Christ".^q It came in fulfillment of biblical prophecy: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established".^r It came as a heavenly gift to the entire human family. Originally inscribed on metallic plates and written in a modified Egyptian language, that record was preserved for many centuries, then made available for translation into the English language. That translation was done by the Prophet Joseph Smith through the gift and power of God. Subsequently, the book has been translated into many other languages. Since its first publication in 1830, millions of copies of the Book of Mormon have been printed. In the year 1992 alone, nearly five million copies were distributed.

32 We have observed that sincere study of the Book of Mormon

transforms the spirit and engenders a testimony of Jesus Christ that heals the spiritual hearts of men and women throughout the world. The more widely it is read and understood, the greater is its influence for good. We find that as the Book of Mormon spreads to the four corners of the globe, men and women exhibit greater devotion and become promulgators of peace within their own families and society.

33 Other divine revelations to prophets, ancient and modern, have been canonized into additional scriptures—books known as the Doctrine and Covenants and as the Pearl of Great Price. Thus, we believe the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price to be four standard works of sacred scripture.

34 These books of revelation, recorded by prophets from age to age, provide broad eternal perspective and clarify the purpose of man's existence. These scriptures teach that all of us lived as spirit children of God before we came into this life. We came to earth to obtain a body, to gain earthly experiences, and to prove our faith as we confront life's many challenges. And because there are differences in degree of obedience to God's eternal laws, there will be different gradations, or degrees of glory, in our eternal destinies. Jesus taught that "in my Father's

q Book of Mormon Title Page
 r 2 Cor. 13:1

house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you".^s

35 This plan of salvation reveals the supernal potential that each of us has as a unique son or daughter of our Heavenly Father. It is literally possible for each of us to return to His presence, to become heir to all that He has in store for the faithful. This plan informs us where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. We cherish this knowledge and are grateful for the joyful satisfaction it produces.

*Restoration of
Priesthood Authority*

36 We believe that our priesthood leaders are ordained by authority restored by heavenly messengers in these latter days and that leaders may receive direct inspiration and revelation.^t Both a lesser priesthood—such as was operative in the days of Moses—and a greater priesthood—such as was operative in the days of Jesus and the Apostles—have been restored, along with many additional specific priesthood offices and keys. During His mortal ministry, Jesus “chose twelve, whom also he named apostles”.^u That holy apostleship has been restored. Living Apostles again bear witness of the name of Christ to all the world. Restoration of all priesthood offices and keys has

been accomplished under the direction of the Lord by heavenly messengers, including John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elias, Elijah, Moroni, and others. Priesthood power extends beyond life through the veil of death into the eternities.

37 The Apostle Paul once wrote concerning the priesthood: “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron”.^v As in former days, it is again conferred by ordination, by the laying on of hands by those in authority. The influence of the priesthood is controlled according to conditions established by the Lord, who said:

38 “The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and ... the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

39 “That they may be conferred upon [men] it is true; but when [they] undertake to cover [their] sins, or to gratify [their] pride, [their] vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, ... the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man ...

s John 14:2; see also 1 Cor. 15:40–41; D&C 76:70–98; D&C 98:18
t A of F 1:5, 7, 9
u Luke 6:13
v Heb. 5:4

40 “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

41 “By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile”.^w

42 This priesthood authority has divine power to confer sacred ordinances that are binding for all eternity. To illustrate, a husband and wife may be eternally married so that even after death, they and their family can be together forever in the presence of Deity. This enabling ordinance is performed in our holy temples. Furthermore, these and other necessary ordinances of salvation, such as baptism, may be performed by living individuals as proxy for deceased family members.

43 Hence, as part of our religious responsibility, we identify our ancestors, for as the Apostle Paul said to the Hebrew Saints, “they without us should not be made perfect”.^x For this purpose, Church family history (genealogical) libraries dot the earth; they are patronized extensively and without fee, both by members of our Church and by those who may have other religious affiliation.

Welfare and Humanitarian Assistance

44 Members of this church practice principles of Christian living by assisting some of the homeless, the hungry, and the needy throughout the world. We strive to practice the admonition of James: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction”.^y

45 Once a month, if members are physically able and desirous of doing so, they voluntarily go without food for two meals and contribute, as a fast offering, the money that would have been spent. These funds are then used to assist the poor and the needy as determined by leaders of local congregations. Contributions in excess of local need are pooled and made available for aid elsewhere. In addition, our members electively donate millions of hours of compassionate service each year.

46 During 1992, for example, voluntary humanitarian donations enabled the Church to help care for the poor through more than three hundred fifty projects in Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States of America. This help was in the form of food, clothing, shelter, textbooks, medical supplies, volunteer labor, and skilled advisers. In these and other activities, the Church has participat-

w D&C 121:36–37, 41–42

x Heb. 11:40

y James 1:27

ed with more than two hundred private volunteer organizations, other churches, and community agencies such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Catholic Relief Services, Food for the Poor, and the Salvation Army, to name but a few.

47 Most recently, in response to the devastating drought in Eastern Africa, the Church provided approximately \$1 million worth of powdered milk, oil, flour, beans, and clothing to help care for expectant or nursing mothers, young children, and others. Twenty thousand pounds of medical equipment were sent to Albania, where modern medical care is urgently needed. Hundreds of hygiene kits and essential clothing were sent to Croatia to assist the suffering people in that war-torn country.

48 Each of these humanitarian endeavors is an application of the biblical command "Love thy neighbour as thyself".^z

Individual Application

49 As we repent and live in accordance with the commandments of God, the Atonement of Jesus Christ becomes a force for permanent change in our lives. We become more pure in heart and true disciples of the Master. Personal prayer, contributions of tithes and offerings, honoring

the Sabbath day, and partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are all regular practices that protect us from the bondage of sin and bring us true freedom and joy.

50 The daily practice of our faith is not confined solely to religious rites. We reach out to aid the communities in which we live. For example, parent-teacher associations, public schools, and similar worthy civic activities receive our support.

51 We value good teachers. We affirm the scriptural admonition, "Teach ye diligently ... that you may be instructed more perfectly".^{aa} We assert that "the glory of God is intelligence",^{ab} and we seek wisdom out of the best books.^{ac} We regard one's education as a religious responsibility with everlasting reward. Scriptures state that "whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come".^{ad}

52 We neither endorse games of chance nor rely on random favor. Scripture attests that predictable results come only from obedience to divine law:

z Lev. 19:18; see also Luke 10:27
aa D&C 88:78
ab D&C 93:36
ac D&C 88:118; D&C 109:7, 14
ad D&C 130:18-19

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53 “There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

54 “And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated”.^{ae}

55 As a cardiac surgeon, I can certify that this understanding helped me a great deal. In the operating room, hopes were never enough. I knew that I must remain there and perform with precision all that was required to put things into proper order. Only then could the desired blessings of healing and health be expected to follow.

Personal Refinement

56 We know that alcoholic beverages and tobacco are not good for human beings. Our understanding came by way of divine revelation recorded more than a century and a half ago in the year 1833. Moreover, we teach that stimulants and other harmful substances are contrary to the will of God for our bodies. Scientific studies document the benefits of obedience to this code of health. Research from the University of California at Los Angeles published in 1989, for example, demonstrated that the

length of life of faithful members of this church was significantly longer than the norm. Latter-day Saint men and women were reported to have lower mortality rates from cancer and heart disease when compared with control population groups.^{af}

57 Such data are of interest because we maintain, as did the Apostle Paul, that our bodies are temples for our spirits, divinely created by our loving Father in Heaven.^{ag}

58 We also believe in “being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men ... If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things”.^{ah} As a result, we cherish happy and wholesome relationships with our families and others wherever we live. We honor the family as the basis of a virtuous, moral life.

Missionary Service

59 Because these doctrines are so ennobling and fulfilling, we have a genuine desire to share the good news of the gospel with others.^{ai} We have many missionaries who serve at the call of their Church leaders. They go wherever called to live and labor among the people. Most of our missionaries are young men and

ae D&C 130:20–21

af Enstrom, J. E., “Health Practices and Cancer Mortality Among Active California Mormons,” *The Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, 81 (6 Dec. 1989): 1807–15

ag 1 Cor. 3:16–17

ah A of F 1:13

ai Prov. 25:25

4. Priesthood authority has been restored to the earth.
5. Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind may be saved. Repentance and obedience to His commandments are vital to personal progress.
6. The Savior’s command to go into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature constitutes the commission for our missionary work.
7. The greatest blessings available in this life may be obtained through ordinances performed in holy temples. Marriages solemnized by the authority therein unite couples and their children not only for this life but for all eternity as well.
8. Care of the poor and the needy and service to others are privileges and religious responsibilities.
9. Each individual existed as a premortal spirit and will live after death as a resurrected being. The possibility of eternal glory with our loved ones in the presence of Deity inspires obedience to God’s commandments.
10. The purpose of our creation is that we might have eternal joy, both as individuals and as families.

64 While implementing these and other important precepts, the Church is tolerant of all faith groups, claiming for itself no right or privilege that it would deny to others. It affirms itself to be Christ’s church of old, re-established anew. Its message to the world is one of peace and

goodwill, with a sincere invitation to come and partake of all the blessings incident to the new and everlasting covenant between God and His children.

Interfaith Cooperation

65 Moving now from the distinctive doctrines and tenets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I would like to discuss areas in which faith groups may cooperate. Members of our church often join with other like-minded citizens, regardless of religious persuasion, in support of worthy causes and humanitarian projects. This can be done without losing independent identity and strength. We are mindful of history’s lesson that attempts of interfaith groups to unify through theological blending have not always been successful. Indeed, when divine doctrines are compromised to accommodate social pressures, religious institutions become no more relevant in their mission than other agencies of good intent. At the same time, we should be models of tolerance of others whose sacred beliefs may differ from our own. We recognize that if one religion is persecuted, all are attacked.

66 We need to safeguard the proper relationships of religion to governments and to the people we serve. We are under obligation to take a strong stand on moral issues in order to preserve a wholesome and ethical environment. As religious leaders, our participation in the political process may be needed to protect precious religious liberty.

This is particularly important in countries of the earth whose citizens, until recently, have been deprived of freedom of religious expression and practice. Many of those nations are now shaping laws to allow freedoms that citizens of other countries have long enjoyed. These developing democracies deserve support.

67 Selected humanitarian projects can be pursued independently or cooperatively. We can promote education regarding moral values, the arts, service to humanity, and the value of education itself. We can give encouragement for family life, knowing that patience, righteousness, and love will be rewarded with joy.

Conclusion

68 Returning to the medical metaphor with which I began, I firmly feel that the people of this world can be healed as we do our best in combatting spiritual drift—our global pandemic. Healing requires a concurrent development of the will to live, the faith to become well, and the motivation to improve our world for future generations.

69 May I conclude on a personal note. My expressions represent more than mere belief. I know from personal experience that God can and does communicate with individuals. Through that personal revelation, one may surely know that God lives, that His Beloved Son, Jesus, is the Christ, and that the doctrines I

have discussed which are pertinent to man’s salvation and eternal progress are true. Similar strong convictions in the hearts of millions of individual members comprise the real vitality of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

70 After this exposure to the roots of our faith, you deserve to experience some of the good fruits by which you shall also know us. So I have asked several children from the Chicago area, all members of our church, to sing to you. The title of their song is “I Am a Child of God.” As they acknowledge the Fatherhood of God, they also demonstrate the brotherhood of all mankind. Their song will comprise the concluding portion of my presentation. Together we echo a statement previously published by the First Presidency of our church:

71 “Our message is one of special love and concern for the eternal welfare of all men and women, regardless of religious belief, race, or nationality, knowing that we are truly brothers and sisters because we are the sons and daughters of the same eternal Father.”^{am}

72 To each of you I express heartfelt appreciation along with sincere wishes for your success in all of your worthy endeavors. May God bless you and your loved ones and sustain our mutual quest for spiritual strength, goodwill, and peace on earth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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CHAPTER 18

“Teach Us Tolerance and Love” - Delivered April 1994 in the Sunday Morning session of General Conference.

DEAR brothers and sisters, I join my brethren in extending Easter greetings to each of you, while expressing personal gratitude for the atonement of Jesus Christ, for His example, and for His teachings that have motivated my message today.

2 I have been impressed to speak on the subject of tolerance—a virtue much needed in our turbulent world. But in discussing this topic, we must recognize at the outset that there is a difference between *tolerance* and *tolerate*. Your gracious tolerance for an individual does not grant him or her license to do wrong, nor does your tolerance obligate you to tolerate his or her misdeed. That distinction is fundamental to an understanding of this vital virtue.

3 I attended a “laboratory of tolerance” some months ago when I had the privilege of participating in the Parliament of the World’s Religions. There I conversed with good men and women representing many religious groups. Again I sensed the advantages of ethnic and cultural diversity and reflected once more on the importance of religious freedom and tolerance.

4 I marvel at the inspiration of

the Prophet Joseph Smith when he penned the eleventh article of faith: “We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.”^a

5 That noble expression of religious tolerance is particularly poignant in light of the Prophet’s personal persecution. On one occasion he wrote, “I am at this time persecuted the worst of any man on the earth, as well as this people, ... all our sacred rights are trampled under the feet of the mob.”^b

6 Joseph Smith endured incessant persecution and finally heartless martyrdom—at the hands of the intolerant. His brutal fate stands as a stark reminder that we must never be guilty of any sin sown by the seed of intolerance.

Two Great Commandments to Love

7 Revealed to that revered prophet was the fulness of the gospel. He was tutored by the resurrected Christ, whom Joseph adored. He taught doctrines declared by the Lord, including these He gave in response to the question of an exacting lawyer:

8 “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

9 “Jesus said unto him, Thou

a A of F 1:11

b History of the Church, 5:157

shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

10 "This is the first and great commandment.

11 "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

12 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."^c

13 Hence, our highest priorities in life are to love God and to love our neighbors. That broadly includes neighbors in our own family, our community, our nation, and our world. Obedience to the second commandment facilitates obedience to the first commandment. "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God."^d

Parental Love

14 That concept is easy for mothers and fathers to understand. Parental love includes gratitude for service extended to any of their children, especially in their time of need.

15 I was amused recently when one of our grown children confided that she had always thought that she was her daddy's favorite daughter. She was surprised to discover later that

each of her eight sisters harbored that same feeling. Only when they had become mothers themselves did they realize that parents hardly have favorites. (Incidentally, our only son never had to wonder who was our favorite son.)

16 Our Father in Heaven loves all of His children, too. Peter taught that "God is no respecter of persons:

17 "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."^e

18 Yet His children can be so intolerant with one another. Neighboring factions, whether they be identified as groups or gangs, schools or states, counties or countries, often develop animosity. Such tendencies make me wonder: Cannot boundary lines exist without becoming battle lines? Could not people unite in waging war against the evils that beset mankind instead of waging war on each other? Sadly, answers to these questions are often no. Through the years, discrimination based on ethnic or religious identity has led to senseless slaughter, vicious pogroms, and countless acts of cruelty. The face of history is pocked by the ugly scars of intolerance.

c Matt. 22:36-40; see also John 13:34-35; John 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thes. 3:12; 1 Thes. 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 1 Jn. 4:7, 11-12; 2 Jn. 1:5

d Mosiah 2:17

e Acts 10:34-35; see also D&C 38:16, 24-26

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19 How different our world would be if all parents would apply this inspired instruction from the Book of Mormon: “Ye will not suffer your children ... that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another. ...

20 “But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.”^f

21 If such training occurred, children and parents around this globe would join in singing, “Fill our hearts with sweet forgiving; Teach us tolerance and love.”^g Men and women would respect their neighbors and the beliefs held sacred by them. No longer would ethnic jokes and cultural slurs be acceptable. The tongue of the tolerant speaks no guile.

Independence and Cooperation

22 While we strive for the virtue of tolerance, other commendable qualities need not be lost. Tolerance does not require the surrender of noble purpose or of individual identity. The Lord gave instruction to leaders of His restored church to establish and maintain institutional integrity—“that the church may stand independent.”^h

23 Meanwhile, its members are encouraged to join with

like-minded citizens in doing good.ⁱ We are grateful for the many examples of heroic service rendered in times of earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, or other disasters. Such cooperative efforts to help neighbors in distress transcend any barriers posed by religion, race, or culture. Those good deeds are latter-day love in action!

24 Humanitarian relief rendered by members of this church is extensive, multinational, and generally unpublicized. Even so, there are doubtless many who wonder why we don’t do more to assist the innumerable worthy causes to which our hearts respond.

25 Of course we are concerned with the need for ambulances in the valley below. But at the same time, we cannot ignore the greater need for protective guardrails on the cliffs above. Limited resources needed for the accomplishment of the higher work cannot be depleted in rescue efforts that provide only temporary relief.

26 The biblical prophet Nehemiah must have felt that same commitment to his important calling. When he was asked to divert attention away from his primary purpose, he replied: “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should

f Mosiah 4:14–15; see also Rom. 12:18

g Hymns, 1985, no. 172

h D&C 78:14

i A of F 1:13

the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"^j

27 Fortunately, we in the Church rarely have to make such a decision. We consider love of neighbor an integral part of our mission. And while we serve one another, we continue to build a spiritual house of refuge on the cliffs above. Such a sanctuary becomes a blessing for all mankind. We are but the builders; the architect is almighty God.

Missionary Responsibilities

28 Latter-day Saints throughout the world work side by side with others—regardless of race, color, or creed—hoping to be good examples worthy of emulation. The Savior said: "I give unto you a commandment, that every man, both elder, priest, teacher, and also member, ... prepare and accomplish the things which I have commanded.

29 "And let your preaching be the warning voice, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and in meekness."^k

30 This we are to do with tolerance. While in Moscow in June 1991, in that spirit of preparation and with sincere respect for leaders of other religious denominations, Elder Dallin H. Oaks and I had the privilege of meeting with the presiding official of the Russian Orthodox Church. We were accompanied by Elder

Hans B. Ringger and the mission president, Gary L. Browning. Patriarch Aleksei was most gracious in sharing a memorable hour with us. We perceived the great difficulties endured for so many years by this kind man and his fellow believers. We thanked him for his perseverance and for his faith. Then we assured him of our good intentions and of the importance of the message that missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would be teaching among his countrymen. We affirmed that ours is a global church and that we honor and obey the laws of each land in which we labor.^l

31 To those with an interest in the fulness of the restored gospel—regardless of nationality or religious background—we say as did Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "Keep all the truth and all the good that you have. Do not abandon any sound or proper principle. Do not forsake any standard of the past which is good, righteous, and true. Every truth found in every church in all the world we believe. But we also say this to all men—Come and take the added light and truth that God has restored in our day. The more truth we have, the greater is our joy here and now; the more truth we receive, the greater is our reward in eternity. This is our invitation to men [and women] of good will everywhere."^m

j Neh. 6:3
k D&C 38:40–41; see also D&C 88:81
l A of F 1:12
m In Tahiti Area Conference Report, Mar. 1976, p. 31

Horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 evenly spaced lines extending across the right side of the page.

32 Each of you with a testimony of the truth of the restored gospel has opportunity to share that precious gift. The Lord expects you to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness.”ⁿ

Baptism Transcends Background

33 On every continent and across isles of the sea, the faithful are being gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Differences in cultural background, language, gender, and facial features fade into insignificance as members lose themselves in service to their beloved Savior. Paul’s declaration is being fulfilled: “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

34 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”^o

35 Only the comprehension of the true Fatherhood of God can bring full appreciation of the true brotherhood of man. That understanding inspires desire to build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation.

36 Our Creator decreed “that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one

eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another.”^p

37 Intolerance seeds contention; tolerance supersedes contention. Tolerance is the key that opens the door to mutual understanding and love.

Risks of Boundless Tolerance

38 Now may I offer an important note of caution. An erroneous assumption could be made that if a little of something is good, a lot must be better. Not so! Overdoses of needed medication can be toxic. Boundless mercy could oppose justice. So tolerance, without limit, could lead to spineless permissiveness.

39 The Lord drew boundary lines to define acceptable limits of tolerance. Danger rises when those divine limits are disobeyed. Just as parents teach little children not to run and play in the street, the Savior taught us that we need not tolerate evil. “Jesus went into the temple of God, and ... and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers.”^q Though He loved the sinner, the Lord said that He “cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.”^r His Apostle Paul specified some of those sins in a letter to the Galatians. The list included “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

n 1 Pet. 3:15; see also D&C 60:2

o Gal. 3:27–28

p Mosiah 18:21; see also Mosiah 23:15; 4 Ne. 1:13

q Matt. 21:12; see also Mark 11:15

r D&C 1:31

40 “Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, ... wrath, strife, seditions, here-sies,

41 “Envyings, murders, drunk-
enness, revellings, and such
like.”^s

42 To Paul’s list I might add the
regrettable attitudes of bigotry,
hypocrisy, and prejudice. These
were also decried in 1834 by ear-
ly Church leaders who foresaw
the eventual rise of this church
“amid the frowns of bigots and
the calumny of hypocrites.”^t The
Prophet Joseph Smith prayed
that “prejudices may give way
before the truth.”^u Hatred stirs
up strife^v and digs beneath
the dignity of mature men and
women in our enlightened era.

43 Paul’s list included “unclean-
ness.” As members of the Church
entrusted with its holy temples,
we are commanded that “no un-
clean thing shall be permitted to
come into [His] house to pollute
it.”^w

44 That assignment requires
great fortitude as well as love.
In former days, disciples of the
Lord “were firm, and would suf-
fer even unto death rather than
commit sin.”^x In latter days, de-
voted disciples of the Lord are
just as firm. Real love for the

sinner may compel courageous
confrontation—not acquies-
cence! Real love does not sup-
port self-destructing behavior.

Tolerance and Mutual Respect

45 Our commitment to the Sav-
ior causes us to scorn sin yet
heed His commandment to love
our neighbors. Together we live
on this earth, which is to be tend-
ed, subdued, and shared with
gratitude.^y Each of us can help
to make life in this world a more
pleasant experience. Not long
ago the First Presidency and the
Twelve issued a public state-
ment from which I quote: “It is
morally wrong for any person or
group to deny anyone his or her
inalienable dignity on the tragic
and abhorrent theory of racial or
cultural superiority.

46 “We call upon all people ev-
erywhere to recommit them-
selves to the time-honored ideals
of tolerance and mutual respect.
We sincerely believe that as we
acknowledge one another with
consideration and compassion
we will discover that we can all
peacefully coexist despite our
deepest differences.”^z

47 That pronouncement is a
contemporary confirmation of
the Prophet Joseph’s earlier en-
treaty for tolerance. Unitedly we

s Gal. 5:19–21

t JS—H 1:71, footnote

u D&C 109:56; see also D&C 109:70

v Prov. 10:12

w D&C 109:20

x Alma 24:19

y Gen. 1:28; Moses 2:28; Abr. 4:28; D&C 59:15–21

z Statement of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the
Twelve, 18 Oct. 1992; as quoted in Church News, 24 Oct. 1992, p. 4

may respond. Together we may stand, intolerant of transgression but tolerant of neighbors with differences they hold sacred. Our beloved brothers and sisters throughout the world are *all* children of God. He is our Father. His Son, Jesus, is the Christ. His church has been restored to the earth in these latter days to bless all of God’s children. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 19

Shepherds, Lambs, and Home Teachers - Published in the August 1994 Ensign magazine. Republished in the April 1999 Liahona magazine.

SOMEONE once offered this sage advice: “Survey large fields; cultivate small ones.” That seems quite appropriate for home teachers. I, at least, became a better home teacher when my perspective became more global than local. I realized that this would be a better world if everyone had good home teachers. And if such a global outlook is helpful, how much more valuable is an eternal viewpoint, compared with one that is merely mundane.

2 Faith would increase in the earth and God’s everlasting covenant would be established if the Master’s desire could be fulfilled. For He expressed the hope “that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world”.^a Every priesthood holder could do this

while serving as a home teacher.

3 As I have surveyed large fields of this planet, my sense of appreciation for home and neighbors nearby has become even more dear. Those feelings of fondness have found meaningful expression in home teaching. Sister Nelson and I are so grateful to have been blessed with home teachers who have given much-needed encouragement to us and our family. Wherever we have lived through the years, we have appreciated home teachers who have observed four hallmarks of effective home teaching. Our home teachers have

- Faithfully kept appointments scheduled in advance;
- Come prepared with brief messages relevant to contemporary need, determined previously in counsel with us as parents;
- Honored our time constraints with visits that were appropriately concise;
- Invoked the Spirit of the Lord upon our family with prayer.

4 Returning to the broader perspective, in the world today many religious denominations and other well-meaning groups focus attention on concepts such as “wholeness of self,” “self-realization,” “self-fulfillment,” or “self-awareness.” But such slogans cause me to wonder whether the two great commandments are ignored or forgotten. Jesus said:

a D&C 1:20

5 “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

6 “This is the first and great commandment.

7 “And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”.^b

8 The two great commandments work in perfect harmony because obedience to the first is manifest by obedience to the second: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God”.^c

9 Rewards for selfless service were revealed by the Lord, who said, “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it”.^d

10 Long ago, an enduring standard of interpersonal conduct was set. We know it as the Golden Rule: “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them”.^e

11 That principle was established by Jesus, who called himself the “good shepherd.” Appropriately, shepherds were among the first to receive the announcement of His birth.^f He is our

Shepherd and we are the sheep of His fold.^g Often He used that metaphor in His teachings:

12 “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

13 “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep”.^h

14 When the Good Shepherd bade farewell to His disciples, important instructions were given: “Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, *Feed my lambs*”.ⁱ

15 Because the available manuscripts of the New Testament are in Greek, additional insight is gained when the meanings of the words italicized above are studied in the Greek language. In the preceding verse, the word *feed* comes from the Greek term *bosko*, which means “to nourish or to pasture.” The word *lamb* comes from the diminutive term *arnion*, meaning “little lamb.”

16 “[Jesus] saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou know-

b Matt. 22:37–39; see also D&C 59:6

c Mosiah 2:17

d Matt. 16:25; Matt. 10:39

e Matt. 7:12

f Luke 2:8–18

g Ps. 23:1

h John 10:14–15; John 10:11, 27; D&C 50:44

i John 21:15; emphasis added

est that I love thee. He saith unto him, *Feed my sheep*”.^j

17 In this verse, the word *feed* comes from a different term, *poimaino*, which means “to shepherd, to tend, or to care.” The word *sheep* comes from the term *probaton*, meaning “mature sheep.”

18 “[Jesus] saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, *Feed my sheep*”.^k

19 In this verse, the word *feed* again comes from the Greek *bosko*, referring to nourishment. The word *sheep* was again translated from the Greek term *probaton*, referring to adult sheep.

20 These three verses, which seem so similar in the English language, really contain three distinct messages in Greek:

- Little lambs need to be nourished in order to grow;
- Sheep need to be tended;
- Sheep need to be nourished.

21 Therefore, one of the tangible signs of the restored church of Jesus Christ would have to be the establishment of an orderly system by which each precious member—young or old, male or female—might be given the con-

tinuing care and nourishment the Lord decreed for every one of His flock.

22 That system includes priesthood home teaching. To describe those called to render such service, I like the term “true undershepherds,” as written by Mary B. Wingate in the hymn we love to sing. Her text carries a meaningful message:

*Dear to the heart of the Shepherd,
Dear are the sheep of his fold;
Dear is the love that he gives them,
Dearer than silver or gold.
Dear to the heart of the Shepherd,
Dear are his “other” lost sheep;
Over the mountains he follows,
Over the waters so deep. ...*

*Dear to the heart of the Shepherd,
Dear are the lambs of his fold;
Some from the pastures are straying,
Hungry and helpless and cold.
See, the Good Shepherd is seeking,
Seeking the lambs that are lost,
Bringing them in with rejoicing,
Saved at such infinite cost. ...*

*Dear to the heart of the Shepherd,
Dear are the “ninety and nine”;
Dear are the sheep that have wandered
Out in the desert to pine.
Hark! he is earnestly calling,
Tenderly pleading today:
“Will you not seek for my lost ones,
Off from my shelter astray?” ...*

*Green are the pastures inviting;
Sweet are the waters and still.
Lord, we will answer thee gladly,*

j John 21:16; emphasis added
k John 21:17; emphasis added

“And visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties”.^q

“[An elder is to] visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties.

“In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires”.^r

“The teacher’s duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them;

“And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking;

“And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty”.^s

30 Additional instructions were given regarding the pairing of companions in the work of the Lord:

“If any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also.

“Therefore, take with you

those who are ordained unto the lesser priesthood, and send them before you to make appointments, and to prepare the way”.^t

31 As I reflect upon my own opportunities for Church service in the several cities where Sister Nelson and I have lived, few experiences have been more gratifying than those as a home teacher. Some of the brothers and sisters we first met through those contacts, who at one time may not have been very active in the Church, have since been called to serve as stake presidents, mission presidents, auxiliary presidents, and temple presidents and matrons. They and members of their families have become some of our dearest friends.

32 Home teaching requires energy. I remember times when I was so exhausted from the demands of difficult days in the surgical operating room (in addition to duties relating to family needs and to Church responsibilities) that the prospects of spending evening hours in home teaching were not always anticipated eagerly. Almost without exception, however, I can say that I returned home more invigorated and happy than when I left. I often told Sister Nelson that rewards for a home teacher were not remote; they were immediate, at least for me.

q D&C 20:46–47
r D&C 20:51–52
s D&C 20:53–55
t D&C 84:106–7

33 Besides, in this world of gluttony and greed, there is a certain satisfaction that comes from rendering service to others purely because of love and not for pay. I think the Apostle Peter felt that same exhilaration when he wrote:

34 "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

35 "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

36 "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away".^u

37 I recognize that it takes time to develop the discipline and desire to prioritize concern for others ahead of one's personal interests. That ennobling transition begins when one makes the baptismal covenant:

38 "Now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

39 "Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, ...

40 "Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?"^v

41 Home teaching opportunities provide a means by which an important aspect of character may be developed: love of service above self. We become more like the Savior, who has challenged us to emulate His example: "What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am".^w

42 Each individual who sincerely strives to become more like the Good Shepherd will be blessed. His promise and challenge are real: "Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life; and thou shalt serve me and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep".^x

43 Remembering that the Savior is our exemplar, picture in your mind a little lamb being carried across His shoulders, as you read His divine directive:

44 "Ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that

u 1 Pet. 5:2-4
v Mosiah 18:8-10; see also D&C 20:37
w 3 Ne. 27:27; John 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21; 3 Ne. 18:6, 16
x Mosiah 26:20

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which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do;

45 “Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day”.^y

46 The following admonition was given by President Ezra Taft Benson:

47 “The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep—for you and me—for us all.^z The symbolism of the Good Shepherd is not without parallel in the Church today. The sheep need to be led by watchful shepherds. Too many are wandering. Some are being enticed away by momentary distractions. Others have become completely lost. ...

48 “With a shepherd’s care, our new members, those newly born into the gospel, must be nurtured by attentive fellowshiping as they increase in gospel knowledge and begin living new standards. Such attention will help to ensure that they will not return to old habits. With a shepherd’s loving care, our young people, our young lambs, will not be as inclined to wander. And if they do, the crook of the shepherd’s staff, a loving arm and an understanding heart, will help to retrieve them. With a shepherd’s care, many of those who are now independent of the flock can still

be reclaimed. Many who have married outside the Church and have assumed the life-styles of the world may respond to an invitation to return to the fold”.^{aa}

49 As I foresee the troublesome times that lie ahead—when deepening trials and testing shall be thrust upon members of the Church^{ab}—the gentle caring of compassionate home teachers may literally save spiritual lives.

50 “For what shepherd is there among you having many sheep doth not watch over them, that the wolves enter not and devour his flock? ...

51 “And now I say unto you that the good shepherd doth call after you; and if you will hearken unto his voice he will bring you into his fold, and ye are his sheep; and he commandeth you that ye suffer no ravenous wolf to enter among you, that ye may not be destroyed”.^{ac}

52 Personal security through the travails of life cannot be guaranteed by wealth, fame, or governmental programs. But it can come from doing the will of the Lord, whose instructions are given to bring spiritual protection to His Saints. His merciful commandments, with undergirding and overarching power to sustain all natural law, tenderly al-

y 3 Ne. 27:21–22

z John 10:17–18

aa The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, pp. 231–32

ab D&C 1:12–23; D&C 101:4–5

ac Alma 5:60

low gentle hands to guard His children well.

53 The Good Shepherd lovingly cares for all sheep of His fold, and we are His true undershepherds. Our privilege is to bear His love and to add our own love to friends and neighbors—feeding, tending, and nurturing them—as the Savior would have us do. By so doing, we evidence one of the godly characteristics of His restored Church upon the earth.

CHAPTER 20

The Spirit of Elijah - Delivered October 1994 in the Sunday Afternoon session of General Conference

WITHIN the past year, four of our beloved General Authorities have concluded their mission in mortality. The passing of President Ezra Taft Benson and Elders Marvin J. Ashton, Sterling W. Sill, and Clinton L. Cutler has prompted a great outpouring of love to their families. Their departure has also underscored a scriptural explanation of activities on the other side of the veil: “The faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel ... in the great world of the spirits of the dead.”^a

2 President Spencer W. Kimball taught that “our great part in this aspect of missionary work is to perform on this earth the ordinances required for those who accept the gospel over there.”^b

3 These thoughts, coupled with the fact that next month marks the one hundredth anniversary of the Genealogical Society of Utah, highlight the great importance and influence of “the spirit of Elijah.”^c Happily, the date of this centennial closely coincides with the birthday of President Howard W. Hunter, who once presided over that society and who now beckons us to the house of the Lord.

Baptism Is Essential to Enter the Kingdom of God

4 Basic to all Christian understanding is the timeless statement made by Jesus: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”^d

5 Following His crucifixion, Jesus ministered in the spirit world, setting in motion missionary work among those who had died without hearing the gospel.^e Baptism for these souls would logically be expected. Yet, only one verse in the New Testament refers directly to that need: “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the

a D&C 138:57

b Ensign, Jan. 1977, p. 3

c 2 Kgs. 2:15

d John 3:5. See also Mark 16:16; D&C 5:16; Moses 6:59. Jesus himself was baptized “to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15; 2 Ne. 31:5–6)

e 1 Pet. 4:6; D&C 138:10–37

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dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"^f

6 Those questions of the Apostle Paul—without latter-day revelation—would remain an enigma. With latter-day revelation, they become clear. Clarification began when the Prophet Joseph Smith was tutored by the angel Moroni,^g who said:

"I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn^h to their fathers.

"If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted."ⁱ

7 Joseph compared Moroni's teaching to a similar prophecy by Malachi—that Elijah would come again.^j We know that Elijah did return—at least twice—after Malachi's promise. At Christ's transfiguration, Elijah

appeared on the mount to Peter, James, and John.^k At the Kirtland Temple, April 3, 1836, Elijah appeared to the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery and said, "The keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands."^l

8 The Prophet Joseph Smith was chosen to reestablish the Church, to receive and administer priesthood authority, and to restore plain and precious truths lost to human knowledge.^m One such doctrine was that of salvation for the dead—a pivotal part of the promised "restitution of all things."ⁿ

9 Several years ago Elder Howard W. Hunter said: "Does it seem reasonable that persons who have lived upon the earth and died without the opportunity of baptism should be deprived throughout eternity? Is there anything unreasonable about the living performing the baptisms for the dead? Perhaps the greatest example of vicarious work for the dead is the Master himself. He gave his life as a vicarious atonement, that all who

f 1 Cor. 15:29; see also Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 179

g Especially from 1823 through 1827

h Later, Joseph Smith said that "the word *turn* here should be translated *bind*, or *seal*" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 330; emphasis added)

i D&C 2:1–3

j Mal. 4:5–6

k Matt. 17:3. Moses held the keys of the gathering of Israel and the gathering of the ten tribes. Elijah held the keys of the sealing power. These are the keys that they conferred upon Peter, James, and John upon the Mount. Reference to the sealing power is also indicated in Matt. 16:18–19; also D&C 128:10; D&C 138:45–48

l D&C 110:16

m 1 Ne. 13:26, 28–29, 32, 34–35, 40

n Acts 3:21

was destroyed by fire, it served its sacred purposes.^v

*Genealogical Records for
Use in Temples*

18 Throughout the world, members of the Church faithfully prepare family records for use in our many temples. When ordinances are performed there, further documentation is required, because the Lord said:

“When any of you are baptized for your dead, let there be a recorder, and let him be eye-witness of your baptisms. ...

“That in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven; whatsoever you bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth, may be loosed in heaven.”^w

This weighty doctrine pressed itself upon the Prophet’s mind.^x His thoughts resonated with those of previous prophets. Joseph wrote, “John the Revelator was contemplating this very subject in relation to the dead, when he declared, ... I saw the dead ... stand before God; and the books were opened; ... and the

dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books.”^y

19 Then the Prophet Joseph added, “Whatsoever you do not record on earth shall not be recorded in heaven; for out of the books shall your dead be judged.”^z

*Elijah and Keys of
Priesthood Authority*

20 In 1844, Joseph Smith asked, “What is this office and work of Elijah?” The Prophet promptly answered his own question: “It is one of the greatest and most important subjects that God has revealed. ...

21 “This is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven. ... This is the power of Elijah and the keys of the kingdom of Jehovah.”^{aa}

22 Some among us still have neither perceived the Spirit of Elijah nor its power. Yet, we are bound by this warning:

23 “These are principles in relation to the dead and the living

v On November 8, 1841 the baptismal font “was dedicated by Brigham Young. It was first used two weeks later when Elders Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor performed forty baptisms for the dead” (Church History in the Fulness of Times, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, p. 252). “According to temple records, 5,615 Saints were endowed before going west”—and likewise blessed on their heavenly trek (ibid., pp. 303–4)

w D&C 127:6–7

x D&C 128:1

y D&C 128:6; emphasis in original

z D&C 128:8

aa Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 337–38

28 Sister Nelson, our family, and I have submitted our own ancestral names to the temple and have performed ordinances for them. Because we are fortunate to live near a temple, we like to meet there early in the morning. Usually in less than an hour, the initiatory work is accomplished, our youth are taken directly to school, their mothers return home, and their fathers get to work—on time! When we do endowments or sealings, available adults prefer to meet early in the evening to share that choice experience. Following that, we gather at home to update our records and enjoy some of Sister Nelson’s homemade goodies.

29 We are also doing temple work for ancestors of a Russian convert to the Church who is not able to travel to a temple. While our son was serving on his mission in Russia, this devoted convert entrusted records of his relatives to our son, along with a plea that their temple work be done. When our children and grandchildren go to the temple to perform those ordinances, our son’s help is needed for pronouncement of names, but not for the percep-

tion of joy among all participants.

30 Service in the temple together is a sublime activity for a family. It provides its own sustaining motivation and verification of the truth of this unique work.

*Rights of Personal Choice,
Accountability, and Privacy*

31 For whom will such temple work be efficacious? Principles of agency pertain on both sides of the veil. There, in postmortal realms, personal choice and accountability will be of paramount importance.^{af} Not all will accept these ordinances. Not all that would choose to do so may be worthy to receive them. Scriptures indicate that individual faith,^{ag} repentance,^{ah} and obedience^{ai} will be required to consummate this vicarious work.

32 Here, on this side of the veil, there are limitations of available time and temples. This means that choosing to identify and perform ordinances for *our own kindred* should receive our highest priority. The Spirit of Elijah will inspire individual members of the Church to link their generations, rather than submit lists of

af President Ezra Taft Benson and his counselors issued this statement: “In considering ordinances for the deceased, we need not attempt to determine individual worthiness, whether an ordinance will be accepted, or the probable feelings of other deceased individuals affected by the proposed ordinance. ... These determinations must, of necessity, be made beyond the veil” (First Presidency Letter, 8 Dec. 1988)

ag Alma 19:13; Ether 3:14; Moses 5:9

ah D&C 138:58

ai Ibid., D&C 138:58

people or popular personalities to whom they are unrelated.^{aj}

33 Now, we are mindful of those not of our faith who are concerned about or even offended by the practice of temple ordinances for the dead. To them we say, our Heavenly Father directed the restoration of keys of priesthood authority and surely intended no offense to any of His children. Quite to the contrary. He intended to bless them. This doctrine and its ordinances are laden with love and are intended to perpetuate the sweetest of all relationships—in families forever.

34 Nevertheless, the Church is sensitive to these concerns. The First Presidency has asked that, as far as possible, individual rights of privacy be protected. In 1972, they wrote, “Persons submitting names for other than direct ancestors [should] have obtained approval from the closest living relative of the deceased before submitting records of persons born within the last ninety-five years.”^{ak} In addition, reminders of rights of precedence and privacy appear *each* time our computer programs are used.

35 Meanwhile, as a gesture of generosity and goodwill, leaders of the Church continue to make its family history facilities available to interested individuals, regardless of religious affiliation and without admission fees! All patrons, in turn, are invited to make valuable additions to the world’s ever-expanding pool of genealogical information.

Opportunities to Serve

36 In a recent statement, President Howard W. Hunter included these remarks: “Let us be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people. Let us hasten to the temple ... not only for our kindred dead, but let us also go for the personal blessing of temple worship.”^{al}

37 President Hunter’s invitation reminds us that we can provide names and ordinances for ancestors for whom information is readily available, and, where possible, we can regularly attend the temple. What and how much we do should depend upon personal circumstances and abilities, direction from Church leaders, and guidance from the Spirit. Throughout our lives, each of us can do something significant.

aj President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “We are not going to do the temple work for everybody because it does not pertain to them. We are going to do the temple work for those who are entitled, through their faith and their repentance, to enter into the celestial kingdom. ... I do not know whether one man is worthy and another is not. The Lord has given us the privilege of doing the work for all of *our kindred*” (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–55, 2:191; emphasis in original).

ak Records Submission Manual, 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973), p. 16

al Ensign, July 1994, p. 5

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

38 I would add that the daily building of happy memories in our families is an important part of making family history pleasant. Each day on earth can bring a little bit of heaven.

39 Many travel the highways of life without a companion. They, too, are needed by their families on both sides of the veil. Others may never be able to attend a temple during their mortal lifetime. To the faithful, comfort comes from the knowledge that no blessings will be withheld from any who love the Lord and strive earnestly to keep His commandments.^a We will be judged by our deeds *and* the desires of our hearts—in the Lord’s merciful way and time.^b

40 No mortal mind could have conceived this divine work. It is evidence of the restoration of the gospel in its fulness and is sparked by the Spirit of Elijah. “Let us, therefore, as a church and a people ... offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple ... a book containing the records of our dead ... worthy of all acceptance.”^c Then we shall bless and be blessed as saviors upon mount Zion, I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 21

Birthdays Bright - Delivered 13 November 1994 as a fireside address to the Genealogical Society of Utah. Printed in the March 1995 Ensign.

WE are ever grateful to the Tabernacle Choir for their sweet sermons in song. Their rendition of that medley helped me to appreciate both the beautiful music and the unique significance of the words. Only members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sing that families can be together forever; that temples are loved because they provide ordinances of eternal significance; and that hearts of the children are turned to their fathers—by the spirit of Elijah. That same special spirit brings us together on this important occasion. Birthdays are bright and special events. Joyfully we celebrate two of them tonight:

- Under Church sponsorship, the Genealogical Society of Utah came into being one hundred years ago today, 13 November 1894.
- President Howard W. Hunter was born eighty-seven years ago tomorrow, 14 November 1907.

2 Not only do their birthdates closely coincide, but their histories are also intertwined.

a See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–55), 2:76; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979–81), 3:188

b 2 Ne. 9:41; Alma 41:3; D&C 137:9

c D&C 128:24

3 President Hunter has enjoyed family history since his youth when he listened with great interest to stories of his pioneer ancestors. As an adult he pursued research on his family lines. For a season after being ordained an Apostle, he commuted between California and Utah, doing research at the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City when time permitted.^d

4 Elder Howard W. Hunter became president of the Genealogical Society of Utah in 1964. During his eight-year period of presidency, the Society introduced a computer system named GIANT—an acronym for Genealogical Information and Names Tabulation. At the time, GIANT was at the forefront of this newly developing technology. It functioned as the major program for the processing of names for the next twenty years.

5 While Elder Hunter presided over the Society, it sponsored the first World Conference on Records in 1969. He welcomed participants from all parts of the earth and gave one of the major addresses. That conference seemed to authenticate the Society in the eyes of many archivists worldwide and opened the way for microfilming in previously untouched realms of the globe. The conference was, in

the words of Elder Hunter, “truly one of the great successes of the Church.”^e

6 While he served as president of the Society, its collection of microfilms grew from four hundred thousand to seven hundred thousand rolls. The Granite Mountain Record Vault was completed and dedicated. President Hunter helped to shape the destiny of the Society and establish its position as one of the foremost genealogical societies of the world. “He dedicated a significant portion of his life to [family history] work and laid the foundations and the direction from which the Church is still reaping the benefits.”^f

7 What has been done is very important. Why it has been done is even more meaningful. Though the Genealogical Society of Utah was officially organized a century ago, its vital work was foreseen long before. Elder Hunter once explained that “the uniting and redemption of the family of God was the divine plan before the foundations of the earth were laid.”^g Temples are an essential part of that divine plan, and they are not new.

8 The Old Testament is replete with references to the temple. In those times, temple work was done for the living only. Ordi-

d See Eleanor Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994), p. 186

e Minutes, Board of Trustees, Genealogical Society of Utah, 18 Sept. 1969, vol. 8, typescript, Family History Department

f Elder Richard G. Scott, quoted in Howard W. Hunter, p. 194

g Ensign, Dec. 1971, p. 72; emphasis added

nances for the dead had to await the Atonement and postmortal ministry of the Savior.^h

9 The New Testament also contains many references to the temple, but only occasional fragments relate to the priesthood authority and blessings that are unique to a temple. In the New Testament we read that Jesus instructed his disciples regarding “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” with power to bind on earth and in heaven.ⁱ It also carries a statement of Paul regarding baptism for the dead.^j And the book of Revelation forecasts a future day when faithful people would serve day and night in the temple.^k

10 Though temples were an important part of biblical history, very little would be known about redemption of the dead from a study of the Bible alone. Its few fragments could not be pieced together into a meaningful mosaic without latter-day revelation. The restoration of the gospel in its fulness brought a restitution of the doctrine of redemption of the dead. Our understanding of the doctrine is increasing incrementally.

11 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been a vigorous force for good in helping people throughout the world to identify their forebears. The

Church’s state-of-the-art computer programs have been made available to millions of genealogical researchers, regardless of their religious affiliation.

12 Many individuals have contributed to the success of the Church’s temple and family history work. Surely the name of Howard William Hunter must be listed among the foremost. Now as President of the Church, he beckons us to the temple. He invites us to emulate the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose church this is. God declared that his work and his glory is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”^l His devoted disciples should adopt a similar objective—to help people toward the goal of eternal life.

13 Tonight we celebrate the centennial of the Society. We also extend congratulations and birthday greetings to President Hunter. His life symbolizes an unswerving commitment to his calling. His kindness, compassion, and courage inspire us to be more like him, and like Jesus the Christ—our great Exemplar. We honor and pray for Howard W. Hunter as President of the Church and as a prophet of God—tonight and always—in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

h D&C 138:18–37

i Matt. 16:19; see also Matt. 18:18

j See 1 Cor. 15:29; Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 179

k Rev. 7:15

l Moses 1:39.

Hope.” That expression is attributed to Ether, who further declared that “man must *hope*, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which [God] hast prepared”.^c

6 That verse of scripture came to mind the other day as I read a letter from a troubled friend who is wrestling with a profound personal problem. I would like to quote excerpts from that letter.

The guilt and failure I feel make it almost impossible for me to repent. I am losing my faith. The sins were first; the doubts followed. The order is important because sin needed doubt. When I doubted my faith, sins lost their meaning and guilt its bite. Doubting began, then, as a means of anesthesia. It served to diminish the guilt that was literally tearing me apart. Before long, however, the doubts thrived independent of the needs that conceived them.

My painful indecisiveness, my tentativeness, my lack of direction, my paralysis of volition, my poverty of confidence, have caused suffering and depression. My family, my future, and my faith are at stake. I am losing hope.

7 Could the author of that letter, as well as others with such inner turmoil, have forgotten a promise of the Lord? He said, “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceas-

ingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God”.^d Unrighteous thoughts are the termites of character—and of confidence.

8 To the author and to each person listening, I bring a message of hope. Regardless of how desperate things may seem, remember, we can always have hope. Always! The Lord’s promise to us is certain: “He that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome”.^e I repeat, there is always hope!

9 We came to the earth to receive our bodies and to be tested. Do you remember the scripture that states, “We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them”.^f Passing tests of obedience requires faith and hope—constantly.

10 Hope is part of our religion—mentioned in one of the Articles of Faith. “We follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we *hope* all things, we have endured many things, and *hope* to be able to endure all things”.^g

11 A correlation exists between hope and gratitude. To illustrate, let me share a personal experience. Last Thanksgiving, Sister Nelson and I hosted a memo-

c Ether 12:32; emphasis added

d D&C 121:45

e D&C 63:20

f Abraham 3:25

g Articles of Faith 1:13; emphasis added

become our tether to the celestial kingdom. We read in the Book of Mormon:

There must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity.

And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope.^m

16 We know that there is an opposition in all things.ⁿ Not surprisingly, therefore, faith, hope, and charity have their opposing forces. As illustrated in the letter from which I read, the antithesis of faith is doubt;^o the opposite of hope is despair. And the counterpart of charity—the pure love of Christ—is disregard or even disdain for him and his commandments.

17 Therefore, in our quest for faith, hope, and charity, we must beware of the dangers of doubt, despair, or disdain for the divine. Moroni so taught: “If ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity”.^p

18 Each of you is special, valued, and needed in building the kingdom of God. The adversary is also aware of your worth and

will surely taunt you. When Satan’s temptations come your way, please remember this counsel from Alma:

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear. . . .

Having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts.^q

Anchor of Faith and Hope

19 A more excellent hope is mightier than a wistful wish. Hope, fortified by faith and charity, forges a force as strong as steel. Hope becomes an anchor to the soul. To this anchor, the faithful can cling, securely tethered to the Lord. Satan, on the other hand, would have us cast away that anchor and drift with the ebb tide of despair. If we will cling to the anchor of hope, it will be our safeguard *forever*.

20 A scripture declares:

Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast.^r

21 The Lord of hope invites all

m Moroni 10:20–21; see also Ether 12:9, 34

n 2 Nephi 2:10–11, 15

o for descriptions, see Hebrews 11:1, Alma 32:21

p Moroni 10:22

q Alma 13:28–29

r Ether 12:4; see also v. 9 and Hebrews 6:19

*And after the scourges and harvest are over,
We'll rise with the just when the Savior doth come.*

*Then all that was promised the Saints will be given,
And they will be crown'd with the angels of heav'n,
And earth will appear as the Garden of Eden,
And Christ and his people will ever be one.^v*

27 This text is a remarkable statement of unity in the Lord's work. Regardless of nationality, the Saints have always understood the word of the Lord, who declared: "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine".^w

28 When stake number two thousand was created in Mexico last month, President Howard W. Hunter said that the "great purposes of the Lord could not have been achieved with dissension or jealousy or selfishness. [The Lord] will bless each of us as we cast off pride, pray for strength, and contribute to the good of the whole".^x

29 In stark contrast to that divine objective, the real world in which we live is divided by diverse languages, culture, and politics. Even the privileges of a democracy carry the burden of bickering in election campaigns. Con-

tention is all about us. Ours is a pessimistic and cynical world—one that, to a great extent, has no hope in Christ nor in God's plan for human happiness. Why such global contention and gloom? The reason is plain. If there is no hope in Christ, there is no recognition of a divine plan for the redemption of mankind. Without that knowledge, people mistakenly believe that existence today is followed by extinction tomorrow—that happiness and family associations are only ephemeral.

30 Such fallacies feed contention. The Book of Mormon bears record of these words from the first sermon of the Lord to the people of ancient America. Jesus said:

I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.^y

The Importance of Names

31 Unfortunately, our modern society is caught up in divisive disputation. Often unkind nicknames are added to—or even substituted for—given names.

v "Now Let Us Rejoice," Hymns, 1985, no. 3

w D&C 38:27

x Address delivered at the creation of the Mexico Mexico City Contreras Stake, 11 December 1994

y 3 Nephi 11:29–30

property," or "treasure."

38 In the New Testament, the Greek term from which *peculiar* was translated is *peripoiesis*, which means "possession," or "an obtaining." (Forms of the Greek suffix *poiesis* are seen in words currently in use in the English language. For example, doctors and druggists use a book known as a "*pharmacopoeia*," which refers to possession or obtaining of pharmaceutical agents. The term used for the making of blood in the body is known as *hematopoiesis*. Students of the English language refer to *onomatopoeia*, a word made to sound like its referent, such as *buzz*, *crack*, or *twang*.)

39 With that understanding from the Greek, we can see that the scriptural term *peculiar* does not mean "strange" or "odd" at all. It signifies "valued treasure," "made," or "selected by God." *Peculiar* is used in only seven verses of the Bible. In the Old Testament it is used five times.^{af} In each instance, it has been translated from the Hebrew term that means "valued treasure."

40 In the New Testament, *peculiar* is used two times.^{ag} In each instance it has been translated from a Greek term that signifies "possession" or "those selected by God as his own people." Thus, for us to be identified by

servants of the Lord as his *peculiar* people is a compliment of the highest order.

41 When we know who we are and what God expects of us, we are filled with hope and made aware of our significant role in his great plan of happiness. The day in which we now live was foreseen even *before* Christ was born, when a prophet said:

Our father hath not spoken of our seed alone, but also of all the house of Israel, pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days; which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.^{ah}

42 These are those latter days. We are the ones foredetermined and foreordained to fulfill that promise.^{ai} We are the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We are, in fact, the hope of Israel. We are God's treasure, reserved for our particular place and time.

43 No wonder China's vice premier noted what he did. Our faithful Latter-day Saints are filled with hope and motivated by love of the Lord Jesus Christ. With that hope, we assiduously avoid labels that could be interpreted as derogatory. When the Nephites were truly righteous, their previous patterns of polarization vanished.

af Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 14:2, 26:18; Psalms 135:4; Ecclesiastes 2:8

ag Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9

ah 1 Nephi 15:18; emphasis added

ai Alma 13:3

50 As I quote a couple of scriptures, see if you can identify the appropriate Greek term. Quoting the Lord: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another”.^{ap} Right! The level of love cited in this verse is that of *agape*: with highest respect.

51 Quoting Paul: “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love”.^{aq} If you said *phileo*, the second level, you were correct. The Greek term from which this was translated is *philadelphia*.

52 I looked up all references to *love* in the New Testament, both in English and in Greek. I found that every reference that adjures us to love one another employs only the higher *agape* or *phileo* forms. Not a single reference utilized the third level, *eros*. One exception should be noted: “Beware of the scribes, which *love* to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces”.^{ar} In this instance, the word *love* was translated from the Greek term *thelo*, meaning “desire” or “delight.”

53 This little exercise confirms what we already know, that the Lord wants our love for each other to be most noble, reserving

the intimate expression of physical love exclusively for husband and wife.^{as} I’ll translate that conclusion into simple terms. If you are tempted toward sexual behavior that is either errant or aberrant, hang an imaginary sign on the subject that says, “Please do not touch!” And, since deeds are preceded by thoughts, think *not* of now; think of *eternal life!*

Selection of a Marriage Partner

54 At the beginning of my message, I suggested (with a smile) that some of you might be hoping to find a prospect for marriage, perhaps in the not-too-distant future. May I offer a word of counsel, in addition to the quotation from President McKay about keeping your eyes wide open. The commandment to love our neighbors without discrimination is certain.^{at} But it must not be misunderstood. It applies generally. Selection of a marriage partner, on the other hand, involves *specific* and not *general* criteria. After all, you can only be married to *one* individual.

55 The probabilities of a successful marriage are known to be much greater if both the husband and wife are united in their religion, language, culture, and ethnic background. Thus, in choosing your eternal compan-

ap John 13:34

aq Romans 12:10

ar Mark 12:38; emphasis added

as for examples, see Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7, D&C 42:22, Moses 3:24, Abraham 5:18

at Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19, 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8; D&C 59:6

ion, please be wise. It's better not to fly in the face of constant head winds. Occasional squalls provide challenge enough.

56 Once those marriage vows are taken, you will want to be absolutely faithful to the Lord and to your companion, to whom you have promised complete fidelity. This year, Sister Nelson and I will celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary. We realize that the number of additional years together in mortality is steadily diminishing. How grateful we are that we have been faithful to each other in spite of numerous periods of separation imposed by wartime and professional duties. Someone once asked my sweetheart how she managed with ten children as well as a husband with a demanding surgical practice, major responsibilities in the Church, and little time to help. Her reply was unforgettable. "When I married him," she said, "I didn't expect much, so I was rarely disappointed." I pay tribute to her. All that I hold dear in life has come to me because of my love for her and for the Lord.

Hope of Eternal Life

57 Happiness comes when scriptures are used in shaping our lives. They speak of the "brightness of hope"^{au} for which we yearn. But if our hopes were narrowly confined only to moments in mortality, we should surely

be disappointed. Our ultimate hope must be anchored to the atonement of the Lord. He said, "If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God".^{av} In addition, President Joseph F. Smith said:

The great truth enunciated by the Savior seems very generally to be lost sight of in this generation, that it will profit a man nothing tho' he should gain the whole world if he lose his own soul.

The standard of success as declared by the word of God, is the salvation of the soul. The greatest gift of God is eternal life.^{aw}

58 An understanding of that objective should help us approach the future with faith instead of fear,^{ax} with a more excellent hope in place of despair. With education, your niche in life will be assured. Interests in your family, the Church, and your vocation can be properly balanced. God sent each of us here to be happy and successful.^{ay}

59 Meanwhile, he also needs us. We are to "seek not the things of this world but seek . . . first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness".^{az} He decreed that "no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love,

au 2 Nephi 31:20
av D&C 14:7
aw Juvenile Instructor 39, 15 September 1904, pp. 561-62
ax D&C 6:36
ay 2 Nephi 2:25, Jacob 2:18-19
az JST Matthew 6:38

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having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things”.^{ba}

60 Such an individual is President Howard W. Hunter. About two years ago he stood at this pulpit where I now stand. Suddenly he was accosted by an assailant brandishing a briefcase said to contain a bomb. President Hunter exhibited great courage. He didn’t give an inch. After the threat was over and peace was restored to the scene, President Hunter delivered his message. It was entitled “An Anchor to the Souls of Men”—a theme similar to mine tonight. I would like to quote from his message because it is especially relevant. President Hunter said:

It is incumbent upon us to rejoice a little more and despair a little less, to give thanks for what we have and for the magnitude of God’s blessings to us. . . .

For Latter-day Saints this is a time of great hope and excitement—one of the greatest eras . . . of all dispensations. We need to have faith and hope, two of the greatest fundamental virtues of any discipleship of Christ. We must continue to exercise confidence in God. . . . He will bless us as a people. . . . He will bless us as individuals. . . .

I promise you tonight in the name of the Lord whose servant I am

that God will always protect and care for his people. . . . With the gospel of Jesus Christ you have every hope and promise and reassurance. The Lord has power over his Saints and will always prepare places of peace, defense, and safety for his people. When we have faith in God we can hope for a better world—for us personally and for all mankind. . . .

Disciples of Christ in every generation are invited, indeed commanded, to be filled with a perfect brightness of hope.^{bb}

61 President Hunter’s counsel is timeless.

62 Tonight, to the youth of the Church, I would like to quote a scripture by way of summary and promise:

Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.^{bc}

63 Your hope is your “Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel—the God of the whole earth”.^{bd} His hope is in you. You are literally the “Hope of Israel, Zion’s army, Children of the promised day”.^{be}

ba D&C 12:8

bb BYU 1992–93 Devotional and Fireside Speeches (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1993), pp. 70–71

bc 2 Nephi 31:20; see also 2 Nephi 32:3

bd 3 Nephi 22:5

be Hymns, 1985, no. 259

er and I last visited President Hunter, he beckoned for Sister Hunter, reached for her hand, and said with a smile, "I feel better when you are near me."

6 My tears of sorrow have flowed along with wishes that I could have done more for our daughter and for our President. If I had the power of resurrection, I would have been tempted to bring them back. Though one of the ordained Apostles, each of whom is entrusted with all the keys of the kingdom of God, I do not hold keys of the Resurrection. Jesus Christ holds those keys and will use them for Emily, for President Hunter, and for all people in the Lord's own time.^d

7 Emily and President Hunter had no fear of death. They had made and honored sacred covenants with the Lord, and they knew that his covenants to them will be kept with equal fidelity.^e They lived nobly as "children of the covenant."

8 Years ago as a young medical student I saw many patients afflicted with diseases that are now preventable. Today it is

possible to immunize individuals against conditions that once were disabling—even deadly. One medical method by which acquired immunity is conferred is inoculation. The term *inoculate* is fascinating. It comes from two Latin roots: *in*, meaning "within"; and *oculus*, meaning "an eye." The verb *to inoculate*, therefore, literally means "to put an eye within"—to monitor against harm.

9 An affliction like polio can cripple or destroy the body. An affliction like sin can cripple or destroy the spirit. The ravages of polio can now be prevented by immunization, but the ravages of sin require other means of prevention. Doctors cannot immunize against iniquity. Spiritual protection comes only from the Lord^f—and in his own way. Jesus chooses not to inoculate, but to indoctrinate. His method employs no vaccine; it utilizes the teaching of divine doctrine—a governing "eye within"—to protect the eternal spirits of his children.

d See Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978), pp. 397–98; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56), 1:128

e D&C 82:10

f Rules of agency and accountability still apply, however. Choice and accountability are divine gifts nearly as precious as life itself. "Even the children of the covenant will be rejected except they make good their title by godly works" (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, p. 540). Children of the covenant are to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy (see Ex. 31:12–13, 16–17; Ezek. 20:20) and obey all of God's commandments

Identification and Indoctrination

10 In so teaching, Jesus often established his own identity,^g then the identity of his followers. I quote his words to the people of ancient America. He said, “I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”^h

“All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after ... have testified of me.

“And behold, ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

“The Father having raised me up unto you first, and sent me to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities; and this because ye are the children of the covenant.”ⁱ

11 A giant step toward spiritual immunity is taken when we understand the expression “children of the covenant.” To what covenant did the Savior refer? “The covenant which he made with Abraham.”^j The Lord added, “I will remember the cove-

nant which I have made with my people; and I have covenanted with them that I would gather them together *in mine own due time.*”^k

The Abrahamic Covenant

12 The covenant that the Lord first made to Abraham^l and re-affirmed to Isaac^m and Jacobⁿ is of transcendent significance. It contained several promises:

- Abraham’s posterity would be numerous, entitled to eternal increase and to bear the priesthood;
- He would become a father of many nations;
- Christ and kings would come through Abraham’s lineage;
- Certain lands would be inherited;
- All nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed;
- That covenant would be everlasting—even through “a thousand generations.”^o

13 Some of these promises have been accomplished; others have yet to be. I quote from a prophecy given nearly 600 years B.C.: “Our father hath not spoken of our seed alone, but also of all

g For examples, see 3 Ne. 9:15; 3 Ne. 11:10; 3 Ne. 20:31; Ether 3:14; D&C 6:21; D&C 10:57; D&C 11:28; D&C 14:9; D&C 19:24; D&C 35:2; D&C 36:8; D&C 43:34; D&C 49:28; D&C 51:20; D&C 52:44

h 3 Ne. 20:31; emphasis added

i 3 Ne. 20:24–26; emphasis added

j 3 Ne. 20:27

k 3 Ne. 20:29; emphasis added. See also 1 Pet. 5:6; 3 Ne. 5:25; Morm. 5:12; D&C 93:19

l Gen. 17:1–10; Gen. 22:15–18; Gal. 3:28–29; Abr. 2:9–11

m Gen. 26:1–5, 24

n Gen. 28:1–4, 10–14; Gen. 35:9–13; Gen. 48:3–4

o 1 Chr. 16:15. See also Gen. 17:1–10, 19; Lev. 26:42; Acts 3:25;

LDS Bible Dictionary, “Abraham, Covenant of,” p. 602

the house of Israel, pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days; which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham.”^p

14 Precisely as promised, the Master appeared in these latter days to renew the Abrahamic covenant. To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord declared: “Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins—from whose loins ye are, ... my servant Joseph. ... This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham.”^q

15 We are also children of the covenant. We have received, as did they of old, the holy priest-

hood and the everlasting gospel. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are our ancestors. We are of Israel. We have the right to receive the gospel, blessings of the priesthood, and eternal life. Nations of the earth will be blessed by our efforts and by the labors of our posterity. The literal seed of Abraham and those who are gathered into his family by adoption receive these promised blessings—predicated upon acceptance of the Lord and obedience to his commandments.

16 Elijah the prophet came to plant a knowledge of these promises made to the fathers.^r Later the Book of Mormon came forth as a sign that the Lord had

p 1 Ne. 15:18; emphasis added. Other prophecies convey similar meaning. Among them are the following: “Many generations after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed—“And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord; and then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers by him; wherefore, they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved” (1 Ne. 15:13–14). “Then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then will I fulfil the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel” (3 Ne. 16:5). “And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them.” “And I will show unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you; but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fulness of my gospel” (3 Ne. 16:11–12). “Thou shalt preach the fulness of my gospel, which I have sent forth in these last days, the covenant which I have sent forth to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel” (D&C 39:11)

q D&C 132:30–31. The Lord also told the Prophet Joseph Smith: “As I said unto Abraham concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph: In thee and in thy seed shall the kindred of the earth be blessed” (D&C 124:58)

r D&C 2:1–3

20 The new and everlasting covenant of the gospel allows us to qualify for marriage in the temple and be blessed to “come forth in the first resurrection” and “inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, ... to [our] exaltation and glory in all things.”^w

21 Children born to parents thus married are natural heirs to the blessings of the priesthood. They are born *in the covenant*. Hence, “they require no rite of adoption or sealing to insure them place in the posterity of promise.”^x

22 Rewards for obedience to the commandments are almost beyond mortal comprehension. Here, children of the covenant become a strain of sin-resistant souls. And hereafter, President Hunter, Emily, other children of the covenant, and “each generation would be linked to the one which went on before ... [in] the divine family of God.”^y Great comfort comes from the knowledge that our loved ones are secured to us through the covenants.

*Unity Among Children
of the Covenant*

23 Latter-day Saints understand the word of the Lord, who declared, “I say unto you, be one;

and if ye are not one ye are not mine.”^z

24 “This great unity is the hallmark of the true church of Christ,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley. “It is felt among our people throughout the world.” President Hinckley continued, “We pray for one another that we may go on in unity and strength.”^{aa}

25 Throughout the world, however, strident voices are engaged in divisive disputation and name-calling. Often demeaning nicknames are added to—or even substituted for—given names. Unfortunately, terms of derision obscure the true identity of children of the covenant.

26 In contrast, God employs names that unify and sanctify. When we embrace the gospel and are baptized, we are born again and take upon ourselves the sacred name of Jesus Christ.^{ab} We are adopted as his sons and daughters and are known as brothers and sisters. He is the Father of our new life. We become joint heirs to promises given by the Lord to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their posterity.^{ac}

27 Peter used uplifting terms in

w D&C 132:19

x James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977), p. 446

y Joseph Fielding Smith, in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1965, p. 10

z D&C 38:27. “Christ and his people will ever be one” (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 3)

aa *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, p. 5

ab D&C 20:37

ac Gal. 3:29; D&C 86:8–11

a prophecy regarding our day. He identified members of the Church as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.”^{ad} The adjectives *chosen*, *royal*, and *holy* we recognize as elevating. But what about *peculiar*? A modern dictionary defines *peculiar* as “unusual,” “eccentric,” or “strange.”^{ae} What kind of compliment is that?

28 But the term *peculiar* as used in the scriptures is quite different. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew term from which *peculiar* was translated is *segullah*, which means “valued property,” or “treasure.”^{af} In the New Testament, the Greek term from which *peculiar* was translated is *peripoiesis*, which means “pos-

session,” or “an obtaining.”^{ag}

29 Thus, we see that the scriptural term *peculiar* signifies “valued treasure,” “made” or “selected by God.”^{ah} For us to be identified by servants of the Lord as his *peculiar* people is a compliment of the highest order.

30 When we know who we are and what God expects of us—when his “law [is] written in [our] hearts”^{ai}—we are spiritually protected. We become better people. When the Nephites were truly righteous, they avoided divisive nicknames and “there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.”^{aj}

ad 1 Pet. 2:9; emphasis added. Moses also employed the term when he said, “Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a *peculiar* people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth” (Deut. 14:2; emphasis added)

ae The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980), p. 965

af See LDS Bible Dictionary, “Peculiar,” p. 748; “Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary,” Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1983), p. 82, word 5459

ag Forms of the Greek suffix *poiesis* are seen in words currently in use in the English language. For example, doctors and druggists use a book known as a “*pharmacopoeia*,” which refers to possession or obtaining of pharmaceutical agents. The English word *onomatopoeia* refers to a sound like its referent, such as “*buzz*,” “*crack*,” or “*twang*.” The term used for the making of blood in the body is known as *hematopoiesis*

ah *Peculiar* is used in only seven verses of the Bible. In the Old Testament, it is used five times (see Ex. 19:5; Deut. 14:2; Deut. 26:18; Ps. 135:4; Eccl. 2:8). In each instance, it has been translated from the Hebrew term that means “valued treasure.” In the New Testament, *peculiar* is used two times (see Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). In each instance, it has been translated from a Greek term that signifies “possession,” or “those selected by God as His own people.”

ai Rom. 2:15; see also Jer. 31:33; Mosiah 13:11

aj 4 Ne. 1:15

31 “There were no ... Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God.”^{ak}

32 That lesson from history suggests that we also delete from our personal vocabularies names that segregate and hyphens that separate. Paul taught that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”^{al}

33 He invites us “to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; ... all are alike unto God.”^{am}

34 The Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints has been restored in these latter days to fulfill ancient promises of the Lord. It is part of the “restitution of all things.”^{an} Committed children of the covenant remain steadfast, even in the midst of adversity. We shall “be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son.”^{ao} Yet we are strengthened by this promise of the Lord:

35 “Ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God—

36 “Therefore your life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things. ...

ak 4 Ne. 1:17

al Gal. 3:28; see also Col. 3:11. Speaking of correct names, we are reminded of a proclamation given by the Lord: “Thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (D&C 115:4). He did *not* say, “Thus shall my church be *named*.” He said, “Thus shall my church be *called*.” Members have been cautioned by the Brethren, who wrote: “We feel that some may be misled by the too frequent use of the term ‘Mormon Church’” (Member-Missionary Class, Instructor’s Guide, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982, p. 2)

am 2 Ne. 26:33. Additional scripture declares that God “made the world and all things therein, ... and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:24, 26). The commandment to love our neighbors without discrimination is certain. But it must not be misunderstood. It applies generally. Selection of a *marriage partner*, on the other hand, involves *specific* and not *general* criteria. After all, one person can only be married to *one* individual. The probabilities of a successful marriage are known to be much greater if both the husband and wife are united in their religion, language, culture, and ethnic background. Thus, in choosing an eternal companion, wisdom is needed. It’s better not to fly in the face of constant head winds. Occasional squalls provide challenge enough. Once marriage vows are taken, absolute fidelity is essential—to the Lord and to one’s companion

an Acts 3:21

ao D&C 101:4

37 “Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savior unto my people Israel.”^a

38 With that doctrine implanted deeply within our souls, the sting of death is soothed and spiritual protection is provided. Children of the covenant will be blessed—here and hereafter—I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 24

Perfection Pending - Delivered October 1995 in the Saturday Afternoon session of General Conference

IF I were to ask which of the Lord’s commandments is most difficult to keep, many of us might cite Matt. 5:48: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”^b

2 Keeping this commandment can be a concern because each of us is far from perfect, both spiritually and temporally. Reminders come repeatedly. We may lock keys inside the car, or even forget where the car is parked. And not infrequently we walk intently from one part of the house to another, only to forget the reason for the errand.

3 When comparing one’s personal performance with the su-

preme standard of the Lord’s expectation, the reality of imperfection can at times be depressing. My heart goes out to conscientious Saints who, because of their shortcomings, allow feelings of depression to rob them of happiness in life.

4 We all need to remember: men are that they might have joy—not guilt trips!^c We also need to remember that the Lord gives no commandments that are impossible to obey. But sometimes we fail to comprehend them fully.

5 Our understanding of perfection might be aided if we classify it into two categories. The first could pertain uniquely to this life—*mortal* perfection. The second category could pertain uniquely to the next life—*immortal* or *eternal* perfection.

Mortal Perfection

6 In this life, certain actions can be perfected. A baseball pitcher can throw a no-hit, no-run ball game. A surgeon can perform an operation without an error. A musician can render a selection without a mistake. One can likewise achieve perfection in being punctual, paying tithing, keeping the Word of Wisdom, and so on. The enormous effort required to attain such self-mastery is rewarded with a deep sense of satisfaction. More importantly, spiritual attainments

a D&C 86:9–11

b Those words were given additional intensity in the Joseph Smith Translation: “Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect” (JST, Matt. 5:50)

c 2 Ne. 2:25

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in mortality accompany us into eternity.^d

7 James gave a practical standard by which mortal perfection could be measured. He said, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a *perfect* man."^e

8 Scriptures have described Noah, Seth, and Job as *perfect* men.^f No doubt the same term might apply to a large number of faithful disciples in various dispensations. Alma said that "there were many, exceedingly great many,"^g who were pure before the Lord.

9 This does not mean that these people never made mistakes or never had need of correction. The process of perfection includes challenges to overcome and steps to repentance that may be very painful.^h There is a proper place for chastisement in the molding of character, for we know that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."ⁱ

10 Mortal perfection can be achieved as we try to perform every duty, keep every law, and strive to be as perfect in our sphere as our Heavenly Father is

in his. If we do the best we can, the Lord will bless us according to our deeds and the desires of our hearts.^j

Eternal Perfection

11 But Jesus asked for more than mortal perfection. The moment he uttered the words "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," he raised our sights beyond the bounds of mortality. Our Heavenly Father has eternal perfection. This very fact merits a much broader perspective.

12 Recently I studied the English and Greek editions of the New Testament, concentrating on each use of the term *perfect* and its derivatives. Studying both languages together provided some interesting insights, since Greek was the original language of the New Testament.

13 In Matt. 5:48, the term *perfect* was translated from the Greek *teleios*, which means "complete." *Teleios* is an adjective derived from the noun *telos*, which means "end."^k The infinitive form of the verb is *teleiono*, which means "to reach a distant end, to be fully developed, to consummate, or to finish."^l Please note that the

d D&C 130:18–19

e James 3:2; emphasis added

f Gen. 6:9; D&C 107:43; Job 1:1

g Alma 13:12

h Heb. 5:8

i Heb. 12:6

j D&C 137:9

k Incidentally, the feminine form of this noun is *teleia*, the Greek term for a period at the end of a sentence

l Footnote b for Matt. 5:48 states: "gr complete, finished, fully developed" (LDS edition of the King James Version of the Bible, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, p. 1195)

word does not imply “freedom from error”; it implies “achieving a distant objective.” In fact, when writers of the Greek New Testament wished to describe perfection of behavior—precision or excellence of human effort—they did *not* employ a form of *teleios*; instead, they chose different words.^m

14 *Teleios* is not a total stranger to us. From it comes the prefix *tele-* that we use every day. *Telephone* literally means “distant talk.” *Television* means “to see distantly.” *Telephoto* means “distant light,” and so on.

15 With that background in mind, let us consider another highly significant statement made by the Lord. Just prior to his crucifixion, he said that on “the third day *I shall be perfected*.”ⁿ Think of that! The sinless, errorless Lord—already perfect

by our mortal standards—proclaimed his own state of perfection yet to be in the future.^o His *eternal* perfection would follow his resurrection and receipt of “all power ... in heaven and in earth.”^p

16 The perfection that the Savior envisions for us is much more than errorless performance. It is the eternal expectation as expressed by the Lord in his great intercessory prayer to his Father—that we might be made perfect and be able to dwell with them in the eternities ahead.^q

17 The Lord’s entire work and glory pertains to the immortality and eternal life of each human being.^r He came into the world to do the will of his Father, who sent him.^s His sacred responsibility was foreseen before the creation^t and was foretold by all his holy prophets since the world began.^u

m A few examples include: “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise” (Matt. 21:16; emphasis added). “The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master” (Luke 6:40). In both of these verses, perfect came from the Greek term *katartizo*, which means “to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust; to fit or frame for one’s self”—an act of preparation. Another speaks of “perfect understanding” (Luke 1:3; emphasis added). In this instance, perfect came from the Greek adverb *akribos*, which means “exactly, accurately.” Another verse refers to those who touched the hem of the Master’s garment and “were made perfectly whole” (Matt. 14:36; emphasis added). Perfect in this instance came from the Greek *diasozo*, which means “to preserve through danger, to bring safely through, to save, keep from perishing, to rescue.”

n Luke 13:32; emphasis added

o In the Greek text of that proclamation, the verb *teleiono* was again used, in its future tense—*teleiouma*.

p Matt. 28:18; see also D&C 93:2–22

q John 17:23–24

r Moses 1:39

s 3 Ne. 27:13

t Moses 4:1–2; Moses 7:62; Abr. 3:22–28

u Acts 3:19–21

18 The atonement of Christ fulfilled the long-awaited purpose for which he had come to the earth. His concluding words upon Calvary's cross referred to the culmination of his assignment—to atone for all humankind. Then he said, "It is finished."^v Not surprisingly, the Greek word from which *finished* was derived is *teleios*.

19 That Jesus attained eternal perfection *following* his resurrection is confirmed in the Book of Mormon. It records the visit of the resurrected Lord to the people of ancient America. There he repeated the important injunction previously cited but with one very significant addition. He said, "I would that ye should be perfect *even as I*, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect."^w This time he listed himself along with his Father as a perfected personage. Previously he had not.^x

20 Resurrection is requisite for eternal perfection. Thanks to the

atonement of Jesus Christ, our bodies, corruptible in mortality, will become incorruptible. Our physical frames, now subject to disease, death, and decay, will acquire immortal glory.^y Presently sustained by the blood of life^z and ever aging, our bodies will be sustained by spirit and become changeless and beyond the bounds of death.^{aa}

21 Eternal perfection is reserved for those who overcome all things and inherit the fulness of the Father in his heavenly mansions. Perfection consists in gaining eternal life—the kind of life that God lives.^{ab}

Ordinances and Covenants of the Temple

22 Scriptures identify other important prerequisites to eternal perfection. They relate to the ordinances and covenants of the temple.^{ac} No accountable individual can receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom without the ordinances of the temple. Endowments and sealings are

v John 19:30. In modern revelation, Jesus used similar language. He said, "I partook and *finished* my preparations unto the children of men" (D&C 19:19; emphasis added).

w 3 Ne. 12:48; emphasis added

x Matt. 5:48

y Alma 11:45; D&C 76:64–70

z Lev. 17:11

aa LDS Bible Dictionary, s.v. "resurrection": "A resurrection means to become immortal, without blood, yet with a body of flesh and bone."

ab See Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Independence, Missouri: The Genealogical Society of Utah, 1946), p. 331; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 237

ac Joseph Smith taught, "Being born again, comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 162)

for our personal perfection and are secured through our faithfulness.^{ad}

23 This requirement also pertains to our ancestors. Paul taught “that they without us should not be made *perfect*.”^{ae} Again, in that verse, the Greek term from which *perfect* was translated was a form of *teleios*.^{af}

24 In latter-day revelation, the Lord was even more explicit. His prophet wrote: “My dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation. ... They without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect.”^{ag}

Encouragement from the Savior’s Example

25 Our climb up the path to perfection is aided by encouragement from the scriptures. They hold the promise that we shall, if faithful in all things, become like Deity. John the beloved Apostle wrote:

26 “We should be called the sons

[and daughters] of God. ...

27 “... When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

28 “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”^{ah}

29 Continuing encouragement comes as we follow the example of Jesus, who taught, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”^{ai} His hope for us is crystal clear! He declared: “What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am.”^{aj} Thus, our adoration of Jesus is best expressed by our emulation of Jesus.^{ak}

30 People have never failed to follow Jesus because his standards were imprecise or insufficiently high. Quite to the contrary. Some have disregarded his teachings because they were viewed as being too precise or impractically high! Yet such lofty standards, when earnestly pursued, produce great inner peace and incomparable joy.

31 There is no other individual to compare with Jesus Christ, nor is there any other exhorta-

ad See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56), 2:45

ae Heb. 11:40; emphasis added

af Teleioo

ag D&C 128:15; see also *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 159

ah 1 Jn. 3:1–3. For additional commentary, see Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, pp. 7–9

ai 1 Pet. 1:16; see also Lev. 11:44–45; Lev. 19:2; Lev. 20:26

aj 3 Ne. 27:27

ak See Neal A. Maxwell, *We Talk of Christ, We Rejoice in Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984), p. 145; Hugh B. Brown, *The Abundant Life* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), p. 199

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tion equal to his sublime expression of hope: “I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.”^{al}

32 This divine entreaty is consistent with the fact that, as begotten children of heavenly parents, we are endowed with the potential to become like them, just as mortal children may become like their mortal parents.

33 The Lord restored his church to help us prepare for perfection. Paul said that the Savior placed in the Church Apostles, prophets, and teachers, “for the perfecting of the saints, ... for the edifying of the body of Christ:

34 “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect* man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”^{am}

35 The *perfect* man described in Paul’s quotation is the completed person—*teleios*—the glorified soul!

36 Moroni taught how to gain this glorious objective. His instruction stands in any age as an antidote for depression and a prescription for joy. I echo his

plea: “Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; ... love God with all your might, mind and strength ... [Then] ye may be perfect in Christ, ... holy, [and] without spot.”^{an}

37 Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, let us do the best we can and try to improve each day. When our imperfections appear, we can keep trying to correct them. We can be more forgiving of flaws in ourselves and among those we love. We can be comforted and forbearing. The Lord taught, “Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now ... ; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected.”^{ao}

38 We need not be dismayed if our earnest efforts toward perfection now seem so arduous and endless. Perfection is pending. It can come in full only after the Resurrection and only through the Lord. It awaits all who love him and keep his commandments. It includes thrones, kingdoms, principalities, powers, and dominions.^{ap} It is the end for which we are to endure.^{aq} It is the eternal perfection that God has in store for each of us. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

al 3 Ne. 12:48

am Eph. 4:12–13; emphasis added

an Moro. 10:32–33

ao D&C 67:13

ap D&C 132:19

aq This concept is supported by the fact that in verses of the New Testament that refer to the end for which we are to endure, the Greek word from which *end* was translated was also derived from *telos* (see Matt. 10:22; Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13).

CHAPTER 25

Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods - Delivered April 1996 in the Saturday Morning session of General Conference

AS I face this congregation, I sense the responsibility entrusted to me. As you face the General Authorities and officers of the Church, you also bear responsibility. We are all accountable for acting upon the truths that are taught.

2 Facing you, I am reminded of military days long ago when our platoon heard shouts from a sergeant: "Attention!" "Right face!" "Left face!" "About face!" We learned to respond to those orders with instant precision. In retrospect, I don't recall ever having heard his command to "face upward." Yet scriptures tell us to "look to God and live."^a

3 My topic today relates to the first of the Lord's Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."^b This commandment may be better known than obeyed. May I share a suggestion that I have found useful in testing my own allegiance to this commandment? When confronted with a challenging choice, I ask myself, "Which way do you face?"

Life without Looking to God

4 Sadly, many individuals don't know where to find God, and exclude Him from their lives. When spiritual needs arise, they

may look to the left, the right, or round about. But looking to other people on the same level cannot satisfy spiritual shortages. When the immortal spirit is starved, hunger persists for something more filling. Even when material success comes, there is a hollow ache—if living well falls short of living worthily. Inner peace cannot be found in affluence accompanied by spiritual privation.

Invitation to Come to the Lord

5 Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invite all to come unto Christ and enjoy the spiritual feast that His gospel provides. The Saints savor a sweet spiritual nourishment that sustains them through life. This sustenance comes because they have made covenants to take upon themselves the name of the Lord and strive to obey his precepts. Strength comes in recognizing and in being grateful for the Lord's gifts of immortality and the opportunity for eternal life.

Loyal Citizens

6 These gifts are available to all. Citizens of many countries claim membership in the Church. Regardless of their flag or form of government, they find that allegiance to the Lord does not preclude their being loyal citizens of their nations. Fidelity to God enables one to develop a more profound patriotic allegiance and become a better citizen.

a Alma 37:47; see also Ps. 5:3; Alma 5:19; Alma 37:37
b Ex. 20:3; see also D&C 20:17-19

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7 In addition to their national citizenship, members of the Church are also citizens of God's kingdom.^c Their commitment to it, however, may be variable. The great majority seek "first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness."^d Some allow their allegiance to God and His kingdom to slip below that of other interests in life. They have not yet determined which way they face.^e

Representatives of the Lord

8 I perceived such confusion in the mind of a newspaper reporter who asked one of our leaders when a representative of such-and-such a country would become a General Authority. While that question was being answered, I thought about our beloved General Authorities born in the countries of Asia; of Europe; of North, Central, and South America; and of the islands of the sea. Though these Brethren come from many nations and speak several tongues, not one of them was called to represent his native country. Presiding quorums of the Church are not representative assemblies. Each leader has been called to face the people as a representative of the Lord, not the other way around.

9 General Authorities are "called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority."^f They are called as "especial witnesses"^g unto *all* the world, to teach and testify of the Lord Jesus Christ.^h

*Obedying Commandments
of the Lord*

10 No matter where we live or in what position we serve, all of us need to determine which way we face. God's commandments serve as a standard against which priorities can be measured. Our respect for the first commandment fashions our feelings for all the others. Consider the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy, for example.ⁱ We live in a time when many people throughout the world have transferred their allegiance on the Sabbath from places of worship to places of amusement. Again I ask, "Which way do you face?"^j

11 Scriptures give us encouragement to do right: "If thou turn away ... from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, ... and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, ...

c Eph. 2:19

d JST, Matt. 6:38

e Joel 3:14

f A of F 1:5

g D&C 107:25

h What they speak "when moved upon by the Holy Ghost" represents the will of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, and the word of the Lord (D&C 68:4)

i Among the many, see Ex. 20:8; Ex. 31:15; Ex. 35:2; Lev. 23:3; Jarom 1:5; Mosiah 13:16; Mosiah 18:23; D&C 68:29

j 1 Kgs. 18:21

12 "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."^k

13 Self-esteem is also earned by obedience to God's commandments regarding chastity.^l Yet in our day those commands have been attacked and trivialized. The morality of self-discipline with appropriate "denial or restraint has been popularly depicted as unhealthy and dehumanizing." The truth is, "it is dehumanizing to define ourselves by our desires alone."^m Each human being is a child of God—created in His image—with natural appetites to control.

14 If we break God's first commandment, we cannot escape retribution. If we allow any other person or cause to come before allegiance to Him, we will reap a bitter harvest. Paul foresaw "destruction" for those "whose God is their belly."ⁿ (I might include all forms of anatomical affec-

tion.) Any who choose to serve "the creature more than the Creator"^o deprive themselves of spiritual reward.

15 Thus, our priorities should be honestly evaluated in terms of that first commandment. If change in direction is needed, we may want to issue a self-command to "about face!" Doing so would please the Lord, who said, "Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations."^p

16 Trees reach up for the light and grow in the process. So do we as sons and daughters of heavenly parents. Facing upward provides a loftier perspective than facing right or facing left. Looking up in search of holiness builds strength and dignity as disciples of Deity.^q

k Isa. 58:13-14

l Some of the many are Ex. 20:14; Lev. 18:22; Matt. 5:28; 1 Cor. 6:9; 3 Ne. 12:28; D&C 42:24; D&C 59:6

m Report of the Ramsey Colloquium, Wall Street Journal, 24 Feb. 1994, A-18

n Philip. 3:19

o Rom. 1:25

p Ezek. 14:6

q The importance of looking up to the Lord is also emphasized in a vision to the Prophet Joseph Smith, dated 21 January 1836: "I saw the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who are now upon the earth, who hold the keys of this last ministry, in foreign lands, standing together in a circle, much fatigued, with their clothes tattered and feet swollen, with their eyes cast downward, and Jesus standing in their midst, and they did not behold Him. The Savior looked upon them and wept" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 107). That the Twelve were subsequently vindicated is apparent as we read further in the Prophet's record: "And I finally saw the Twelve in the celestial kingdom of God. I also beheld the redemption of Zion, and many things which the tongue of men cannot describe in full" (Teachings, 108)

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Facing Our Families

17 Facing upward is crucial for successful parenting. Families deserve guidance from heaven. Parents cannot counsel children adequately from personal experience, fear, or sympathy.^r But when parents face children as would the Creator who gave them life, parents will be endowed with wisdom beyond that of their own. Wise mothers and fathers will teach members of their family how to make personal decisions based upon divine law.^s They will teach them that “this life is the time ... to prepare to meet God.”^t They will teach them that decisions of a moral and spiritual character *cannot* be based on freedom to choose without accountability to God for those choices.^u With that understanding, parents and children will be rewarded with strength of character, peace of mind, joy, and rejoicing in their posterity.^v

Facing Our Neighbors

18 Similarly, relationships with neighbors, friends, and associates will be enhanced as we approach them with “the pure love

of Christ.”^w A desire to emulate the Lord provides powerful motivation for good. Our craving for compassion will cause us to act in accord with the Golden Rule.^x By so doing, we will find joy in feeding the poor, clothing the naked, or doing volunteer work of worth.

19 Service to neighbors takes on new stature when we first look to God. In the Church, when priesthood and auxiliary leaders face their congregations, quorums, and classes as would the Lord, they learn that it does not matter *where* they serve, but *how*. Position in the Church does not exalt anyone, but faithfulness does. On the other hand, aspiring to a visible position—striving to become a master rather than a servant—can destroy the spirit of the worker and the work.

20 Occasionally confusion exists regarding servants and masters. The Bible reports that a group of men “had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest” among them. Jesus said, “If any man desire to be

r Prov. 3:5

s D&C 130:20–21, which teaches that any blessing from God is obtained by obedience to that law upon which the blessing is predicated

t Alma 34:32

u D&C 101:78

v JST, Gen. 9:22 adds this insight: “When thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy.”

w Moro. 7:47

x “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matt. 7:12)

first, the same shall be last of all, and *servant of all.*"^y

21 Was Jesus asking His disciples to respond to random requests from the crowd or to serve tables?^z No! He was asking them to serve in *His* way. The people were not to be masters of his disciples. The *Lord* is their Master.

22 In rendering service to others, which way do we face? From the right or the left, we can only push or pull. We can lift only from a higher plane. To reach it we don't look sideways; we look up to our Master. Just as we must look to God to *live* well, so we must look to God to *serve* well.

Attitudes of Effective Disciples

23 If we are called to positions of leadership, we are accountable to the Savior for the acts we perform in that office. Those actions are shaped by attitudes, and attitudes are elevated while lowering our heads in humble prayer. So state words in the hymn "Before Thee, Lord, I Bow My Head":

*Look up, my soul; be not cast down.
Keep not thine eyes upon the ground.*

*Break off the shackles of the earth.
Receive, my soul, the spirit's birth.
And now as I go forth again
To mingle with my fellowmen,
Stay thou nearby, my steps to guide,
That I may in thy love abide.*^{aa}

24 Praying helps us to face trials in life. Prayer centers our attitudes precisely. With that focus, we do not wander to the right or left through land mined with traps of temptation. Disciples do not flirt with danger at the jagged edge of disaster. Experienced mountain climbers do not lean toward the dangerous edge but toward safety, with ropes and other safeguards to secure them to those they trust. So it is with us. When we climb mountainous challenges of life, we should lean toward our Master and be yoked with him, clinging tightly to the iron rod of the gospel, to family, and to trusted friends.

25 President David O. McKay taught this about edges: "Many of us through selfishness are lingering near the edge of the animal jungle where Nature's law demands us to do everything with self in view."^{ab}

y Mark 9:34-35; emphasis added. Another gospel writer phrased that truth in a similar way: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:11). In these scriptures, the word servant comes from the Greek noun diakonos, which means "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master." Diakonos is the Greek word from which the English word deacon is derived

z Acts 6:2

aa Hymns, no. 158

ab Improvement Era, June 1957, 390. President James E. Faust issued this solemn warning: "Living on the edge can also mean being perilously close to the Bottomless Pit. ... "Some of you may think that you will discover your strengths and abilities by living on the edge. ... There will always be enough risks that will come to you naturally without your having to seek them out" (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 46)

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26 The Lord said, "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not."^a I have learned that such faith gives emancipating power. Facing God first lets us decide firmly what we shall not do; then we are free to pursue what we ought to do.

27 Recently, President Gordon B. Hinckley declared: "Love of God is the root of all virtue, of all goodness, of all strength of character, of all fidelity to do right. Love the Lord your God, and love his Son, and be ever grateful for their love for us. Whenever other love fades, there will be that shining, transcendent, everlasting love of God for each of us and the love of his Son, who gave his life for us."^b

28 Brothers and sisters, race, nationality, occupation, or other interests need not stand in the way. All can look to the Lord. All can place him first in their lives. Those who do so and remain faithful will qualify for his sublime promise:"^c "Every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my

name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am."^d This glorious destiny can be ours, I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 26

The Atonement - Delivered October 1996 in the Saturday Afternoon session of General Conference.

HUMBLY I join the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob, who asked, "Why not speak of the atonement of Christ?"^e This topic comprises our third article of faith: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."^f

2 Before we can comprehend the Atonement of Christ, however, we must first understand the Fall of Adam. And before we can understand the Fall of Adam, we must first understand the Creation. These three crucial components of the plan of salvation relate to each other.^g

a D&C 6:36

b Ricks College regional conference, 29 Oct. 1995; reported in Church News, 2 Mar. 1996, 2

c He has also given many others, among which are: "Blessed are you; for as you now behold me and know that I am, even so shall ye come unto me and your souls shall live" (D&C 45:46). "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88)

d D&C 93:1

e Jacob 4:12

f A of F 1:3

g The relationships of these components are found linked together in several scriptures, such as Alma 18:34–39; Morm. 9:12; D&C 20:17–24

The Creation

3 The Creation culminated with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were created in the image of God, with bodies of flesh and bone.^h Created in the image of God and not yet mortal, they could not grow old and die.ⁱ “And they would have had no children”^j nor experienced the trials of life. (Please forgive me for mentioning children and the trials of life in the same breath.) The creation of Adam and Eve was a *paradisical creation*, one that required a significant change before they could fulfill the commandment to have children^k and thus provide earthly bodies for premortal spirit sons and daughters of God.

The Fall

4 That brings us to the Fall. Scripture teaches that “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.”^l The Fall of Adam (and Eve) constituted the *mortal creation* and brought about the required changes in their bodies, including the circulation of blood and other modifications as well.^m They were now able to have children. They and their posterity also became subject to injury, disease, and death. And a loving Creator

blessed them with healing power by which the life and function of precious physical bodies could be preserved. For example, bones, if broken, could become solid again. Lacerations of the flesh could heal themselves. And miraculously, leaks in the circulation could be sealed off by components activated from the very blood being lost.ⁿ

5 Think of the wonder of that power to heal! If you could create anything that could repair itself, you would have created life in perpetuity. For example, if you could create a chair that could fix its own broken leg, there would be no limit to the life of that chair. Many of you walk on legs that were once broken and do so because of your remarkable gift of healing.

6 Even though our Creator endowed us with this incredible power, He consigned a counterbalancing gift to our bodies. It is the blessing of *aging*, with visible reminders that we are mortal beings destined one day to leave this “frail existence.”^o Our bodies change every day. As we grow older, our broad chests and narrow waists have a tendency to trade places. We get wrinkles, lose color in our hair—even the

h They were created as *amortal* beings—“without mortality”—not at that time subject to death.

i Alma 12:21–23

j 2 Ne. 2:23

k Gen. 1:28; Moses 2:28

l 2 Ne. 2:25

m We should remember that God forgave Adam and Eve their transgression (see Moses 6:53)

n Such as platelets and thrombin

o Eliza R. Snow, “O My Father,” Hymns, no. 292

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hair itself—to remind us that we are mortal children of God, with a “manufacturer’s guarantee” that we shall not be stranded upon the earth forever. Were it not for the Fall, our physicians, beauticians, and morticians would all be unemployed.

7 Adam and Eve, as mortal beings, were instructed to “worship the Lord their God, and ... offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord.”^p They were further instructed that “the life of the flesh is in the blood: ... for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”^q Probation, procreation, and aging were all components of—and physical death was essential to—God’s “great plan of happiness.”^r

8 But mortal life, glorious as it is, was never the *ultimate* objective of God’s plan. Life and death here on planet Earth were merely *means* to an end—not the *end* for which we were sent.

The Atonement

9 That brings us to the Atonement. Paul said, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”^s The Atonement of Jesus Christ became the *im-*

mortal creation. He volunteered to answer the ends of a law previously transgressed.^t And by the shedding of His blood, His^u and our physical bodies could become perfected. They could again function without blood, just as Adam’s and Eve’s did in their *paradisiacal* form. Paul taught that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; ... this mortal must put on immortality.”^v

Meaning of Atonement

10 With this background in mind, let us now ponder the deep meaning of the word *atonement*. In the English language, the components are *at-one-ment*, suggesting that a person is at one with another. Other languages^w employ words that connote either *expiation* or *reconciliation*. *Expiation* means “to atone for.” *Reconciliation* comes from Latin roots *re*, meaning “again”; *con*, meaning “with”; and *sella*, meaning “seat.” *Reconciliation*, therefore, literally means “to sit again with.”

11 Rich meaning is found in study of the word *atonement* in the Semitic languages of Old Testament times. In Hebrew, the basic word for atonement is *kaphar*, a verb that means “to

p Moses 5:5
 q Lev. 17:11
 r Alma 42:8
 s 1 Cor. 15:22; see also Mosiah 16:7–8
 t 2 Ne. 2:7; also “Behold the Great Redeemer Die,” Hymns, no. 191
 u Luke 13:32
 v 1 Cor. 15:50–53
 w Such as Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, and German

and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. Latter-day revelation has added much to our biblical base of understanding.

Infinite Atonement

16 In preparatory times of the Old Testament, the practice of atonement was finite—meaning it had an end. It was a symbolic forecast of the definitive Atonement of Jesus the Christ. His Atonement is infinite—without an end.^{ah} It was also infinite in that all humankind would be saved from never-ending death. It was infinite in terms of His immense suffering. It was infinite in time, putting an end to the preceding prototype of animal sacrifice. It was infinite in scope—it was to be done once for all.^{ai} And the mercy of the Atonement extends not only to an infinite number of people, but also to an infinite number of worlds created by Him.^{aj} It was infinite beyond any human scale of measurement or mortal comprehension.

17 Jesus was the only one who could offer such an infinite atonement, since He was born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. Because of that unique birthright, Jesus was an infinite Being.

The Ordeal of the Atonement

18 The ordeal of the Atonement centered about the city of Jerusalem. There the greatest single act of love of all recorded history took place.^{ak} Leaving the upper room, Jesus and His friends crossed the deep ravine east of the city and came to a garden of olive trees on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. There in the garden bearing the Hebrew name of *Gethsemane*—meaning “oil-press”—olives had been beaten and pressed to provide oil and food. There at Gethsemane, the Lord “suffered the pain of all men, that all ... might repent and come unto him.”^{al} He took upon Himself the weight of the sins of all mankind, bearing its massive load that caused Him to bleed from every pore.^{am}

19 Later He was beaten and scourged. A crown of sharp thorns was thrust upon His head as an additional form of torture.^{an} He was mocked and jeered. He suffered every indignity at the hands of His own people. “I came unto my own,” He said, “and my own received me not.”^{ao} Instead of their warm embrace, He received their cruel rejection. Then He was required to carry His own cross to the hill of Calvary, where He was nailed to that cross and made to suffer excruciating pain.

ah 2 Ne. 9:7; 2 Ne. 25:16; Alma 34:10, 12, 14

ai Heb. 10:10

aj D&C 76:24; Moses 1:33

ak John 3:16

al D&C 18:11

am Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18

an Matt. 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5

ao 3 Ne. 9:16; see also D&C 6:21; D&C 10:57; D&C 11:29; D&C 39:3; D&C 45:8; D&C 133:66

20 Later He said, "I thirst."^{ap} To a doctor of medicine, this is a very meaningful expression. Doctors know that when a patient goes into shock because of blood loss, invariably that patient—if still conscious—with parched and shriveled lips cries for water.

21 Even though the Father and the Son knew well in advance what was to be experienced, the actuality of it brought indescribable agony. "And [Jesus] said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."^{aq} Jesus then complied with the will of His Father.^{ar} Three days later, precisely as prophesied, He rose from the grave. He became the firstfruits of the Resurrection. He had accomplished the Atonement, which could give immortality and eternal life to all obedient human beings. All that the Fall allowed to go awry, the Atonement allowed to go aright.

2 The Savior's gift of *immortality* comes to all who have ever lived. But His gift of *eternal life* requires repentance and obedience to specific ordinances and covenants. Essential ordinances of the gospel symbolize the Atonement. Baptism by immersion is

symbolic of the death, burial, and Resurrection of the Redeemer. Partaking of the sacrament renews baptismal covenants and also renews our memory of the Savior's broken flesh and of the blood He shed for us. Ordinances of the temple symbolize our reconciliation with the Lord and seal families together forever. Obedience to the sacred covenants made in temples qualifies us for eternal life—the greatest gift of God to man^{as}—the "object and end of our existence."^{at}

The Atonement Enabled the Purpose of the Creation to Be Accomplished

23 The Creation required the Fall. The Fall required the Atonement. The Atonement enabled the purpose of the Creation to be accomplished. Eternal life, made possible by the Atonement, is the supreme purpose of the Creation. To phrase that statement in its negative form, if families were not sealed in holy temples, the whole earth would be utterly wasted.^{au}

24 The purposes of the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement all converge on the sacred work done in temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The earth was created

ap John 19:28

aq Mark 14:36. The word *Abba* is significant. *Ab* means "father"; *Abba* is an endearing and tender form of that term. The nearest English equivalent might be *Daddy*

ar Centuries later, the Lord shared innermost recollections of this experience with the Prophet Joseph Smith, the record of which we read in Doctrine and Covenants 19

as D&C 14:7

at Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* (1978), 568

au D&C 2:3; D&C 138:48

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and the Church was restored to make possible the sealing of wife to husband, children to parents, families to progenitors, worlds without end.

25 This is the great latter-day work of which we are a part. That is why we have missionaries; that is why we have temples—to bring the fullest blessings of the Atonement to faithful children of God. That is why we respond to our own calls from the Lord. When we comprehend His voluntary Atonement, any sense of sacrifice on our part becomes completely overshadowed by a profound sense of gratitude for the privilege of serving Him.

26 As one of the “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world,”^a I testify that He is the Son of the living God. Jesus is the Christ—our atoning Savior and Redeemer. This is His Church, restored to bless God’s children and to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 27

Friend to Friend - Printed in the March 1997 Friend magazine. Reprinted in the February 1999 Liaho-na magazine.

IN June 1972, Sister Nelson and I decided to take our family on a rafting trip down the Colorado River. We thought it would be fun to be together for a week, and we were told the water level was low, so we believed it would

be safe. We had no idea how dangerous the trip would turn out to be!

2 Our youngest child was only four months old then, so we left him with relatives and went with our nine daughters and one son-in-law. On the second day of the trip, as we started to go over the Horn Creek rapids, we suddenly saw a drop ahead that seemed to be the depth of a several-story building. These precious people in my family were about to drop down a waterfall in a small rubber raft, and I was frightened! By instinct I let go of the rope in the raft and protectively put one arm around my wife and the other around our youngest daughter, Marjorie, who was not quite seven years old.

3 I was sitting in the back of the raft, and as we hit the rapids, I was thrown into the air. I landed in the water, and each time I tried to reach the surface, I found myself trapped underneath the raft. I was tossed about by the water like an egg in an eggbeater, and I had no air and nearly drowned. My family couldn’t see me, but I could hear them shouting, “Daddy! Daddy! Where’s Daddy?”

4 I finally came to the surface, and my family was able to drag me, exhausted, out of the water. They were relieved to see me—and I was certainly glad to see them!

5 The next several days we went over rapids that were much

a D&C 107:23

ful lakes and rented a small boat. After rowing far from shore, we stopped to relax and enjoy the tranquil scene. Suddenly, our little toddler lifted one leg out of the boat and started to go overboard, exclaiming, "Time to get out, Daddy!"

2 Quickly we caught her and explained, "No, dear, it's not time to get out; we must stay in the boat until it brings us safely back to land." Only with considerable persuasion did we succeed in convincing her that leaving the boat early would have led to disaster.

3 Children are prone to do such dangerous things simply be-

cause they have not acquired the wisdom their parents have. Similarly, we as children of our Heavenly Father may foolishly want to get "out of the boat" before we arrive at destinations He would like us to reach. The Lord teaches over and over that we are to endure^a to the end.^b This is a dominant theme of the scriptures. One example may serve to represent many passages that convey a similar message:

"Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion ..., for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting king-

a The word *endure* comes from two Latin roots. The prefix *en* means "within." The remainder comes from the verb *durare*, which means "to be firm or solid." Thus, to *endure* means "to become firm within yourself." That meaning carries into the original languages of the Bible. In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, the root word *'aman* means "to render firm" or "to be faithful, to trust." It was often translated as "faithful," but never as "faith" alone. *'Aman* meant more than faith. It was not a passive term; it meant "a firm resolve to be faithful." *'Aman* was also the Hebrew root for words that were translated into related terms, such as "verified," "believe," "long continuance," "assurance," "establish(ed)," "sure," "trust," "steadfast," "stand fast," and others. In the Greek language of the New Testament, the verb *hupoméno* was used. It means "to remain," "stay," or "continue." *Hupo* (or *hypo*) means "under," as in *hypodermic* ("under the skin") or *hypothermia* ("low temperature"). "To endure" connotes a commitment *within* one's soul.

b Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13; 2 Ne. 33:4; Omni 1:26; 3 Ne. 15:9; D&C 14:7; D&C 18:22; D&C 20:29. This promise has been confirmed by both our Father in Heaven and by the Lord Jesus Christ. From the great Elohim, we have this pronouncement: "The words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (2 Ne. 31:15). And from the Savior, we have this promise: "Whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, ... him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world" (3 Ne. 27:16).

dom of the Lamb."^c

4 Blessings bestowed by God are always predicated upon obedience to law.^d Applied to my analogy, we are first to get "on the boat" with Him. Then we are to stay with Him. And if we don't get "out of the boat" before we should, we shall reach His kingdom, where we will be lifted up to eternal life.

5 The term "lifted up" relates to a physical law that can be illustrated by a simple demonstration.^e I will use a spool of thread and blow into the axial hole of the spool. The force of my breath will move a piece of tissue paper away from me. Next I will take an ordinary card and a straight pin. I will place the pin through the card. With the pin in the hole of the spool, I will hold the card close to the spool. I will again blow into the hole of the spool. As I blow, I will let go of the card so that it can respond to physical forces. Before I proceed, would you like to predict what will

happen? Will I blow the card away from me, or will the card be lifted up toward me? Are you ready? [Elder Nelson demonstrates that blowing down the axial hole of the spool lifts the card up toward the spool.]

6 Did you notice? As long as I had sufficient breath, the card was lifted up. But when I could endure no longer, the card fell. When my breath gave out, the opposing force of gravity prevailed. If my energy could have endured, the card would have been lifted up indefinitely.^f

7 Energy is always required to provide lift over opposing forces. These same laws apply in our personal lives. Whenever an undertaking is begun, both the energy and the will to endure are essential. The winner of a five-kilometer race is declared at the end of *five* kilometers, not at one or two. If you board a bus to Boston, you don't get off at Burlington. If you want to gain an education, you don't drop

c 1 Ne. 13:37; see also Mosiah 23:22; Alma 13:29; Alma 36:3; Alma 37:37; Alma 38:5; 3 Ne. 27:21–22; Ether 4:19; D&C 5:35; D&C 9:14; D&C 17:8; D&C 75:16. For additional emphasis, scriptures teach the negative consequences of disobedience to this commandment. For example, "If they will not repent and believe in his name, and be baptized in his name, and endure to the end, they must be damned; for the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has spoken it" (2 Ne. 9:24; see also 2 Ne. 31:16; Morm. 9:29).

d D&C 130:20–21

e This demonstration of Bernoulli's principle in physics was first shown to the author on 17 August 1996 by Elder Norman C. Boehm, then an Area Authority of the Church residing in Sacramento, California

f The law of lift is at work whenever airplanes fly. It is a "component of the total aerodynamic force acting on an airfoil or on an entire aircraft or winged missile perpendicular to the relative wind and normally exerted in an upward direction, opposing the pull of gravity" (American Heritage Dictionary [1982], s.v. "lift.")

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out along the way—just as you don't pay to dine at an elegant restaurant only to walk away after sampling the salad.

8 Whatever your work may be, endure at the beginning, endure through opposing forces along the way, and endure to the end. Any job must be completed before you can enjoy the result for which you are working. So wrote the poet:

*Stick to your task till it sticks to you;
Beginners are many, but enders are few.*

*Honor, power, place, and praise
Will always come to the one who stays.
Stick to your task till it sticks to you;
Bend at it, sweat at it, smile at it too;
For out of the bend and the sweat and
the smile*

Will come life's victories, after awhile.^g

9 Sometimes the need to endure

comes when facing a physical challenge. Anyone afflicted with a serious illness or with the infirmities of age hopes to be able to endure to the end of such trials.^h Most often, intense physical challenges are accompanied by spiritual challenges as well.

10 Think of the early pioneers. What if they had not endured the hardships of their westward migration? There would be no sesquicentennial celebration this year. Steadfastly they endured—through persecution,ⁱ expulsion,^j a governmental order of extermination,^k expropriation of property,^l and much more. Their enduring faith in the Lord provided lift for them as it will for you and for me.

11 The Lord's ultimate concern is for the salvation and exaltation of each individual soul. What if

g Author unknown, "Stick to Your Task," in *Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People*, ed. Jack M. Lyon and others (1996), 255–56

h In his 95th year, President Joseph Fielding Smith publicly expressed the hope that he would be able "to endure to the end in this life" (in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1970, 92; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1970, 27). He who served so faithfully and well all of his days provided a model for all of us to follow.

i JS—H 1:20, 22–24, 27, 58, 60–61, 74

j The pioneers were driven from Ohio to Missouri to Illinois and finally to the valley of the Great Salt Lake

k The early pioneers were forced out of Missouri under threat of an order signed by Missouri's governor directing that the "Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state" (*History of the Church*, 3:175)

l In 1887, the Congress of the USA took the unprecedented step of eliminating the Church's legal existence by revoking its corporate charter and authorizing federal receivers to assume ownership of virtually all of the Church's property and other assets, including its most sacred houses of worship—temples—in Logan, Manti, St. George, and Salt Lake City (see *The Late Corporation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. United States*, 136 U.S. 1 [1890])

dren is to “love their mother.”^u

19 President Gordon B. Hinckley made a statement recently that each Latter-day Saint husband should heed: “Magnify your [wife],” he said, “and in so doing you will magnify your priesthood.”^v To his profound advice we might couple the timeless counsel of Paul, who said, “Let every one of you ... love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”^w Enduring love provides enduring lift through life’s trials. An enduring marriage results when both husband and wife regard their union as one of the two most important commitments they will ever make.

20 The other commitment of everlasting consequence is to the Lord.^x Unfortunately, some souls make a covenant with God—signified by the sacred ordinance of baptism—without a heartfelt commitment to endure with Him. Baptism is an extremely important ordinance. But it is only initiatory. The su-

preme benefits of membership in the Church can only be realized only through the exalting ordinances of the temple. These blessings qualify us for “thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers”^y in the celestial kingdom.

21 The Lord can readily discern between those with superficial signs of activity and those who are deeply rooted in His Church. This Jesus taught in the parable of the sower. He observed that some “have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended.”^z

22 Loyalty to the Lord carries an obligation of loyalty to those called by the Lord to lead His Church. He has empowered that men be ordained to speak in His holy name.^{aa} As they guide His unsinkable boat safely toward the shore of salvation, we would do well to stay on board with them.^{ab} “No waters can swallow

u This statement has been made by many leaders of the Church. For example, see Howard W. Hunter, “Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 50; David O. McKay, as quoted by Gordon B. Hinckley, “Reach Out in Love and Kindness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 77

v First session of member fireside conference in Lima, Peru, 9 Nov. 1996

w Eph. 5:33

x In addition, worthy men are privileged to qualify for the oath and covenant of the priesthood, which will bless all men, women, and children whom they serve (see D&C 84:33–48)

y D&C 132:19

z Mark 4:17

aa D&C 1:38; D&C 21:5; D&C 68:4

ab Acts 27:30–31; 1 Ne. 18:21–23

will protect you from cheating—in marriage, in the Church, and in life.

28 If you really want to *be* like the Lord—more than any thing or *anyone* else—you will remember that your adoration of Jesus is best shown by your emulation of Him. Then you will not allow any other love to become more important than love for your companion, your family, and your Creator. You will govern yourself not by someone else’s set of rules but by revealed principles of truth.

29 Your responsibility to endure is uniquely yours. But you are never alone. I testify that the lifting power of the Lord can be yours if you will “come unto Christ” and “be perfected in him.” You will “deny yourselves of all ungodliness.” And you will “love God with all your might, mind and strength.”^a

30 The living prophet of the Lord has issued a clarion call: “I invite every one of you,” said President Hinckley, “to stand on your feet and with a song in your heart move forward, living the gospel, loving the Lord, and building the kingdom. Together we shall *stay* the course and *keep* the faith.”^b

31 I pray that each of us may so endure and be lifted up at the last day, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 29

The Exodus Repeated - Delivered September 1997 as a devotional at BYU Provo

THIS large congregation at the Marriott Center at Brigham Young University is but a fraction of the total audience assembled in centers throughout the world tonight. I wish that I could greet each one of you, and I am very sorry that is not possible. I am also thankful that Sister Nelson and several members of our family can be here. Their steadfast support means much to me.

2 I bring love and greetings from the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. We appreciate the great faith and devotion of the young adults of the Church. We hope that you students will enjoy your studies and excel in your chosen fields wherever you live. We hope that you who are single may meet and marry someone who can help you achieve your full potential. And for you who are already married, we hope that you will continually cherish your precious partner. Each person in this vast congregation may be privileged to bear great responsibilities in the Church in the exciting years ahead. We commend you, we thank you, and we pray for you.

3 The title for my message tonight is “The Exodus Repeated.” I have chosen this topic because

a Moro. 10:32

b “Stay the Course—Keep the Faith,” Ensign, Nov. 1995, 72; emphasis added

of the many instructive parallels that exist between the exodus from Egypt of the Israelites under Moses and the exodus from the United States of the Latter-day Saint pioneers under Brigham Young. In this year of celebration honoring those early converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we sense our deep debt of gratitude to them. But I also chose this topic because we can learn much from these stalwarts of ancient and modern Israel.

4 Generally, the sesquicentennial sketches and pageants have portrayed well what the pioneers did. But only a few writers have delved deeply enough to explain why. Even fewer have reported the similarities between the pioneer trek and the exodus from Egypt. That exodus was a type, and shadow, for the exodus of the pioneers.

5 An obvious likeness is that both groups had their inland sea of salt water and a Jordan River. But there were many other very significant similarities. Ancient Israel and modern Israel are linked arm in arm.

The Josephs

6 Ancient Israel had leaders before Moses, and modern Israel had a prophet-president before Brigham Young. The predecessors for each group also bore a resemblance to each other. A name common to both was Joseph—Joseph who was sold into Egypt and the Prophet Joseph Smith.

7 Few men in the Old Testament are of greater importance to Latter-day Saints than is Joseph of Egypt. Many of us claim lineage from Joseph through his sons Ephraim or Manasseh. The Book of Mormon reveals:

A part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed. . . . Even as this remnant of garment . . . hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed . . . be preserved by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself.^c

8 The pioneers were remnants of that precious seed. They knew that Joseph Smith had been chosen by the Lord to take up the labors of the tribe of Joseph, son of Jacob. Centuries earlier, Joseph had prophesied of Joseph Smith and had described their kinship:

Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers.

And I will give unto him a commandment that he shall do none other work, save the work which I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes; for

he shall do my work.^d

9 The name of *Joseph* applied not only to Joseph Smith, Jr., but to his father as well. Again I quote from Joseph, who was sold into Egypt:

Behold, that seer [Joseph Smith] will the Lord bless; . . . for this promise, which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins, shall be fulfilled. . . .

And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation.^e

10 Jacob's son Joseph and Joseph Smith had even more in common. At age 17, Joseph was informed of his great destiny.^f At the same age Joseph Smith was informed of his destiny regarding the Book of Mormon. At age 17 he was first visited by the angel Moroni, who informed the boy prophet that "God had a work for [him] to do." He was to translate a book written upon golden plates containing the fullness of the everlasting gospel. His "name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues".^g

11 Both Josephs endured persecution. Joseph of old was falsely accused of a crime he did not commit and was put into prison.^h Joseph Smith suffered incarceration on trumped-up charges and false accusations.

12 Joseph's coat of many colors was taken from him by his brothers in a cruel attempt to convince their father that Joseph had been killed.ⁱ Joseph Smith's life was cruelly taken from him, largely because of betrayals by false brethren.

13 Anciently, when "all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do".^j In the latter days, people starving for nourishment that only the gospel can provide are again to be fed—by Joseph. The Lord declared that "this generation shall have my word through [Joseph Smith]".^k Today we may "feast upon the words of Christ"^l because of Joseph Smith.

Moses and Brigham Young

14 Moses and Brigham Young had much in common. They were astute followers before they became great leaders. Moses had been prepared in the

d 2 Nephi 3:7–8

e 2 Nephi 3:14–15; see also JST, Genesis 50:26–38

f Genesis 37:2–11

g Joseph Smith—History 1:33; see also vv. 34–41

h Genesis 39:11–20

i Genesis 37:2–33

j Genesis 41:55

k D&C 5:10

l 2 Nephi 32:3

associates.^v Nevertheless, the same unified pattern of government will come again when the Lord shall be “King over all the earth”^w and govern from Zion and Jerusalem.^x

17 The journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai took about three months.^y The journey from Winter Quarters to the valley of the Great Salt Lake also took about three months (111 days).

18 The destination for each group was described by the Lord as a land flowing with milk and honey.^z The pioneers turned their wilderness into a fruitful field and made the desert blossom as a rose—precisely as prophesied by Isaiah centuries before.^{aa}

Miracles Shared

19 Both groups shared many miracles that are memorialized annually. The celebration of Passover relates to the travels of the ancient Israelites. And each July we repeat legendary stories of our pioneers. Both groups tra-

versed deserts, mountains, and valleys of untamed wilderness. Ancient Israelites left Egypt via the parted waters of the Red Sea “as by dry land”.^{ab} The pioneers left the United States crossing the wide waters of the Mississippi river—frozen to become a highway of ice.^{ac}

20 The book of Exodus reports that quail were miraculously provided to feed the hungry people of ancient Israel.^{ad} The pioneers had an equivalent experience. After the last of them had been driven out of Nauvoo, many were sick and some had died. Their provisions were meager. On the riverbank above Montrose, Iowa, 9 October 1846, many quail miraculously flew into camp. The quail were cooked and fed to some 640 destitute people.^{ae} It was also miraculous that a permanent settlement survived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Seagulls that saved the crops were part of that miracle.

v HC 1:104–5, 226

w Psalm 47:2; see also Zechariah 14:9

x Isaiah 2:1–4

y Exodus 19:1

z For the ancient Israelites, see Exodus 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 13:27, 14:8, 16:13–14; Deuteronomy 6:3; 11:9; 26:9, 15; 27:3; 31:20; Joshua 5:6; Jeremiah 11:5, 32:22; Ezekiel 20:6, 15; JST, Exodus 33:1. For the pioneers, see Doctrine and Covenants 38:18–19

aa Isaiah 32:15–16, 35:1

ab Hebrews 11:29

ac Orson Pratt, JD 21:275–77

ad Exodus 16:13, Numbers 11:32, Psalm 105:40

ae Stanley B. Kimball, “Nauvoo West: The Mormons of the Iowa Shore,” Brigham Young University Studies 18, no. 2 [winter 1978:142]; Catching Quails, an oil painting on canvas by C. C. A. Christensen, is in the Museum of Art at Brigham Young University

21 God preserved ancient Israel from plagues sent upon Egypt.^{af} Similarly, God preserved the Saints from the plague of the United States Civil War, which caused more American deaths due to war than any other war.

Spiritual Strengths Shared

22 For both the Israelites and the Saints, their travail forged great spiritual strength. They both endured trials of their faith, during which the weak were winnowed away and the strong were empowered to endure to the end.^{ag} They had to leave their homes and earthly possessions and learn to rely wholly upon God. Protection was provided for ancient Israel by the Lord, who “went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire”.^{ah} The same has been said of divine watchcare afforded to the pioneers.^{ai}

23 Scriptures given to both societies speak of the strength of the Lord’s hand in their deliverance. To those of ancient Israel, Moses said, “Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bond-

age; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place”.^{aj}

24 To the Latter-day Saints, a comparable scripture was revealed: “For I, the Lord, have put forth my hand to exert the powers of heaven; ye cannot see it now, yet a little while and ye shall see it, and know that I am”.^{ak}

25 The children of Israel had a portable tabernacle wherein covenants were made and ordinances were performed to strengthen them on their journey.^{al} Many Latter-day Saints were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple before their arduous trek westward.

26 Gratefully, the Israelites celebrated their exodus from Egypt. The Latter-day Saints commemorated their exodus with the establishment of the world headquarters of the restored Church in the tops of the mountains. All celebrants acclaimed their deliverance by God.^{am}

Timeless Gospel Principles

27 Scriptures available to ancient and modern Israel include time-

af Exodus 15:26
ag Ether 12:6; D&C 101:4–5, 105:19
ah Exodus 13:21; see also v. 22, Numbers 14:14, Deuteronomy 1:33, Nehemiah 9:19
ai HC 3:xxxiv; also Thomas S. Monson, CR, April 1967, p. 56
aj Exodus 13:3
ak D&C 84:119
al Ordinances and covenants of ancient Israel are cited in 1 Corinthians 10:1–3; for those of modern Israel, see Doctrine and Covenants 84:26–27. The tabernacle of ancient Israel had been intended to be a movable temple before the people lost the higher law (see D&C 84:25, 124:38)
am Jeremiah 23:7–8

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less principles of the gospel. You are familiar with the prophecy of Isaiah:

Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.^{an}

28 Could any words have been more descriptive of the Book of Mormon, coming as it did “out of the ground” to “whisper out of the dust” to people of our day?

29 Other Old Testament passages foretold the Book of Mormon. One such came to mind last January when I attended a prayer breakfast at the White House, in Washington, D.C., hosted by President Bill Clinton. During an informal reception that preceded the breakfast, I was chatting with a distinguished and scholarly Jewish rabbi from New York. Our conversation was interrupted by another rabbi, who asked his colleague from New York if he could recall the scriptural reference to the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph that would come together one day. My friend paused for a moment, stroked his chin pensively, and then replied, “I think you will find that in the book of Ezekiel.”

30 With that, I could not restrain myself. “You might look in chapter 37 of Ezekiel,” I interjected.

“There you will find the scriptures that you seek.”

31 My rabbi friend expressed surprise: “How did *you* know that?”

32 “This doctrine,” I concluded, “is very important in our theology.”

33 Indeed it is. You know it, and I know it. I would like to read it:

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.^{ao}

34 Saints of modern Israel in 160 nations across the world are blessed to hold the Bible and the Book of Mormon as one in their hands. The worth of this privilege must never be underestimated.

35 Isaiah described the spirit of the Book of Mormon as “familiar.” It resonates with people who know the Old Testament, especially those who are conversant with its Hebrew language. The Book of Mormon is rich with Hebraisms—traditions, symbolisms, idioms, and literary forms. It is familiar because

an Isaiah 29:4

ao Ezekiel 37:16–17

more than 80 percent of its pages came from Old Testament times.

36 Timeless truths and principles of the gospel were and are important to people of ancient and modern Israel. The Sabbath day, for example, was honored for different reasons through the generations. From the time of Adam to Moses, the Sabbath was observed as a day of rest from the labor of creation.^{ap} From the time of Moses to the Resurrection of the Lord, the Sabbath also commemorated the liberation of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt.^{aq} In latter days, Saints keep the Sabbath day holy in memory of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.^{ar}

37 The restoration of the priesthood rejuvenated the principle of tithing, linking to the Old Testament teachings of Genesis and Malachi.^{as} Saints of modern Israel know how to calculate their own tithing from this simple instruction: “Those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy priesthood, saith the Lord”.^{at}

38 In contrast, have you ever

amused yourself with the thought, on or about April 15 each year, that the filing of income tax returns is a bit more complicated? I’ll confess that I have.

39 Turning our attention again to the timeless truths of the gospel, none are more vital than those associated with temple worship. They are another connection between ancient and modern Israel.

Whenever the Lord has had a people on the earth who will obey his word, they have been commanded to build temples in which the ordinances of the gospel and other spiritual manifestations that pertain to exaltation and eternal life may be administered.^{au}

40 The best-known temple of ancient Israel was Solomon’s temple. Its baptismal font and dedicatory prayer provided patterns that are employed for temples today.^{av} Old Testament scriptures refer to special clothing^{aw} and ordinances^{ax} associated with temples.^{ay} How thankful we are that the Lord chose to restore the highest blessings of the priesthood to his faithful sons and daughters. He said: “For I

ap Exodus 20:8–11, 31:16–17
 aq Deuteronomy 5:12–15; Isaiah 58:13; Ezekiel 20:20, 44:24; Mosiah 13:19
 ar Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2, Revelation 1:10, D&C 59:9–19
 as Genesis 14:20, Malachi 3:8–12
 at D&C 119:4
 au Bible Dictionary, s.v. “temple”
 av 2 Chronicles 4:15, 6:12–42; D&C 109
 aw Exodus 28:4, 29:5; Leviticus 8:7; 1 Samuel 18:4
 ax Exodus 19:10, 14; 2 Samuel 12:20; Ezekiel 16:9
 ay D&C 124:37–40

deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times".^{az}

41 Revealed truth that we know as the Word of Wisdom came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833. Every Latter-day Saint is familiar with it as one of the enduring hallmarks of our faith. The final verse of that revelation forges another link back to ancient Israel: "And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them".^{ba}

42 This reference to the Passover shows that the Lord wanted obedient Saints of modern Israel to receive physical and spiritual protection just as he had provided for his faithful followers centuries before.

*The Covenant, the Scattering,
and the Gathering*

43 Other divine teachings revered by both societies include doctrines of the Abrahamic covenant and of the scattering and gathering of Israel. About four thousand years ago, Abraham received a promise from the

Lord that blessings would be offered to all of his mortal posterity.^{bb} Included were promises that the Son of God would come through Abraham's lineage, that certain lands would be inherited by his posterity, that nations and kindreds of the earth would be blessed through his seed, and more. Affirmation and reaffirmations of this covenant are evident in many scriptures of the Old Testament.^{bc}

44 Although certain aspects of that covenant have already been fulfilled, many have not. The Book of Mormon teaches that we of modern Israel are among the covenant people of the Lord.^{bd} And, most remarkably, it teaches that the Abrahamic covenant will be fulfilled only in the latter days!^{be} The Lord once again bestowed the Abrahamic covenant, this time upon the Prophet Joseph Smith, to be a blessing upon him and posterity after him.^{bf}

45 Did you know that Abraham is mentioned in more verses of modern revelation than in all verses of the Old Testament?^{bg} Abraham—this great patriarch of the Old Testament—is inextricably linked to all who join The

az D&C 124:41

ba D&C 89:21

bb D&C 132:29–50, Abraham 2:6–11

bc Genesis 26:1–4, 24, 28; 35:9–13; 48:3–4

bd 1 Nephi 14:14, 15:14; 2 Nephi 30:2; Mosiah 24:13; 3 Nephi 29:3; Mormon 8:15

be 1 Nephi 15:12–18

bf D&C 124:56–59

bg Abraham is mentioned in 506 verses of scripture, 289 of which are in modern revelation

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.^{bh}

46 Doctrines relating to the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel were also among the earliest lessons taught in the Book of Mormon. I quote from 1 Nephi:

After the house of Israel should be scattered they should be gathered together again; . . . the natural branches of the olive-tree, or the remnants of the house of Israel, should be grafted in, or come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer.^{bi}

47 Saints of modern Israel know that Peter, James, and John were sent by the Lord with “the keys of [his] kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times,” in which he would “gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth”.^{bj}

48 The travels and travails of our pioneers were of eternal consequence. Their mission was not limited to an international immigration or a transcontinental migration with wagons and handcarts. They were to lay the foundation of an endless work

that would “fill the world”.^{bk} They were essential to Jeremiah’s prophecy: “Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock”.^{bl}

49 They got the message. Missionaries were sent very early to “the isles afar off” to commence the work of the Lord. As a result, the Church was established in the British Isles and in the islands of French Polynesia years before the pioneers entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake. It has been my privilege to participate in sesquicentennial celebrations in the British Isles in 1987 and in French Polynesia in 1994. Now we celebrate this one in 1997.

50 The lineage of Joseph—through Ephraim and Manasseh—is the seed appointed to lead in the gathering of Israel.^{bm} The pioneers knew—through their patriarchal blessings and from the Old Testament, amplified by scriptures and revelations of the Restoration—that the long-awaited gathering of Israel was to commence with them. This “ball” was in their court!

bh The covenant may also be received by adoption (see Matthew 3:9; Luke 3:8; Galatians 3:27–29, 4:5–7)

bi 1 Nephi 10:14

bj D&C 27:13; cf. Ephesians 1:10

bk Joseph Smith, quoted in *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946], p. 39

bl Jeremiah 31:10; The word gather comes from the Hebrew verb qabats, which means “to gather, assemble.”

bm Erastus Snow, JD 23:183–84

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Summary

51 Early converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were pioneers of modern Israel. Regardless of the time or place in which Saints may live, all faithful members of the Church will receive their just reward. "All things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's".^a

52 Ancient and modern Israel subscribe to an ageless message of the Old Testament: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God . . . keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations".^b

53 Upon our shoulders lies the responsibility to keep the faith through our own generation. This "ball" is in our court! We of modern Israel are destined to be "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation".^c We know that we are children of the covenant.^d We are remnants of the seed now to be gathered and gleaned into God's eternal garner.^e

54 You young adults are literally the hope of modern Israel. You are part of Zion's army. You are children of the promised day. I

am grateful to be associated with you in the work of the Lord.

55 As Saints of modern Israel, we speak with one voice. We love our Heavenly Father. We love the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. We are his people. We have taken his holy name upon us. We know the Book of Mormon to be the word of God and hold it as one with the Holy Bible. We proclaim Joseph Smith as the great prophet of the Restoration. And we sustain President Gordon B. Hinckley as God's gifted prophet of today.

56 I leave with each of you my testimony, my love, and my blessing, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 30

Spiritual Capacity - Delivered October 1997 in the Saturday Morning session of General Conference.

THOSE invited by the First Presidency to speak at general conference are not assigned subjects. Speakers pray for inspiration and prepare according to promptings they receive. I have been impressed to speak on "spiritual capacity."

a D&C 76:59

b Deuteronomy 7:9; Deuteronomy 11:1, 27; 19:9; 30:16; Joshua 22:5; 1 John 5:2-3; Mosiah 2:4. Other Old Testament scriptures refer to rewards for those obedient to God's commandments through a "thousand generations" (see 1 Chronicles 16:15; Psalm 105:8).

c Exodus 19:6

d Acts 3:25, 3 Nephi 20:25-26

e Alma 26:5

6 But we can also learn much from a man who has spent his entire lifetime in striving to be more like the Lord. More than 87 years ago, Gordon B. Hinckley was an infant cradled in the arms of his loving parents. That newborn babe looked much as any other, I presume. An infant's body is tiny, and its spiritual capacities are undeveloped. While the body may reach the peak of its maturation in a few years, the development of the spirit may never reach the limit of its capacity, because there is no end to progression.

7 President Hinckley's personality, manner, and native intelligence have always been uniquely his. To these inborn attributes, however, he has added spiritual capacities, and they are continuing to increase.

8 Both his parents and he understood the importance of education and a mission. After his graduation from the university, he faced a major decision in 1933, when he was called to go on a mission. At that time, most young men in the Church were not able to serve because of a global economic depression that deprived nearly everyone of available cash. Earlier, his wonderful mother, with foresight and faith, had established a small savings account for his

mission. Though she died before his call, her fund sent him on his way.

9 Shortly after Elder Hinckley's labors began in England, he became discouraged and wrote to his father. After reading that letter, his father's wise reply closed with these words: "Forget yourself and go to work."^m Thanks to noble parents and a crucial decision to remain, Elder Hinckley completed his mission with honor. Now he often states that the good things that have happened to him since have all hinged upon that decision to stay. On his mission, he developed good habits of study, work, communication, budgeting, time management, and more. There he learned that nothing is too hard for the Lord.ⁿ

10 Long ago, President Hinckley harnessed the power of prayer. I have watched him pray over many weighty matters and receive inspired answers. Prayer invites those ennobling attributes of the spirit that are ultimately "bestowed upon all who are true followers of ... Jesus Christ."^o

11 Hobbies can aid in spiritual development. Worthy music, dance, art, and writing are among the creative activities that can enrich the soul. A good hobby can dispel heartache and give

m Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1996), 64

n Jer. 32:17; Luke 1:37

o Moro. 7:48

er suddenly stopped the truck, launching those iron rods like javelins to pierce the Hinckleys' car. Windows were smashed; fenders and doors were dented. The accident could have been very serious. While shattered glass was being removed from their clothing and skin, President Hinckley said: "Thank the Lord for His blessing; now let's continue on in another car."

17 Among President Hinckley's spiritual attributes is that of compassion. He is sympathetic to people and feels a strong urge to help them. I have watched him weep with those who mourn and rejoice when Saints are blessed. Such compassion can come to anyone whose heart has truly been touched by the Spirit of the Lord.

18 President and Sister Hinckley have demonstrated that the capacity to understand increases as one learns and then teaches with diligence.^t Unless illness interferes, age does not diminish—it augments—the capacity for spiritual development.

19 Each President of the Church, armed with the Holy Ghost as a constant companion, inherits an enormous workload at an age when most men would be retired. President Hinckley sets a pace that is unprecedented-

ed. In 1996, he visited missionaries, members, and friends of the Church in 23 nations on four continents. During that year, he gave more than 200 major discourses. His stride in 1997 continues to follow that same pattern. His strenuous schedule is driven by his determination to be "anxiously engaged"^u in building the kingdom of God. Often I have heard him say, "I don't know how to get anything done except getting on my knees and pleading for help and then getting on my feet and going to work." Unshakable faith, hard work, and contagious optimism epitomize our prophet.

20 I have watched President Hinckley, in speaking before great congregations, depend upon the Holy Ghost, who serves "to enlighten and ennoble the mind, to purify and sanctify the soul, to incite to good works, and to reveal the things of God."^v

21 President Hinckley has achieved spiritual supremacy over physical feelings. Even when entitled to normal complaints of "jet lag" or "burnout," he is attentive. I believe that his personal antidote for fatigue is enthusiasm^w for the work. He is energized by the Lord, who said, "I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten

t D&C 88:78

u D&C 58:27

v James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (1962), 167; see also D&C 121:26

w The word enthusiasm comes from Greek roots en, meaning "in," and theos, meaning "God"—"God within us."

your mind ... [and] fill your soul with joy.”^x

22 One of our most memorable experiences occurred when we visited the temple construction site in Guayaquil, Ecuador. There President Hinckley recounted to us how that property was selected. On a prior visit, he had been shown several possible locations, but none seemed to satisfy him. While prayerfully searching, he asked about ground on a hill not far from the airport. But it was said to be *not* for sale. President Hinckley directed that they visit that property anyway. There he received inspiration from the Almighty that this was the right place for the temple. Now we were privileged to stand on that spot reserved by the Lord and then procured for this sacred purpose. Our joy was indescribable.

23 The prophet makes major decisions on a daily basis. This he does with great capacity. Meanwhile, he encourages each of us to make choices that will “give us growth and joy in this life and eternal life in the world to come.”^y

24 This President of the Church calls many people to serve, knowing that much is required

of them. He is keenly aware of their opportunities and risks. “Yes, this work requires sacrifice,” he said. “It requires effort, it means courage to speak out and faith to try. ... It needs men and women of solemn purpose.”^z “We know that there are some limits on what you can do, but we know also that there need be no limits on enthusiasm, planning, thoughtful consideration, and effort.”^{aa}

25 Brothers and sisters, the spirit that dwells within each of us can be enriched with enthusiasm and enlightened by the Almighty. The process of spiritual growth is revealed in the scriptures: “Intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; ... [and] light cleaveth unto light.”^{ab} “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”^{ac}

26 Gratefully, we follow prophets who have been given a divine commission: “Whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the

x D&C 11:13; see also D&C 124:88
y “Caesar, Circus, or Christ?” in Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year (26 Oct. 1965), 8
z In Conference Report, Oct. 1969, 115
aa Bonneville International Corporation Management Seminar, 23 Feb. 1992
ab D&C 88:40
ac D&C 50:24

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voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.”^a

27 While we follow prophetic teachings, we can develop our spiritual capacities by emulating one such as President Gordon B. Hinckley. I thank God for this prophet. He is the Lord’s anointed. Willingly I follow him. I love him and sustain him. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 31

Remnants Gathered, Covenants Fulfilled - Delivered 11 October 1997 at the BYU Sperry Symposium in Provo

THE title of my message is “Remnants Gathered, Covenants Fulfilled.” It comes from the Book of Mormon. There the Lord speaks of fulfilling “the covenant which the Father hath made unto his people,” the house of Israel. “Then,” He continues, “shall the remnants, which shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, be gathered in from the east and from the west, and from the south and from the north; and they shall be brought to the knowledge of the Lord their God, who hath redeemed them”^b.

2 The gathering of those remnants and the fulfilling of that divine covenant are occurring in our day. Yet this big picture is

obscure to the eye of many who focus upon bargains at super-markets and rankings of favorite football teams. Let us examine our place in God’s plan for His children and for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are part of a destiny known by relatively few people upon the earth.^c

3 During the year 1997, attention across the world was attracted to the history of the Church. Its pioneers arrived at the valley of the Great Salt Lake 150 years ago. Replications of handcars have been featured from Siberia to Swaziland, from Scandinavia and South America to the isles of the South Pacific. Through theater and stage, printed and electronic media, stories of early converts to the Church have been told.

4 Generally, writers of these accounts have done well in reporting what these pioneers did. But only a few have captured the reasons why. Even fewer have understood that history in context of the voices of prophets of the Old Testament that link with the great latter-day work that is now being accomplished.

5 Connections with the New Testament would be no surprise to any who understand the deep commitment to Jesus Christ held by members of this Church that bears His holy name. Its stalwart

a D&C 68:4

b 3 Nephi 20:12–13

c Ten million members of the Church compose 0.0017 percent of a world population of 5.8 billion

nently in sixteen of its fifty chapters.^g Joseph’s life from cradle to grave^h represents only 4 percent of the twenty-seven hundred years covered by the book of Genesis. Yet his life is reported in nearly one-third of its chapters.ⁱ

11 In the King James Version, Genesis 50 ends with verse 26, which records the death of Joseph. In the Joseph Smith Translation (JST), that chapter not only adds important information to verses 24 through 26 but provides twelve additional verses that enrich our knowledge of the link of Joseph.^j Those additions include the following insights, which I paraphrase:

1. *A righteous branch would be raised up later out of Joseph’s loins.*^k

2. *Israel would be scattered. A branch would be broken off and carried into a far country.*^l

3. *A choice seer would be raised up from Joseph’s loins to do work for the fruit of his loins.*^m

4. *Writings from the fruit of Joseph’s loins would grow together with writings from the fruit of*

*Judah’s loins to bring knowledge of their fathers and of everlasting covenants. That knowledge would come in the last days.*ⁿ

5. *The promised seer would be called Joseph, after the name of his father, and he would be like unto Joseph, son of Jacob, bringing salvation to the children of the Lord.*^o

12 These additions are good examples of “plain and precious” truths that have been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.^p

13 He and the ancient Joseph had much in common, as shown by other scriptures that I will cite. From the Book of Mormon we read: “A part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed. . . . Even as this remnant of garment . . . hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of [Joseph’s] seed . . . be preserved by the hand of God”.^q

14 We are remnants of that precious seed. Joseph Smith had been chosen by the Lord to take up the labors of the tribe of Joseph, son of Jacob. Centuries ago that same Joseph had prophesied

g Genesis 30; 33; 35; 37; 39–50
h Joseph died at the age of 110 years (see Genesis 50:26)
i Sixteen of fifty chapters equals 32 percent
j JST, Genesis 50:27–38
k JST, Genesis 50:24
l JST, Genesis 50:25
m JST, Genesis 50:26–29
n JST, Genesis 50:30–32
o JST, Genesis 50:33
p 1 Nephi 13:40
q Alma 46:24

Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do".^y In the latter days, people starving for nourishment that only the gospel can provide are again to be fed—by Joseph. The Lord declared that "this generation shall have my word through [Joseph Smith]"^z Today we "feast upon the words of Christ" because of Joseph Smith.^{aa}

20 This link of Joseph is summarized in lines from the book of Ether:

The Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not. . . .

Wherefore, the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land [of America]; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old. . . .

. . . and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel.

. . . and they are they who were scattered and gathered in from the four quarters of the earth, and from the north countries, and are partakers of the fulfilling of the covenant which God made with their father, Abraham.^{ab}

The Link of the Book of Mormon
21 Link number two I shall identify as the link of the Book of Mormon. In September 1997 I had the extraordinary privilege of seeing portions of the original manuscript and virtually all of the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon.^{ac} That was an incredible experience!

22 Voices of prophets in the Old Testament foretold of this great book. You are familiar with the prophecy of Isaiah: "Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust".^{ad}

23 Could any words have been more descriptive of the Book of Mormon, coming as it did "out of the ground" to "whisper out of the dust" to people of our day?

y Genesis 41:55

z D&C 5:10

aa 2 Nephi 32:3

ab Ether 13:7–8, 10–11

ac About 25 percent of the original manuscript is in the historical archives of the Church. The printer's manuscript is owned by the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized LDS Church) and was on loan to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is reported to be complete except for two lines of the title page.

ad Isaiah 29:4

addition, the Doctrine and Covenants has more than seventy quotations from or paraphrases of Isaiah.^{ak} Study the words of Isaiah! Do we get the message?

32 Other prophets of the Old Testament were quoted to our modern prophets. Malachi's teachings have been repeated.^{al} Elijah,^{am} Moses,^{an} and others have taught people of both ancient and modern Israel.^{ao}

33 Isaiah described the spirit of the Book of Mormon as "familiar." It resonates with people who know the Old Testament, especially with those who are conversant with its Hebrew language. The Book of Mormon is filled with Hebraisms—traditions, symbolisms, idioms, and literary forms. It is familiar because more than 80 percent of its pages come from Old Testament times.^{ap}

The Link of the House of Israel

34 Link number three I shall designate as the link of the house of Israel. It includes doctrines of

the Abrahamic covenant and of the scattering and gathering of Israel.

35 About four thousand years ago, Abraham received a promise from the Lord that blessings would be offered to all of his mortal posterity.^{aq} Included were promises that the Son of God would come through Abraham's lineage, that certain lands would be inherited by his posterity, that nations and kindreds of the earth would be blessed through his seed, and more. Knowledge of and reaffirmations of this covenant are evident in scriptures of the Old Testament.^{ar} Although certain aspects of that covenant have already been fulfilled, many have not. The Book of Mormon teaches that we of modern Israel are among the covenant people of the Lord.^{as} And, most remarkably, it teaches that the Abrahamic covenant will be fulfilled only in these latter days.^{at} The Lord bestowed this Abrahamic covenant upon the Prophet Joseph Smith for the blessing of

ak Monte S. Nyman, in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:702. Another is mentioned in Joseph Smith—History 1:40

al 3 Nephi 24:1; D&C 110:14; 128:17; 133:64; 138:46; Joseph Smith—History 1:36

am 3 Nephi 25:5; D&C 2:1; 27:9; 35:4; 110:13, 14; 128:17; 133:55; 138:46, 47; Joseph Smith—History 1:38

an Moses is mentioned in 1,300 verses of scripture, 515 (40 percent) of which are in modern revelation

ao D&C 27:5–13

ap Personal communication from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, June 1997

aq D&C 132:29–50; Abraham 2:6–11

ar Genesis 26:1–4, 24; 28; 35:9; 48

as 1 Nephi 14:14; 15:14; 2 Nephi 30:2; Mosiah 24:13; 3 Nephi 29:3; Mormon 8:15

at 1 Nephi 15:12–18

him and posterity after him.^{au} Did you know that Abraham is mentioned in more verses of modern revelation than in all the verses of the Old Testament?^{av} Abraham—this great patriarch of the Old Testament—is inextricably linked to all who join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.^{aw}

36 Doctrines relating to the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel were also among the earliest lessons taught in the Book of Mormon. I quote from the first book of Nephi: “After the house of Israel should be scattered they should be gathered together again; . . . the natural branches of the olive-tree, or the remnants of the house of Israel, should be grafted in, or come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer”.^{ax}

37 The Old Testament is replete with prophecies that relate to the scattering of Israel. May I cite one from the book of First Kings: “For the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them”.^{ay}

38 In this citation, the word “scatter” was translated from the Hebrew verb *zarah*, which means “to scatter, cast away, winnow, or disperse.” The richness of the Hebrew language provides other verbs to describe similar actions. For example, from the book of First Kings we also read: “I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd”.^{az}

39 In this instance, “scattered” was translated from the Hebrew verb *puwts*, which also means “to scatter” or “be dispersed.”

40 Isaiah used yet another verb in this prophecy: “He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the *dispersed* of Judah from the four corners of the earth”.^{ba}

41 In this case “dispersed” was translated from the Hebrew verb *naphats*, which means “to shatter, break, dash, or beat in pieces.”

42 References to the scattering were also recorded in the New Testament. For example, the book of James begins with these words: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting”.^{bb}

au D&C 124:56–59

av Abraham is mentioned in 506 verses of scripture, 289 of which are in modern revelation

aw The covenant may also be received by adoption (see Matthew 3:9; Luke 3:8; Galatians 3:27–29; 4:5)

ax 1 Nephi 10:14

ay 1 Kings 14:15

az 1 Kings 22:17

ba Isaiah 11:12; emphasis added

bb James 1:1

43 In this reference, “scattered” was translated from the Greek feminine noun *diaspora*, which means “dispersed” or “scattered.” You may wish to look up the word *diaspora* in the Bible Dictionary.^{bc} There the scattering of the house of Israel is succinctly summarized.

44 Saints of modern Israel know that Peter, James, and John were sent by the Lord with “the keys of [His] kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times,” in which He would “gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth”.^{bd}

45 The travels and travail of our pioneers were of eternal consequence. Their mission was not limited to an international immigration or a transcontinental migration with wagons and handcarts. They were to lay the foundation of an endless work that would “fill the world.”^{be} They were essential to Jeremiah’s prophecy:

“Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scat-

tered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock”.^{bf}

46 They got the message. Missionaries were sent very early to “the isles afar off” to commence the work of the Lord. As a result, the Church was established in the British Isles and in the islands of French Polynesia years before the pioneers entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake. It has been my privilege to participate in sesquicentennial celebrations in the British Isles in 1987 and in French Polynesia in 1994. Now in 1997, I celebrate this one with you in Utah.

47 Another aspect of the gathering of Israel reflects back to our first link regarding Joseph. The word *Joseph* comes from the Hebrew masculine personal noun *Yowceph*, the literal meaning of which is “Jehovah has added.” Joseph also relates to the Hebrew root *yasaph*, which means “to add,” and “to *asaph*,” which means both “to take away” and “to gather”.^{bg}

48 The Hebrew verbs *yacaph* and *acaph*^{bh} are used in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament

bc Bible Dictionary, “Diaspora,” 657

bd D&C 27:13; Compare with Paul’s prophecy of the Restoration in Ephesians 1:10

be Joseph Smith, quoted in Wilford Woodruff, *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946), 39

bf Jeremiah 31:10; Gather is used to translate the Hebrew verb *qabats*, which means “to gather, assemble.”

bg Genesis 30:24, footnote a

bh Spellings in James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (1890; reprint, New York: Abingdon, 1965), “Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary,” 50, 15

186 and 180 times respectively. Both words were usually translated into English as “gather” in one of its several forms. For example, in the verse, “David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel”,^{bi} the Hebrew verb *yacaph* was used.

49 Another scripture from Genesis deserves special comment. It reports the naming of Jacob and Rachel’s firstborn son: “She called his name *Joseph*; and said, The Lord shall add to me another son”.^{bj} In that verse both the words “Joseph” and “add” were derived from the Hebrew root *yacaph*.

50 The lineage of Joseph—through Ephraim and Manasseh—is the seed appointed to lead in the gathering of Israel.^{bk} The pioneers knew—through their patriarchal blessings and from doctrines of the Old Testament, amplified by scriptures and revelations of the Restoration—that the long-awaited

gathering of Israel was to commence with them.

The Link of Exodus

51 The fourth link connecting ancient and modern Israel I shall name the link of the Exodus. At a Church Educational System fireside satellite broadcast in September 1997, I spoke to the subject of “The Exodus Repeated.” Then I spoke of some connections between ancient and modern Israel that will also be relevant to a more comprehensive coverage of the topic, “Remnants Gathered, Covenants Fulfilled.” Fascinating are the many parallels between the exodus from Egypt of the Israelites under Moses and the exodus from the United States of the pioneers under Brigham Young.

52 Both peoples were oppressed by their governments. The ancient Israelites were “bondmen”.^{bl} The Latter-day Saints were persecuted by

bi 2 Samuel 6:1; emphasis added

bj Genesis 30:24; emphasis added; Joseph was “added” to Rachel’s family because her handmaid, Bilhah, had given birth to Dan and Naphtali previously (see Genesis 30:5–8). See also Deuteronomy 33:16–17, which refers to the people of Joseph being pushed together “to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.” JST, Genesis 50:34 also affirms that Joseph’s seed would be preserved forever.

bk Erastus Snow, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86), 23:183–84

bl Deuteronomy 6:21

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their own government.^{bm}

53 Moses had been prepared in the courts of Egypt and had gained much experience in military and other responsibilities.^{bn} Brigham Young was likewise prepared for his leadership role. In the march of Zion's Camp, he observed the leadership of the Prophet Joseph Smith under difficult conditions.^{bo} Brigham Young aided in the removal of the Saints from Kirtland and directed the move of the persecuted Saints from Missouri to Nauvoo.^{bp}

54 God preserved ancient Israel from plagues that He sent upon Egypt.^{bq} God preserved the Saints from the plague of the United States Civil War that

caused more American deaths due to war than any other war.

55 Both groups had to leave their homes and earthly possessions. Both had to learn to rely wholly upon the Lord and be sustained by Him during their travels. Both traversed deserts, mountains, and valleys of untamed wilderness. Ancient Israelites left Egypt via the waters of the Red Sea "as by dry land".^{br} Some pioneers left the United States by crossing the wide waters of the Mississippi River—frozen to become a highway of ice.^{bs} Both groups endured trials of their faith during which the weak were winnowed away and the strong were empowered to endure to the end.^{bt}

bm The pioneers were forced out of Missouri under threat of an order signed by Missouri's governor directing that the "Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state" (Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1952–51], 3:175). In 1887, the Congress of the United States of America took the unprecedented step of eliminating the Church's legal existence by revoking its corporate charter and authorizing federal receivers to assume ownership of virtually all of the Church's property and other assets, including its most sacred houses of worship—temples in Logan, Manti, St. George, and Salt Lake City (see *The Late Corporation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. United States*, 136 U.S.[1[1890]]). Yet the Saints knew that they were Abraham's seed and heirs to promises and protection from the Lord (see D&C 103:17–20)

bn Hebrews 11:24, 27

bo Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:6–12, 185; Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 58

bp Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:529; 3:252, 261; Preston Nibley, *The Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 41.

bq Exodus 15:26

br Hebrews 11:29

bs Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:275–77

bt Ether 12:6; D&C 101:4–5; 105:19

56 The children of ancient Israel had a portable tabernacle wherein covenants were made and ordinances were performed to strengthen them on their journey.^{bu} Originally the tabernacle was intended to be a portable temple, before the Israelites lost the higher law.^{bv} Similarly, many Latter-day Saints were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple before their trek.

57 The journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai took about three months.^{bw} The journey from Winter Quarters to the valley of the Great Salt Lake also took about three months.^{bx}

58 The promised land for each group also bore similarities.

That of ancient Israel had an inland sea of salt water, the inlet to which was the River Jordan. That for the pioneers also had an inland sea of salt water, fed by the Jordan River. The destination of each group was described by the Lord as a land “flowing with milk and honey.”^{by} The pioneers turned their wilderness into a fruitful field^{bz} and made the desert blossom as a rose^{ca} — precisely as prophesied by Isaiah.

59 For both the Israelites and the Saints, civil and ecclesiastical law were unified under one head. Moses bore that responsibility for the early Israelites.^{cb} Brigham Young—a modern Moses^{cc}—led the Latter-day Saints’

bu Ordinances and covenants of ancient Israel are referenced in 1 Chronicles 10:1–3; for modern Israel, see D&C 84:26–27

bv D&C 84:23–26; 124:38; JST, Exodus 34:1–2

bw Exodus 12:2, 3, 6, 18; 13:4; 19:1

bx One hundred and eleven days

by For the people of ancient Israel, see Exodus 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 13:27; 14:8; 16:13, 14; Deuteronomy 6:3; 11:9; 26:9, 15; 27:3; 31:20; Joshua 5:6; Jeremiah 11:5; 32:22; Ezekiel 20:6, 15; JST Exodus 33:1. For the pioneers, see D&C 38:18–19

bz Isaiah 32:15–16

ca Isaiah 35:1

cb Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 252

cc President Spencer W. Kimball wrote of Brigham Young’s role in that exodus: “Since Adam there have been many exoduses and promised lands: Abraham, Jared, Moses, Lehi, and others led groups. How easy it is to accept those distant in time as directed by the Lord, yet the ones near at hand as human calculations and decisions. Let us consider for a moment the great trek of the Mormon refugees from Illinois to Salt Lake Valley. Few, if any, great movements equal it. We frequently hear that Brigham Young led the people to make new tracks in a desert and to climb over mountains seldom scaled and to ford and wade unbridged rivers and to traverse a hostile Indian country; and while Brigham Young was the instrument of the Lord, it was not he but the Lord of heaven who led modern Israel across the plains to their promised land” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972], 28); D&C 103:16

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movement west, with the Lord's blessing.^{cd} Moses and Brigham Young followed parallel patterns of governance.^{ce} And each of them endured dissension from their close associates.^{cf} Nevertheless, that same unified pattern of government will again prevail when the Lord shall be "King over all the earth",^{cg} and He shall govern from Zion and Jerusalem.^{ch}

60 The Israelites celebrated their exodus from Egypt. The Latter-day Saints commemorated their exodus with the establishment of the world headquarters of the restored Church in the tops of the mountains. Both celebrations acclaimed their miraculous deliverance by God.^{ci} The link of the exodus reminds us of an Old Testament scripture of gratitude: "Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from

Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place".^{cj}

*The Link of the Timeless
Truths of the Gospel*

61 The fifth connection between ancient and modern Israel I shall denote as the link of the timeless truths of the gospel. Those truths are included in the unending priesthood order of Melchizedek, though he is mentioned but twice in the Old Testament.^{ck} The Melchizedek Priesthood was removed from ancient Israel shortly after the exodus from Egypt.^{cl} Thereafter, ancient Israel functioned under the Levitical Priesthood and the law of carnal commandments.^{cm}

62 Timeless truths and principles of the gospel were and are important to people of ancient and modern Israel. The Sabbath

cd D&C 136:1-42

ce Exodus 18:17-21; D&C 136:1-4

cf Numbers 12:1-11 (Aaron and Miriam); for latter-day examples, see Smith, History of the Church, 1:104-5 (Oliver Cowdery); and 1:226 (William E. McLellin)

cg Psalm 47:2; Zechariah 14:9

ch Isaiah 2:1-4

ci Jeremiah 16:15; 23:7; Other miracles were shared, such as food provided by the "miracle of the quails." (For ancient Israel, see Exodus 16:13; Psalm 105:40; for the pioneers, see Stanley B. Kimball, "Nauvoo West: The Mormons of the Iowa Shore," BYU Studies 18 [Winter 1978]: 142). Protection was provided for ancient Israel by the Lord, who "went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire" (Exodus 13:21; see also v. 22; Numbers 14:14; Deuteronomy 1:33; Nehemiah 9:19). Similar care has been noted for the pioneers (see Smith, History of the Church, 3:34; Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, April 1967, 56)

cj Exodus 13:3

ck Genesis 14:18; Psalm 110:4

cl JST, Exodus 34:1-2; D&C 84:23-25

cm D&C 84:27

sation of the fulness of times".^{cz}

67 Revealed truth that we know as the Word of Wisdom came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833. Every Latter-day Saint is familiar with it as one of the visible hallmarks of our faith. The final verse of that revelation forges another link back to ancient Israel: "And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them".^{da}

68 This reference to the Passover shows that the Lord wanted obedient Saints of modern Israel to receive physical and spiritual protection just as He had provided for His faithful followers centuries before.

Summary

69 Ancient Israel and modern Israel are linked arm in arm. In our day, many Old Testament prophecies are being fulfilled. Isaiah foretold: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it".^{db}

70 During the past year, visitors from more than one hundred nations have come to visit world headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.^{dc}

71 Ancient and modern Israel subscribe to an ageless message of the Old Testament: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God . . . keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations".^{dd}

72 All faithful members of the Church will receive their just reward: "All things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's".^{de}

73 I would like to bear my testimony as one with you, my beloved brothers and sisters. We love our Heavenly Father. We love the Lord Jesus Christ. We are His people. We have taken His holy name upon us. We are His remnants now being gathered and gleaned into His eternal garner.^{df} We are fulfilling "the covenant which the Father hath made unto his people".^{dg} We are being brought to the

cz D&C 124:41

da D&C 89:21

db Isaiah 2:2; see also 2 Nephi 12:2; JST, Isaiah 2:2

dc Estimate provided by the Temple Square Mission

dd Deuteronomy 7:9; Deuteronomy 11:1, 27; 19:9; 30:16; Joshua 22:5; 1 John 5:2-3; Mosiah 2:4. Other Old Testament scriptures refer to rewards for those obedient to God's commandments through a "thousand generations" (see 1 Corinthians 16:15; Psalm 105:8)

de D&C 76:59

df Alma 26:5

dg 3 Nephi 20:12

to strengthen family ties came in 1823, when the angel Moroni first appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Moroni announced the coming of Elijah, who would cause the hearts of children to be turned to their fathers.^f

9 Elijah's return to earth occurred at the first temple built in this dispensation, where he and other heavenly messengers, under direction of the Lord,^g entrusted special keys of priesthood authority to the restored Church:

- Moses committed the keys of the gathering of Israel;^h
- Elias committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham;ⁱ and
- Elijah came to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children to the fathers.^j

10 With that, natural affection between generations began to be enriched. This restoration

was accompanied by what is sometimes called the Spirit of Elijah—a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family.^k Hence, people throughout the world, regardless of religious affiliation, are gathering records of deceased relatives at an ever-increasing rate.^l

11 Elijah came not only to stimulate research for ancestors. He also enabled families to be eternally linked beyond the bounds of mortality. Indeed, the opportunity for families to be sealed forever is the real reason for our research. The Lord declared through the Prophet Joseph Smith: "These are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, ... they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect."^m

f D&C 2:1–3

g D&C 110:2–10

h D&C 110:11

i D&C 110:12

j D&C 110:13–16

k The Spirit of Elijah can be a powerful force for good in the conversion, retention, and activation of individuals

l Genealogy is now among the fastest growing applications for noncommercial use of computers in the home. The popularity of a recent television series entitled *Ancestors* was unprecedented. It was subscribed to by 340 of 353 PBS television stations—the highest response rate in their history. In connection with that effort, a book was prepared entitled *Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide to Family History and Genealogy*. More than 35,000 copies of it were sold in less than a year. Some experts have estimated that 20 percent of Internet use pertains to genealogy.

m D&C 128:15; see Matt. 5:48. There and in other New Testament scriptures, perfect was translated from the Greek *teleios* meaning "brought to its end, finished, completed."

12 Among the first in this dispensation to sow seeds of interest in family history were the brothers Orson and Parley P. Pratt, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Their efforts resulted in a Pratt family genealogy and the performance of temple ordinances for about 3,000 of their ancestors.ⁿ

13 Yet there were many Church members who did not fully understand the responsibility for their own kindred. President Wilford Woodruff was so concerned that he made the issue a matter of fervent prayer. Then, at April 1894 general conference,^o he presented a revelation to the membership of the Church. From it I quote: "We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to

their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. ... This is the will of the Lord to his people."^p

14 Later that year, the First Presidency and the Twelve established the Genealogical Society of Utah.^q From modest beginnings in an upstairs room of the Church Historian's Office,^r its collection and facilities have grown. Today the Family History LibraryTM occupies a modern five-story building with access to 280,000 books, 700,000 microfiches, and more than 2 million rolls of microfilm, making it the largest library of its kind in the world.

15 In 1964 the department began to establish branch libraries. Today more than 3,000 Family His-

n See Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt* (1985), 183. In 1853, while serving a mission in Washington, D.C., Orson Pratt responded to a newspaper advertisement requesting information concerning the descendants of William Pratt of Massachusetts. From this contact, Elder Pratt obtained the connecting links between him and his earliest New England forebear. Twenty years later, Elder Pratt reported that his ancestry had been traced back 11 generations and that families of the Pratt brothers had been baptized for about 3,000 of their ancestors (see *Journal of Discourses*, 16:300)

o President Woodruff discussed the revelation with the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on 5 April 1894. See *Wilford Woodruff Journal*, 5 April 1894, 296; Church Historical Department Archives.

p *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1946), 157; or *Millennial Star*, 28 May 1894, 339.

q They approved the articles of incorporation and instructed Elder Franklin D. Richards to begin organizing the Society. He was also appointed to become its first president. See James B. Allen, Jessie L. Embry, and Kahlile B. Mehr, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1894–1994* (1995), 45.

r The collection was begun with about 300 books. See *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 47.

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tory Centers™ dot the globe.^s

16 Technology used to support this important work has changed greatly over the years. In 1927 a card file was instituted to index all endowments performed.^t The index was maintained through 1969, when new endowments were recorded in the first major computer system, identified by the acronym GIANT.^u It was used for more than two decades.^v

17 The Society's extensive microfilming has permitted the gathering of records at their sources, with copies made available later at the Family History Library and Family History Centers. Microfilming has been done in 110 countries, accumulating more than 2 billion exposures with approximately 13 billion names. Microfilming has enabled the Family History Library to expand its collections dramatically and provide resources for an explosive growth of genealogical research worldwide. These microfilms comprise the core

of information contained in our present automated systems.

18 By the 1980s, the personal computer had revolutionized the management of information. The Family History Department employed this technology in developing Personal Ancestral File® to help members organize data regarding their ancestors. In 1990, FamilySearch® was announced. At October conference that year, Elder Richard G. Scott described components of FamilySearch: Ancestral File™, Family History Library Catalog™, International Genealogical Index®, and more.^w His message stimulated Sister Nelson and me to use these tools to organize information that we and our relatives had gathered over many years.

19 Meanwhile, objectives of decentralization and simplification led to record extraction programs, in which thousands of Church members have participated.^x Extraction projects have now produced records for

s See *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 280. The name was changed in 1987 in connection with the renaming of the Genealogical Department to the Family History Department. See *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 278.

t Called Temple Index Bureau (TIB) card index. It was employed also to help minimize duplication of ordinances. See *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 96–103.

u Genealogical Information and Name Tabulation

v It also served to help minimize duplication of sacred ordinances. See *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 304–9. The department began processing names through TempleReady™ in May 1991.

w "Redemption: The Harvest of Love," *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 5–7.

x More than 50,000 members have sown seeds of labor in the Family Record Extraction Program (FREP). See *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 314–17.

more than 300 million individuals.^y

20 Many people have joined with members of the Church in efforts to index the burgeoning bank of genealogical information. An example is the 1881 British census. For this project, more than 8,000 volunteers from family history societies throughout the British Isles have transcribed 30 million names. Gratefully, we announce that fruits of this labor are now on fiche and will soon be available on compact disc from the Church's distribution centers.

21 We are also pleased to announce that data from the 1880 census of the United States will soon be released on compact disc. Meanwhile, volunteers are working on other projects, such as arrival records for immigrants to the USA through Ellis Island.

22 May I express our deep appreciation to all valiant volunteers—past, present, and future—for their diligent work on these and other projects.

23 In describing these achievements, I realize that for some who are less involved in this work, I may have intensified feelings of guilt. I apologize for that. I know that fear and unfamiliarity may stand in your way. For others, even the mention of a computer may be an additional intimidator. Some secretly

hope that they can slip through their remaining days on earth without ever having to touch a computer. To those with access to computers, I say: "Reach out! Have hope! Try! I have exciting news for you!"

24 "The time of harvest is come."^z A new era of family history work has arrived. As President Gordon B. Hinckley recently noted, "The Lord has inspired skilled men and women in developing new technologies which we can use to our great advantage in moving forward this sacred work."^{aa} Previously, efforts have focused on gathering names and dates and organizing that information. Now, computer products are available that can actually guide you to find your kindred.

25 May I introduce you to the new Family History SourceGuide™. This compact disc is now available at the Church's distribution centers.^{ab} It can lead you to genealogical records in countries, states, and provinces around the world and shows how you can use these records to identify your ancestors. It includes other aids, such as maps, letter-writing guides, translations of words for several non-English speaking countries, definitions, and terms often found in genealogical records. Family History SourceGuide puts at your fingertips much of

y As of 24 February 1998, 329,434,125 entries have been extracted.
z D&C 101:64
aa Unpublished statement, 29 Sept. 1997; used by permission.
ab The initial version has been prepared for use with Windows 95™.

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the collected knowledge and experience of hundreds of genealogical experts. It can all be yours—at the touch of a button. Use it, and rejoice!

26 A new Vital Records Index™ will make available on compact disc the results of extraction programs prepared from many civil and ecclesiastical records. Some overlap will exist between this resource and records in the International Genealogical Index, but most of the names in the Vital Records Index have not yet had temple ordinance work performed. The entire index will include approximately 25 million records. During the next few months, it will be released in segments by geographic area, such as the British Isles (5 million records) and North America (4.5 million records). This file represents years of work of many extraction workers.

27 I am excited about these and other developments. Tasks that once seemed beyond reach are now within our grasp. “With God nothing shall be impossible.”^{ac} A new harvest time has come. The way is opening by which we can obey His will^{ad} and provide welding links^{ae} between all dispensations and generations.

28 To get started, you do not need equipment. Begin with a pedigree chart and a family group record.^{af} List the names of those you know. Add information learned from living relatives. This simple start at home will prepare you to receive additional help. And when you are baptized for a deceased ancestor, you will sense a feeling of validation of this divine work that will bring great joy.

29 As we ponder the importance of our ancestral responsibilities, we also need to be reminded of the Lord’s vast ministry. I quote from President Joseph F. Smith: “Jesus had not finished his work when his body was slain, neither did he finish it after his resurrection from the dead; although he had accomplished the purpose for which he then came to the earth, he had not fulfilled all his work. And when will he? Not until he has redeemed and saved every son and daughter of our father Adam that have been or ever will be born upon this earth to the end of time. ... That is his mission. We will not finish our work until we have saved ourselves, and then not until we shall have saved all depending upon us; for we are to become saviors upon Mount Zion, as well as Christ. We are called to this mission. The dead are not

ac Luke 1:37

ad D&C 128:15

ae D&C 128:18

af The helpful pamphlet *Where Do I Start?* (item no. 32916) is available from the ward family history consultant. All products discussed and computer support are available at Family History Centers.

6 In a world populated by more than five billion people, our large numbers here, augmented by many more watching on television, are really but a relative few. Our circumstance today was foreseen centuries ago by Nephi:

And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few . . . ; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small. . . .

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.^g

7 That righteousness, that power, that glory—indeed, all of our many blessings—stem from our knowledge of, obedience to, and our gratitude and love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 During his relatively brief sojourn in mortality, the Savior accomplished two overarching objectives: One was his “work and [his] glory—to bring to pass

the immortality and eternal life of man.”^h The other he stated simply: “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done.”ⁱ

9 His first objective we know as the Atonement. This was his magnificent mission in mortality. To the people of ancient America, the resurrected Lord gave his mission statement:

I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me.^j

10 In continuing his sermon, he revealed his second objective—to be our exemplar: “Ye know the things that ye must do . . . ; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do.”^k

11 His first objective I have defined as his *mission*. His second objective I would like to identify as his *ministry*. For our discussion today, let us review these two components of his life—his mission and his ministry.

*The Mission of Jesus Christ—
The Atonement*

12 His mission was the Atonement. That mission was unique—

g 1 Nephi 14:12, 14
h Moses 1:39
i John 13:15
j 3 Nephi 27:13–14
k 3 Nephi 27:21

in the name of the Son forevermore.”^t From that day to the meridian of time, animal sacrifice continued to be a type and shadow of the eventual Atonement of the Son of God.

18 When the Atonement was accomplished, that great and last sacrifice fulfilled the law of Moses^u and terminated the practice of animal sacrifice, which had taught that “the life of the flesh [was] in the blood.” Jesus then explained how the elements of ancient sacrifice were subsumed by the Atonement and commemorated by the sacrament. I read from the book of John, chapter 6, verses 53 and 54. Note again references to the life, the flesh, and the blood.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

19 Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind, even as many as will, shall be redeemed. The Savior began shedding his blood for all mankind not on the cross but in the Garden of Gethsemane. There he

took upon himself the weight of the sins of all who would ever live. Under that heavy load, he bled at every pore.^v The agony of the Atonement was completed on the cross at Calvary.

20 The importance of the Atonement was summarized by the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said:

The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.^w

21 With that authority and with profound gratitude, I so teach and testify of him today.

*The Ministry of Jesus Christ —
The Exemplar*

22 The Lord’s second far-reaching objective in mortality was to serve as an example for us. His exemplary life constituted his mortal ministry. It included his teachings, parables, and sermons. It encompassed his miracles, his loving-kindness, and his long-suffering toward the children of men.^x It embraced his compassionate use of priesthood authority. It included his righteous indignation when he condemned sin^y and when he

t Moses 5:8

u Alma 34:13–14

v D&C 19:18

w Teachings, p. 121

x 1 Nephi 19:9

y Romans 8:3

28 Another expression of our Savior’s love was his service. He served his Father, and he served the people with whom he lived and labored. In both ways, we are to follow his example. We are to serve God, “to walk in all his ways, and to love him.”^{al} And we are to love our neighbors by serving them.^{am} We start with our families. The deep love that binds parents to their children is forged by service to them through their period of total dependence. Later in life, dutiful children may have the opportunity to reciprocate that love when they serve their aging parents.

Ordinances

29 A second aspect of the Savior’s exemplary life was his emphasis upon sacred ordinances. During his mortal ministry he demonstrated the importance of the ordinances of salvation. He was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Even John asked, “Why?”

30 Jesus explained: “For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”^{an} Not only was the ordinance essential, but the example set by Jesus and John was also essential.

31 Later the Lord instituted the

ordinance of the sacrament and linked it to that of baptism. He so instructed his disciples: “Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized . . . shall ye be baptized.”^{ao} He again explained the symbolism of the sacrament and administered its sacred emblems to his disciples.^{ap}

32 Our Heavenly Father also gave instruction regarding ordinances. He said:

Ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory.^{aq}

33 During the Lord’s postmortal ministry, the higher ordinances of exaltation have been revealed.^{ar} He has provided for these ordinances in his holy temples. In our day, washings, anointings, and endowments are granted to individuals who are properly prepared.^{as} In the temple, an individual may be sealed to husband or wife, to progenitors, and to posterity.^{at} Our Master is a God of law and order. His focus on ordinances is

al Deuteronomy 10:12; see also 11:13; Joshua 22:5; D&C 20:31, 59:5
 am Galatians 5:13, Mosiah 4:15–16
 an Matthew 3:15, emphasis added; see also JST Matthew 3:43
 ao Mark 10:39
 ap Matthew 26:26–28, Mark 14:22–24, Luke 24:30
 aq Moses 6:59
 ar D&C 124:40–42
 as D&C 105:12, 18, 33; 110:9; 124:39
 at D&C 132:19

“Ye will not come to me, that ye might have [eternal] life.”^{ba}

40 The Master could overwhelm us with his supernal knowledge, but he does not. He honors our agency. He allows us the joy of discovery. He encourages us to repent of our own mistakes. He permits us to experience the freedom that comes from our willing obedience to his divine law. Yes, the way he uses his knowledge provides a great example for us.

Endure to the End

41 A fifth aspect of the Lord’s ministry I have chosen to emphasize is his commitment to endure to the end. Never did he withdraw from his assignment. Though he experienced suffering beyond our comprehension, he was not a quitter. Through deepening trials he endured to the end of his assignment: to atone for the sins of all humankind. His final words as he hung from the cross were, “It is finished.”^{bb}

Application to Our Lives

42 These five aspects of his ministry—love (including obedience and service), focus on ordinances, prayer, use of knowledge, and a commitment to endure to the end—can be applied in our own lives. Surely the best evidence of our adoration of Jesus is our emulation of him.

43 When we begin to realize who

Jesus is and what he has done for us, we can understand, to some degree, the logic of the first and great commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.”^{bc} In other words, all that we think and do and say should be steeped in our love for him.

44 Ask yourself, “Is there anyone whom I love more than the Lord?” Then compare your answer to these standards set by the Lord:

- “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”
- “He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”^{bd}

45 (Some of you may wish to add a boyfriend or girlfriend to that list.)

46 *Love* for family and friends, great as it may be, is much more profound when anchored in the love of Jesus Christ. Parental love for children has more meaning here and hereafter because of him. All loving relationships are elevated in him. Love of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ provides the illumination, inspiration, and motivation to love others in a loftier way.

47 *Ordinances* provide a focus

ba John 5:40
 bb John 19:30
 bc Mark 12:30
 bd Matthew 10:37

Friends? Associates?

- How do his mission and his ministry affect who you really are? And who you may become?

54 With all my heart I pray that the transforming influence of the Lord may make a profound difference in your lives. I leave my love and blessing with you, along with my testimony that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His mission and his ministry can bless each of you now and forever more, I testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 34

We Are Children of God - Delivered October 1998 in the Sunday Afternoon session of General Conference. Reprinted January 1999 in the Lia-hona magazine.

RECENTLY I observed young men who attracted attention to themselves because of their extreme styles of dress and grooming. One made a revealing remark when he said, "I'm trying to find out who I really am." This occurred after I had come from a Church meeting where Primary children had sung "I Am a Child of God."^a Such contrasting experiences emphasize the importance of knowing that

we are literally children of God.

2 We are dual beings. Each soul is comprised of body and spirit,^b both of which emanate from God. A firm understanding of body and spirit will shape our thoughts and deeds for good.

The Body

3 The marvel of our physical bodies is often overlooked. Who has not encountered feelings of low self-esteem because of physique or appearance? Many people wish their bodies could be more to their liking. Some with naturally straight hair want it curly. Others with curly hair want it straight. Occasionally some ladies, believing that "gentlemen prefer blonds," become "decided blonds."

4 Your body, whatever its natural gifts, is a magnificent creation of God.^c It is a tabernacle of flesh—a temple for your spirit.^d A study of your body attests to its divine design.

5 Its formation begins with the union of two reproductive cells—one from the mother and one from the father. Together, these two cells contain all of the new individual's hereditary information, stored in a space so small it cannot be seen by the

a Hymns, no. 301

b D&C 88:15

c See Russell M. Nelson, "The Magnificence of Man," Ensign, Jan. 1988, 64–69. The Psalmist stated: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou has ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? ... For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Ps. 8:3–5; see also Heb. 2:7, 9).

d 1 Cor. 6:19.

naked eye. Twenty-three chromosomes from each parent unite in one new cell. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes which determine all of the physical characteristics of the unborn person. Approximately 22 days after these two cells unite, a little heart begins to beat. At 26 days, blood begins to circulate. Cells multiply and divide. Some become eyes that see; others become ears that hear.

6 Each organ is a wondrous gift from God. The eye has a self-focusing lens. Nerves and muscles control two separate eyes to make a single three-dimensional image. The eyes are connected to the brain, which records the sights seen. No cords or batteries are needed.

7 Each ear is connected to compact equipment designed to convert sound waves into audible tones. An eardrum serves as a diaphragm. Minute ossicles amplify sound vibrations and transmit a signal via nerves to the brain, which senses and remembers the sounds.

8 The heart is an incredible pump. It has four delicate valves that control the direction of blood flow. These valves open and close more than 100,000 times a day—36 million times a year. Yet, unless altered by disease, they are able to withstand this stress almost indefinitely. No man-made material developed to date can be flexed so

frequently and so long without breaking.

9 Each day an adult heart pumps enough fluid to fill a 2,000-gallon^e tank. This work is equivalent to lifting a grown man^f to the top of the Empire State Building while expending only about four watts of energy. At the crest of the heart is an electrical generator that transmits energy down special lines, causing myriads of muscle fibers to work together.

10 Much could be said about each of the other precious organs in the body. They function in a marvelous manner, beyond my time or ability to describe.

11 Other attributes of the body are equally amazing, though less evident. For example, backup is provided. Each *paired* organ has instant backup available from the other of the pair. *Single* organs, such as the brain, the heart, and the liver, are nourished by *two* routes of blood supply. This design protects the organ if harm should come to any one channel.

12 Think of the body's system of self-defense. To protect it from harm, the body perceives pain. In response to infection, it generates antibodies. They not only help to combat the immediate problem, but they persist to strengthen resistance to infection in the future. One day my attention was directed to some three-year-old children who had

e About 7,570 liters
f Weighing 150 pounds (68.2 kilograms)

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lapped up water from a street gutter. The number of germs they ingested must have been incalculable, but not one of those youngsters became ill. As soon as that dirty drink reached each little stomach, its hydrochloric acid went to work to treat the water and protect the life of the child.

13 The skin provides protection. It also warns against injuries that excessive heat or cold might cause. It even sends signals that indicate trouble elsewhere. With fever, the skin perspires. When one is frightened, it pales. When one is embarrassed, it blushes.

14 The body repairs itself. Broken bones mend and become strong once again. Skin lacerations heal themselves. A leak in the circulation can seal itself.

15 The body renews its own outdated cells. The average red blood cell, for instance, lives about 120 days. Then it is replaced by a newly regenerated cell.

16 The body regulates its own vital ingredients. Essential elements and chemical constituents are adjusted continuously. And regardless of wide fluctuations in temperature of the environment, the temperature of the body is carefully controlled

within narrow bounds.

17 If these qualities of normal function, defense, repair, regeneration, and regulation were to prevail in perpetuity, life here would continue without limit. Mercifully, our Creator provided for aging and other processes which ultimately result in physical death. We often think of death as untimely or tragic. But death, like birth, is part of life. Scripture tells us that "it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness."^g To return to God through the gateway of death is a joy for those who love Him.^h

18 When death claims an individual in the prime of life, we take comfort in knowing that the very laws which do not allow life to persist here are the same laws that will be implemented at the time of the Resurrection, when the body will be endowed with immortality.

The Spirit

19 Next I speak of the spirit. Prior to our mortal existence here, each spirit son and daughter lived with God. The spirit is eternal; it existed in innocence in the premortal realmⁱ and will exist after the body dies.^j The spirit provides the body with an-

g Alma 42:8; see also Alma 12:24-27

h The Psalmist expressed the viewpoint of Deity: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15)

i D&C 93:38

j Alma 40:11; Abr. 3:18

imation and personality.^k “All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure.”^l

20 “The spirit of man [is] in the likeness of his person.”^m Jesus so explained, as the brother of Jared viewed the Lord’s premortal body:

21 “Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image.

22 “... This body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.”ⁿ

23 Development of the spirit is of eternal consequence. The attributes by which we shall be judged one day are those of the spirit.^o These include the virtues of integrity, compassion, love, and more.^p Your spirit, by being housed in your body, is able to develop and express these attributes in ways that are vital to

your eternal progression.^q

24 Spirit and body, when joined together, become a living soul of supernal worth. Indeed, we are children of God—physically and spiritually.

Physical Limitations

25 For reasons usually unknown, some people are born with physical limitations. Specific parts of the body may be abnormal. Regulatory systems may be out of balance. And all of our bodies are subject to disease and death. Nevertheless, the gift of a physical body is priceless. Without it, we cannot attain a fulness of joy.^r

26 A perfect body is not required to achieve a divine destiny. In fact, some of the sweetest spirits are housed in frail frames. Great spiritual strength is often developed by those with physical challenges precisely because they are challenged. Such individuals are entitled to all the blessings that God has in store for His faithful and obedient children.^s

k Job 32:8

l D&C 131:7

m D&C 77:2

n Ether 3:15–16

o The spirit, not the body, is the active, responsible component of the soul. Without the spirit, the body is dead (see James 2:26). It is the spirit, therefore, that chooses good or evil and will be held accountable for both the positive and negative attributes it possesses at the final judgment (see Alma 41:3–7)

p Such as “faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence” (D&C 4:6)

q 2 Ne. 2:11–16, 21–26; Moro. 10:33–34

r D&C 138:17

s Abr. 3:25–26

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27 Eventually the time will come when each “spirit and ... body shall be reunited again in ... perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame.”^t Then, thanks to the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can become perfected in Him.^u

Personal Behavior

28 How should these truths influence our personal behavior? We should gratefully acknowledge God as our Creator. Otherwise, we would be as guilty as goldfish swimming in a bowl, oblivious to the goodness of their provider. “Ye must give thanks unto God,” said the Lord, “for whatsoever blessing ye are blessed with.”^v And we can practice virtue and holiness before Him continually.^w

29 We will regard our body as a temple of our very own.^x We will not let it be desecrated or defaced in any way.^y We will control our diet and exercise for physical fitness.

30 Should not equal attention be paid to spiritual fitness?^z Just as physical strength requires exercise, so spiritual strength requires effort. Among the most

important of spiritual exercises is prayer. It engenders harmony with God and a desire to keep His commandments. Prayer is a key to wisdom, virtue, and humility.

31 We will be careful about which counsel we heed. Many so-called experts give advice for the body—without thought for the spirit. Anyone who accepts direction contrary to the Word of Wisdom, for example, forsakes a law revealed to bring both physical *and* spiritual blessings.^{aa} Some recommendations regarding use of our reproductive organs are based solely—and inadequately—upon physical considerations. Beware of such one-sided views! Paul taught that “if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”^{ab}

32 That caution pertains to pornography, which is highly addictive. Scriptural warning is clear: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”^{ac} In time, addictions enslave *both* the body and the spirit. Full repentance from addiction is best ac-

t Alma 11:43; see also Alma 40:23; Eccl. 12:7; D&C 138:17

u Moro. 10:32

v D&C 46:32

w D&C 46:33

x 1 Cor. 3:16

y Referring to the human body, the Apostle Paul taught: “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:17).

z 1 Cor. 9:24–27; Heb. 12:9

aa D&C 89:18–21; see also Rom. 8:6; 2 Ne. 9:38–39; D&C 29:34–35

ab Rom. 8:13

ac Rom. 6:12

complished in this life, while we still have a mortal body to help us.

33 As children of God, we should not let anything enter the body that might defile it. To allow sensors of sight, touch, or hearing to supply the brain with unclean memories is a sacrilege. We will cherish our chastity and avoid "foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown [us] in destruction and perdition."^a We will "flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, [and] meekness"^b—traits that edify the whole soul.

34 Who are we? We are children of God.^c Our potential is unlimited. Our inheritance is sacred. May we always honor that heritage—in every thought and deed—I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 35

Our Sacred Duty to Honor Women - Delivered April 1999 in the Priesthood session of General Conference. Reprinted July 1999 in the Liahona magazine.

It is a joy to be with you tonight,

brethren, and wonderful to see so many young men with their fathers. We are assembled because of our desire to hearken to the leaders of the Church. But this congregation is unique. I don't see any mothers. Not one of us could be here without a mother, yet we are all here—without our mothers.

2 Tonight I am attending with a son, sons-in-law, and grandsons. Where are their mothers? Gathered in the kitchen of our home! What are they doing? Making large batches of homemade doughnuts! And when we return home, we will feast on those doughnuts. While we enjoy them, these mothers, sisters, and daughters will listen intently as each of us speaks of things he learned here tonight. It's a nice family tradition, symbolic of the fact that everything we learn and do as priesthood bearers should bless our families.^d

3 Let us speak about our worthy and wonderful sisters, particularly our mothers, and consider our sacred duty to honor them.

4 When I was a young university student, one of my classmates

a 1 Tim. 6:9

b 1 Tim. 6:11. 1 Tim. 6:12 continues: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." That is our choice.

c Looking up scriptural references that refer to *create* or *form* (or their derivatives), with either *man*, *men*, *male*, or *female* in the same verse, I found 55 instances that attest to our divine creation. One may represent the many that convey the same message: "The Gods took counsel among themselves and said: Let us go down and form man in our image, after our likeness. ... So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them" (Abr. 4:26–27).

d D&C 23:3

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

urgently pleaded with a group of us—his Latter-day Saint friends—to donate blood for his mother, who was bleeding profusely. We went directly to the hospital to have our blood typed and tested. I'll never forget our shock when told that one of the prospective donors was unfit because of a positive blood test for a venereal disease. That infected blood was his own! Fortunately, his mother survived, but I'll never forget his lingering sorrow. He bore the burden of knowing that his personal immorality had disqualified him from giving needed aid to his mother, and he had added to her grief. I learned a great lesson: if one dishonors the commandments of God, one dishonors mother, and if one dishonors mother, one dishonors the commandments of God.^e

Honor Motherhood

5 During my professional career as a doctor of medicine, I was occasionally asked why I chose to do that difficult work. I responded with my opinion that the highest and noblest work in this life is that of a mother. Since that option was not available to me, I thought that caring for the sick might come close. I tried to care for my patients as compassionately and competently as Mother cared for me.

6 Many years ago the First Presidency issued a statement that has had a profound and lasting influence upon me. "Motherhood," they wrote, "is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind. It places her who honors its holy calling and service next to the angels."^f

7 Because mothers are essential to God's great plan of happiness, their sacred work is opposed by Satan, who would destroy the family and demean the worth of women.

8 You young men need to know that you can hardly achieve your highest potential without the influence of good women, particularly your mother and, in a few years, a good wife. Learn now to show respect and gratitude. Remember that your mother is your *mother*. She should not need to issue orders. Her wish, her hope, her hint should provide direction that you would honor. Thank her and express your love for her. And if she is struggling to rear you without your father, you have a double duty to honor her.

9 The influence of your mother will bless you throughout life,

e Many scriptures teach us to honor our parents. See Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Matt. 15:4; Matt. 19:19; Mark 7:10; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Eph. 6:2; 1 Ne. 17:55; Mosiah 13:20; JST, Matt. 19:19, The Holy Scriptures: Inspired Version; JST, Mark 7:12, Bible appendix.

f In James R. Clark, comp., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (1965–75), 6:178. In 1935 the First Presidency stated, "The true spirit of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gives to woman the highest place of honor in human life" (in Messages of the First Presidency, 6:5).

especially when you serve as a missionary. Long years ago, Elder Frank Croft was serving in the state of Alabama. While preaching to the people, he was forcefully abducted by a vicious gang, to be whipped and lashed across his bare back. Elder Croft was ordered to remove his coat and shirt before he was tied to a tree. As he did so, a letter he had recently received from his mother fell to the ground. The vile leader of the gang picked up the letter. Elder Croft closed his eyes and uttered a silent prayer. The attacker read the letter from Elder Croft's mother. From a copy of that letter, I quote:

“My beloved son, ... remember the words of the Savior when He said, ... ‘Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name’s sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for you will have your reward in Heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.’ Also remember the Savior upon the cross suffering from the sins of the world when He had uttered these immortal words, ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ Surely, my boy, they who are mistreating you ... know not what they do or they would not do it. Sometime, somewhere, they will understand and then they will regret their action and they will honor you for the glorious work you are doing. So be patient, my son, love those who mistreat you and say all manner of evil against

you and the Lord will bless you and magnify you. ... Remember also, my son, that day and night, your mother is praying for you.”

10 Elder Croft watched the hateful man as he studied the letter. He would read a line or two, then sit and ponder. He arose to approach his captive. The man said: “Feller, you must have a wonderful mother. You see, I once had one, too.” Then, addressing the mob, he said: “Men, after reading this Mormon’s mother’s letter, I just can’t go ahead with the job. Maybe we had better let him go.” Elder Croft was released without harm.^g

11 We are deeply grateful for the faithful mothers and fathers of our wonderful missionaries. The love they bear for their children is sublime.

Honor the Sisters

12 We who bear the holy priesthood have a sacred duty to honor our sisters. We are old enough and wise enough to know that teasing is wrong. We respect sisters—not only in our immediate families but all the wonderful sisters in our lives. As daughters of God, their potential is divine. Without them, eternal life would be impossible. Our high regard for them should spring from our love of God and from an awareness of their lofty purpose in His great eternal plan.

13 Hence, I warn against pornog-

g See Arthur M. Richardson, *The Life and Ministry of John Morgan* (1965), 267–68.

raphy. It is degrading of women. It is evil. It is infectious, destructive, and addictive. The body has means by which it can cleanse itself from harmful effects of contaminated food or drink. But it cannot vomit back the poison of pornography. Once recorded, it always remains subject to recall, flashing its perverted images across your mind, with power to draw you away from the wholesome things in life. Avoid it like the plague!

Honor Your Wife

14 To you who are not yet married, think about your future marriage. Choose your companion well. Remember the scriptures that teach the importance of marriage in the temple:

“In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

“And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

“And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.”^h

15 The highest ordinances in the house of the Lord are received by husband and wife together and equally—or not at all!

16 In retrospect, I see that the most important day of my life was the day when my sweetheart, Dantzel, and I were mar-

ried in the holy temple. Without her I could not have the highest and most enduring blessings of the priesthood. Without her I would not be the father to our wonderful children or grandfather to our precious grandchildren.

17 As fathers we should have love unbounded for the mothers of our children. We should accord to them the gratitude, respect, and praise that they deserve. Husbands, to keep alive the spirit of romance in your marriage, be considerate and kind in the tender intimacies of your married life. Let your thoughts and actions inspire confidence and trust. Let your words be wholesome and your time together be uplifting. Let nothing in life take priority over your wife—neither work, recreation, nor hobby.

18 An ideal marriage is a true partnership between two imperfect people, each striving to complement the other, to keep the commandments, and to do the will of the Lord.

Fathers Preside over the Family in Love

19 The family is the most important unit of society and of the Church. The family is ordained of God. It is central to His plan for the eternal destiny of His children.ⁱ “God has established families to bring happiness to his children, to allow them to

^h D&C 131:1–3

ⁱ See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102

CHAPTER 36

A Testimony of the Book of Mormon - Delivered October 1999 in the Sunday Morning session of General Conference.

NOT long after my call to serve as one of the Twelve Apostles, I was summoned to the office of the President of our Quorum, President Ezra Taft Benson. He expressed deep concern that members of the Church did not fully appreciate the value of the Book of Mormon. With emotion in his voice, he read to me from the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

2 “Your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—

3 “Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.”^a

4 By that time, President Benson had completely captured my attention. He then concluded his admonition:

5 “And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon.”^b

6 I shall never forget that lesson. Since then, President Howard W. Hunter, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and many other leaders of the Church have continued to extol the Book of Mormon to people throughout the world.

7 I would like to add my testimony of the divinity of this book. I have read it many times. I have also read much that has been written about it. Some authors have focused upon its stories, its people, or its vignettes of history. Others have been intrigued by its language structure or its records of weapons, geography, animal life, techniques of building, or systems of weights and measures.

8 Interesting as these matters may be, study of the Book of Mormon is most rewarding when one focuses on its primary purpose—to testify of Jesus Christ. By comparison, all other issues are incidental.

9 When you read the Book of Mormon, concentrate on the principal figure in the book—from its first chapter to the last—the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God.^c And look for a second undergirding theme: God will keep His covenants with the remnants of the house of Israel.^d

a D&C 84:54–55

b D&C 84:57

c The Book of Mormon has been organized into 6,607 verses, of which 3,925 refer to Jesus Christ, employing more than 100 titles. Thus, some form of Christ’s name is used on an average of one reference for every 1.7 verses (see Susan Easton Black, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon* [1987], 16–18).

d 3 Ne. 16:11–12; 3 Ne. 29:3; Morm. 5:20; Morm. 8:21; Morm. 9:37

10 The Book of Mormon is a crucial component of that covenant.^e It is holy scripture that encompasses sacred writings from the small and large plates of Nephi, the plates of Mormon, the plates of Ether, and the plates of brass, which contained “the five books of Moses, ... a record of the Jews, ... and ... prophecies of the holy prophets.”^f

11 When Mormon abridged these records, he noted that he could not write a “hundredth part” of their proceedings.^g Thus, historical aspects of the book assume secondary significance.

12 The Holy Bible has 66 individual books; the Book of Mormon contains 15. Its first book of Nephi—written some six centuries before the birth of Jesus—records that the prophet Lehi^h received a vision of the tree of life.ⁱ His son Nephi prayed to know its meaning. In answer, he was given a remarkable vision. He

beheld a virgin bearing a Child in her arms. He envisioned the Redeemer of the world, His earthly ministry, and His Crucifixion. He saw 12 others who would follow the Holy One. And he foresaw the ongoing opposition to the work of God and of His Apostles.^j

13 Other great prophets of the Book of Mormon—in their own way and time—testified of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Among them were the brother of Jared,^k Zenock, Neum, and Zenos.^l Testimonies of Jesus Christ that predated His birth in Bethlehem were also recorded from King Benjamin, Abinadi, Alma the Elder, Alma the Younger, Amulek, the sons of Mosiah, Captain Moroni, the brothers Nephi and Lehi, and Samuel the Lamanite.^m In a seemingly endless sequence of prophetic proclamations—testimonies of “all the holy prophets”ⁿ for “a great many thousand years before his

e D&C 84:57–58

f “A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon”; 1 Ne. 5:11–13.

g W of M 1:5. This explanation was repeated five more times (see Jacob 3:13; Hel. 3:14; 3 Ne. 5:8; 3 Ne. 26:6; Ether 15:33). Jacob, who received the plates from his brother Nephi, provided additional insight, noting that he “should not touch, save it were lightly, concerning the history of this people,” but he was to touch upon sacred or great things “as much as it were possible, for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of our people” (Jacob 1:2, 4).

h Lehi, father of Nephi and Jacob, was also an eyewitness of the Lord (see 2 Ne. 1:15).

i 1 Ne. 8:10–35

j 1 Ne. 11:14–36

k Ether 3:14

l 1 Ne. 19:10

m Many others could be listed, such as Enos, Jarom, Amaron, Amaleki, and more.

n Jacob 4:4

coming”^o—the Book of Mormon makes the solemn declaration that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer.

Authors

14 Most books contained in libraries of the world were authored for contemporary readers. And they were generally written for profit, with royalties accruing from successful sales.

15 Not so with the Book of Mormon. It was written anciently for our day. It reveals the endless Lordship of Jesus Christ in accounts of two ancient American dispensations,^p preserved for the benefit of us who live in this dispensation of the fulness of times. Certainly no royalties came to its authors. In fact, they paid dearly for their privilege of participation. What motivated them? Their devotion to God!

The book’s four major writers—Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and Moroni^q—were all eyewitnesses of the Lord, as was its martyred translator, the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Content

16 Their writings centered upon the Lord, His mission, and His ministry. Jacob, for example, repeatedly referred to the Atonement and Resurrection of Christ. “Beloved brethren,” wrote Jacob, “be reconciled unto [God] through the atonement of Christ, his Only Begotten Son, and ye may obtain a resurrection, ... and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God. ...

17 “And now, ... why not speak of the atonement of Christ, and attain to a perfect knowledge of him,” and a “knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?”^r

o Hel. 8:18

p Jaredite and Lehite

q Because Isaiah is quoted so extensively, he deserves mention as one of the major contributors to the Book of Mormon. A useful footnote to 2 Nephi 12:2 [2 Ne. 12:2] in the current English edition of the LDS scriptures indicates that some 433 verses of Isaiah—roughly a third of the entire book—are quoted in the Book of Mormon. In the English language edition, more than half (about 233 verses) differ in some detail from their biblical counterpart, “while about 200 verses have the same wording as KJV.” One scholar of Isaiah documents that no less than 391 of the verses refer to the attributes, appearance, majesty, and mission of Jesus Christ (see Monte S. Nyman, “Great Are the Words of Isaiah” [1980], 7, 283–87). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon [1997], 78–94) has classified the teachings of Isaiah as recorded in the Book of Mormon into five topical categories: (1) Christ’s Birth and Mortal Ministry (see 1 Ne. 11:13, 15, 18, 20; 2 Ne. 17:14–15; Alma 7:10). (2) Christ Visits the Spirits in Prison (see 1 Ne. 21:6–9). (3) Christ Shows Kindness to and Preserves Zion in the Last Days (see 1 Ne. 21:13–16; 2 Ne. 7:1–2; 3 Ne. 22:8—quoting from Isa. 54:8). (4) The Millennial Christ (see 2 Ne. 12:2–5; 2 Ne. 21:1–12; 2 Ne. 30:9). (5) The Crucifixion and Atonement (see Mosiah 14:1–12).

r Jacob 4:11–12

18 Jacob's advice is priceless and timeless.

19 The Savior declared that the Book of Mormon contains "the fulness of [His] everlasting gospel."^s How did He define the gospel? The resurrected Lord taught, "This is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me."^t

20 Then He amplified that one-sentence definition: "My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me."^u

21 This unique mortal mission of the Lord—the gospel as He defined it—we know as the Atone-

ment. The fulness of the gospel, therefore, connotes a fuller comprehension of the Atonement.^v This we do not obtain from the Bible alone. The word atonement, in any of its forms, is mentioned only once in the King James Version of the New Testament.^w In the Book of Mormon, it appears 39 times!^x The Book of Mormon also contains more references to the Resurrection than does the Bible.^y

22 The Savior referred to the Book of Mormon as His "new covenant" with the house of Israel.^z It is a tangible sign of Christ's culminating covenant with mankind.^{aa} The divine teachings of this book, as a third testament, clarify doctrine and unify the Old Testament with the New Testament. Scriptural covenants,^{ab} testaments,^{ac} and

s D&C 27:5; see also D&C 20:9; JS—H 1:34

t 3 Ne. 27:13. The full text of His sermon also includes *ordinances* and *covenants* as integral aspects of the gospel.

u 3 Ne. 27:14

v Not all divine doctrines are included in the Book of Mormon. Temple work as we know it today has been revealed as part of the restoration of all things and is taught in the Doctrine and Covenants and in later revelations to living prophets.

w Rom. 5:11

x *Atonement*: 28 times; *atone*, *atoning*, or *atoned*: 8 times; plus *atoneth*: 3 times; equals 39 times. Within several verses, the word *atonement* appears more than once (see 2 Ne. 9:7; Alma 34:9; Alma 42:23)

y The word *resurrection* appears 41 times in the King James Version of the Bible; it appears 81 times in the Book of Mormon (see also Christ and the New Covenant, 238).

z D&C 84:57

aa See 3 Ne. 21:1; 3 Ne. 29: chapter heading

ab *Covenant* comes from the Latin *convenire*, which means "to come with," "to agree."

ac *Testament* comes from the Latin *testis*, which means "witness." *Testament* is also related to the Latin roots *tres* and *stare*, which mean "three stand."

witnesses^{ad} since the beginning of time relate to the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the central act of all human history.

23 The Book of Mormon is the most important religious text to be revealed from God to man “since the writings of the New Testament were compiled nearly two millennia ago.”^{ae} Joseph Smith declared the Book of Mormon to be “the most correct of any book on earth, and the key-stone of our religion.”^{af} It is the only book that the Lord Himself has testified to be true.^{ag}

24 The crowning event of this sacred record is the personal ministry of the resurrected Lord to people of ancient America. To them He made this revelatory announcement:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. ...

“... The scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled. ...

“I am the light and the life of the world. ...

“... Whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spir-

it, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost. ...

“... I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.

“Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. ... I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me, ... and be saved.”^{ah}

25 After that supernal introduction, the Master reinforced His identity by allowing the multitudes to thrust their hands into His side and feel the prints of the nails in His hands and in His feet. Then they knew that the very God of Israel stood in their presence—He who had been slain for the sins of the world.^{ai}

26 He instructed the people. He taught them to pray, to repent, to be baptized, to partake of the sacrament, to know of His doctrine, to understand the importance of sacred ordinances and covenants, and to endure to the end.^{aj}

27 The Book of Mormon is a gift from God to all humankind, and He has “commanded his people that they should persuade all

ad *Witness* comes from the Old English *wit*, which means “knowledge.” A witness is defined as one who has special knowledge.

ae Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 9–10.

af *History of the Church*, 4:461

ag D&C 17:6

ah 3 Ne. 9:15–16, 18, 20–22

ai 3 Ne. 11:14

aj 3 Ne. 15:9

men to repentance.”^{ak} He invites all “to come unto him and partake of his goodness,” and He denies “none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female.”^{al}

Translation

28 This appeal to all people must involve many languages and the work of skilled translators. The King James Version of the Bible, for example, was produced by 50 English scholars who accomplished their work in seven years, translating at the rate of one page per day.^{am} Expert translators today do well if they can also translate scripture at the rate of one page per day.

29 In contrast, Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon at the rate of about 10 pages per day, completing the task in about 85 days!^{an} (Many of us feel good if we can read the book in that time.)

30 Such a pace is even more remarkable considering the circumstances under which the Prophet labored. In that same

period, while enduring constant distractions and incessant hostility, Joseph Smith moved more than 100 miles from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York.^{ao} He applied for a copyright.^{ap} He received revelations comprising 12 sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.^{aq} Heavenly beings restored the holy priesthood. Yet he completed the translation in less than three months.

31 The First Presidency provided opportunity for the Twelve Apostles to see portions of the original manuscript and the printer’s manuscript of the Book of Mormon. Words cannot describe the deep emotions we felt as we examined these precious documents and observed that marks of editing were remarkably rare.

Personal Testimony and Blessings

32 Each individual who prayerfully studies the Book of Mormon can also receive a testimony of its divinity.^{ar} In addition, this book can help with person-

ak 2 Ne. 26:27

al 2 Ne. 26:33

am See Christ and the New Covenant, 349

an From 7 April to 30 June 1829. After subtracting time spent for other contemporary tasks, working time available was closer to 55 days. The present edition of the Book of Mormon contains 531 pages. Assuming 55 days for the work of translation, the rate is calculated as 9.7 present-day pages per day.

ao See John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, “Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. [1992], 1:211.

ap See “A Chronology of Church History,” Appendix 2, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1652, date of 11 June 1829.

aq Sections 6–9 and 11–18

ar Moro. 10:4–5

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al problems in a very real way. Do you want to get rid of a bad habit? Do you want to improve relationships in your family? Do you want to increase your spiritual capacity? Read the Book of Mormon! It will bring you closer to the Lord and His loving power.^{as} He who fed a multitude with five loaves and two fish-

es^{at}—He who helped the blind to see and the lame to walk^{au}—can also bless you! He has promised that those who live by the precepts of this book “shall receive a crown of eternal life.”^{av}

33 The Book of Mormon is true! I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

as The Prophet Joseph Smith declared that “a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its [the Book of Mormon’s] precepts, than by any other book” (History of the Church, 4:461).

at Matt. 14:19–20; Mark 6:41–42; Luke 9:16–17

au Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:21–22

av D&C 20:14

THE THIRD BOOK OF RUSSELL M NELSON

A collection of conference talks and devotionals from 2000 thru 2009. In August 2003, Nelson became the first member of the Quorum of the Twelve to visit Kazakhstan. While there, Nelson visited government officials, was interviewed by Yuzhnaya Stalitsa television, and dedicated that country for the preaching of the gospel. His wife, Dantzel Nelson, died unexpectedly at their home in Salt Lake City on February 12, 2005, at age 78. The following year, Nelson married Wendy L. Watson in the Salt Lake Temple. Nelson’s assignments as an apostle have included supervisory responsibility for the LDS Church in Africa. In 2009, he, along with his wife and others, were attacked while in Mozambique. He also made several other visits to that continent, including one to Kenya in 2011. From 2007 to 2015, Nelson was as a member of the Church Boards of Trustees/Education, the governing body of the Church Educational System, and the chairman of its Executive Committee.

CHAPTER 1

Full Blessings of Abrahamic Covenant Available through Jesus Christ - Delivered as a part of the “Special Witnesses of Christ” broadcast along with the other members of the Quorum of the Twelve and First Presidency. The presentation was broadcast by satellite between general conference sessions on 1–2 April 2000.

WHENEVER I look at stars in the

sky, I am reminded that about 4,000 years ago Jesus the Christ (then speaking as Jehovah—God of the Old Testament) made a covenant with Father Abraham. Included was the promise that the Savior of the world would come through Abraham’s lineage and that his seed would be multiplied “as the stars of the heaven.” In addition, Abraham was told that through his seed, “all the nations of the earth

[shall] be blessed”.^a This covenant was to be everlasting—even through “a thousand generations”.^b Abraham was promised “that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee ... even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal”.^c

2 From scriptures we learn that this covenant “should be fulfilled in the latter days”.^d Then the fulness of His gospel would be preached and many would truly believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

3 In 1836, keys of “the gospel of Abraham” were conferred.^e In 1843 the Lord declared to the Prophet Joseph Smith that “Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins—from whose loins ye are. ... This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham”.^f

4 Brothers and sisters, you may also claim the supernal blessings promised to the faithful lineage of Abraham. The Lord explained that blessings and responsibilities of His priesthood are yours because of your faith, works, and lineage—the lineage declared in your patriarchal blessings. You “are lawful heirs,” He said. “Your

life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage”.^g

5 The ultimate blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are conferred in holy temples. These blessings allow us to come forth in the First Resurrection and inherit thrones, kingdoms, powers, principalities, and dominions, to our “exaltation and glory in all things”.^h The fulfillment of the ancient Abrahamic covenant is feasible only because of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is He who has made it possible for us to dwell with God, with Him, and with our families eternally. This is His work and His glory. I love Him; I testify of Him and express my everlasting gratitude for Him now and forevermore, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 2

Jesus The Christ: Our Master and More - Published in the April 2000 Ensign.

MY lifelong interest in the human heart took an unexpected turn in April 1984, when I was called to leave the operating room of the hospital and enter the upper room of the temple. There I became an ordained Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. I did not seek such a call but have humbly

a Gen. 22:17–18

b 1 Chr. 16:15

c Abr. 2:11

d 1 Ne. 15:18

e D&C 110:12

f D&C 132:30–31

g D&C 86:9–10

h D&C 132:19

tried to be worthy of that trust and privilege of being His representative, now hoping to mend hearts spiritually as I previously did surgically.

2 As one who has been called, sustained, and ordained—one of 15 special witnesses of our Lord and Master—I follow this vital theme from the Book of Mormon: “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, [and] we prophesy of Christ”.ⁱ

3 We honor Him as the most important individual ever to live on planet Earth. He is Jesus the Christ, our Master and more. He has numerous names, titles, and responsibilities, all of eternal significance. The Topical Guide under the heading “Jesus Christ” has 19 pages (240–58) filled with references listed under 57 sub-headings. In the space allotted here we could not fully consider or comprehend all of these important facets of His life. But for now I would like to review, even briefly, 10 of those mighty responsibilities, not wanting to imply any order of priority because all He accomplished was equally supernal in scope.

Creator

4 Under the direction of the Father, Jesus bore the responsibility of Creator. His title was “the Word,” spelled with a cap-

ital W.^j In the Greek language of the New Testament, that Word was Logos, or “expression.” It was another name for the Master. That terminology may seem strange, but it is appropriate. We use words to convey our expression to others. So Jesus was the Word, or expression, of His Father to the world.

5 The Gospel of John proclaims that Christ is the Creator of all things: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made”.^k

6 In modern revelation, Jesus’ responsibility as Creator of many worlds is affirmed:

7 “Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation—

8 “The light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men.

9 “The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him”.^l

10 The book of Helaman records similar testimony, declaring that “Jesus Christ [is] ... the Creator

i 2 Ne. 25:26

j see JST, John 1:16, Bible appendix

k John 1:3; see also D&C 93:21

l D&C 93:8–10; see also 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2; 2 Ne. 9:5; 3 Ne. 9:15; D&C 76:23–24; D&C 88:42–48; D&C 101:32–34

hayah, which means “to be” or “to exist.” A form of the word hayah in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament was translated into English as I AM.^w

18 Remarkably, I AM was used by Jehovah as a name for Himself.^x Read the following intriguing dialogue from the Old Testament. Moses had just received a divine appointment he did not seek, a commission to lead the children of Israel out of bondage. The scene takes place atop Mount Sinai:

19 “Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

20 No doubt Moses felt inadequate for his calling, even as you and I may when given a challenging assignment.

21 “And Moses said [again] unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?”

22 “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

23 “And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever”.^y

24 Jehovah had thus revealed to Moses this very name that He had meekly and modestly chosen for His own premortal identification: “I AM.”

25 Later in His mortal ministry, Jesus occasionally repeated this name. Do you remember His terse response to tormenting questioners? Note the double meaning in His reply to Caiaphas, the chief high priest:

26 “The high priest asked him, ... Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”

27 “And Jesus said, I am”.^z

28 He was declaring both His lineage and His name. Another instance occurred when Jesus was taunted about His acquaintanceship with Abraham:

29 “Then said the Jews unto him, ... hast thou seen Abraham?”

30 “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am”.^{aa}

w Ex. 3:14

x see D&C 29:1; D&C 38:1; D&C 39:1

y Ex. 3:11, 13–15

z Mark 14:61–62

aa John 8:57–58

Father gives us assurance of His unequaled understanding, justice, and mercy.^{ah}

Immanuel

43 Jesus was foreordained to be the promised Immanuel. Remember Isaiah's remarkable prophecy: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel".^{ai} Fulfillment of that prophecy was not just unlikely, it was humanly impossible. Incredible! Everyone knew a virgin could not bear a child. And then for that child to be given such a pretentious name was doubly daring. The Hebrew name—the title of which Isaiah prophesied, Immanuel—literally means "with us is God"!^{aj} That holy name was subsequently given to Jesus in the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants.^{ak}

44 Immanuel could be such only at the will of His Father.

Son of God

45 Jesus alone bore His responsibility as the Son of God, the Only Begotten Son of the Father.^{al} Jesus was literally "the Son of

the Highest".^{am} In more than a dozen verses of scripture, the solemn word of God the Father bears testimony that Jesus is truly His Beloved Son. That solemn testimony is often coupled with God's pleading for mankind to hear and obey the voice of His revered Son.^{an} Through the condescension of God, that most unlikely prophecy of Isaiah^{ao} became a reality.

46 The unique parentage of Jesus was also announced to Nephi, who was thus instructed by an angel:

47 "Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. ...

48 "... Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!"^{ap}

49 From His Heavenly Father, Jesus inherited His potential for immortality and eternal life. From His mother, Jesus inherited death.^{aq} Prior to His Crucifixion, He spoke these words of clarification:

ah see Alma 7:12

ai Isa. 7:14

aj See Isa. 7:14, footnote e.

ak see Matt. 1:23; 2 Ne. 17:14; D&C 128:22

al see John 1:14, 18; John 3:16

am Luke 1:32; see also Luke 1:35

an see Matt. 3:17; Matt. 17:5; Mark 1:11; Mark 9:7; Luke 3:22; Luke 9:35; 2 Pet. 1:17; 2 Ne. 31:11; 3 Ne. 11:7; 3 Ne. 21:20; D&C 93:15; Moses 4:2; JS—H 1:17

ao see Isa. 7:14

ap 1 Ne. 11:18, 21

aq see Gen. 3:15; Mark 6:3

50 "I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

51 "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This ... have I received of my Father".^{ar}

52 Though separate from His Heavenly Father in both body and spirit, Jesus is one with His Father in power and purpose. Their ultimate objective is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man".^{as}

53 Some may wonder why the Son is occasionally referred to as "the Father." The designation used for any man can vary. Every man is a son but may also be called father, brother, uncle, or grandfather, depending on his circumstance. So we must not allow ourselves to become confused regarding divine identity, purpose, or doctrine. Because Jesus was our Creator, He is known in scripture as "the Father of all things".^{at} But please remember, as the First Presidency under President Joseph F. Smith taught: "Jesus Christ is not the Father of the spirits who have taken or yet shall take bodies upon this earth, for He is one of them. He is The Son, as they are sons or daughters of Elohim".^{au}

54 We comprehend that distinction well when we pray to our Heavenly Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. And as we do so regularly, we honor our heavenly and earthly parentage, just as Jesus honored His—the Son of God.

Anointed One

55 "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power".^{av} Jesus was the Anointed One. Because of this fact, He was accorded two specific titles. One was the Messiah, which in Hebrew means "the anointed." The other was the Christ, which comes from the Greek word that also means "the anointed." Thus, "Jesus is spoken of as the Christ and the Messiah, which means he is the one anointed of the Father to be his personal representative in all things pertaining to the salvation of mankind".^{aw} Scriptures declare that Christ is the only name under heaven whereby salvation comes.^{ax} So one may add either of these titles to signify adoration for Jesus: the Christ or the Messiah, both signifying an anointing by God for that supernal responsibility.

Savior and Redeemer

56 Jesus was born to be Savior and Redeemer of all mankind.^{ay}

ar John 10:17–18

as Moses 1:39

at Mosiah 7:27; see also Mosiah 15:3; Mosiah 16:15; Hel. 14:12; Ether 3:14

au in James R. Clark, comp., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. [1965–75], 5:34

av Acts 10:38

aw Bible Dictionary, "Anointed One," 609

ax see 2 Ne. 25:20

ay see Isa. 49:26; 1 Ne. 10:5

He was the Lamb of God^{az} who offered Himself without spot or blemish^{ba} as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.^{bb} Later, as the resurrected Lord, He related that sacred responsibility to the meaning of the gospel, which He described in one powerful passage:

57 “Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

58 “And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross”.^{bc}

59 Thus, Jesus personally defined gospel. This term comes from the Old English godspell, which means “good news.” The LDS Bible Dictionary notes the following: “The good news is that Jesus Christ has made a perfect atonement for mankind that will redeem all mankind from the grave and reward each individual according to his/her works and sincerest desires. This atonement was begun by his appointment in the premortal world but was worked out by Jesus during his mortal sojourn”.^{bd}

60 Jesus’ Atonement had been foretold long before He was born in Bethlehem. Prophets had

so prophesied His advent for many generations. Let us sample from the record of Helaman, written some 30 years before the Savior’s birth: “Remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world”.^{be}

61 His Atonement blesses each of us in a very personal way. Read carefully this explanation from Jesus:

62 “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

63 “But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

64 “Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

65 “Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men”.^{bf}

66 Jesus fulfilled His glorious promise made in preearthly councils by atoning for the fall

az see 1 Ne. 10:10

ba see 1 Pet. 1:19

bb see John 1:29

bc 3 Ne. 27:13–14; see also 3 Ne. 27:15–21

bd Bible Dictionary, “Gospels,” 682

be Hel. 5:9

bf D&C 19:16–19

of Adam and Eve unconditionally and for our own sins upon the condition of our repentance. His responsibility as Savior and Redeemer was indelibly intertwined with His responsibility as Creator.

67 To shed additional insight on this relationship, I would like to share a remarkable quotation I found in a rare book in London one day while searching through the library of the British Museum. It was published as a 20th-century English translation of an ancient Egyptian text. It was written by Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria, who died in A.D. 385. This record refers to the creation of Adam; premortal Jesus is speaking of His Father:

68 “He ... made Adam according to Our image and likeness, and He left him lying for forty days and forty nights without putting breath into him. And He heaved sighs over him daily, saying, ‘If I put breath into this [man], he must suffer many pains.’ And I said unto My father, ‘Put breath into him; I will be an advocate for him.’ And My Father said unto Me, ‘If I put breath into him, My beloved Son, Thou wilt be obliged to go down into the world, and to suffer many pains for him before Thou shalt have redeemed him, and made him to come back to his primal state.’ And I said unto My Father, ‘Put

breath into him; I will be his advocate, and I will go down into the world, and will fulfil Thy command’”.^{bg}

69 Jesus’ responsibility as Advocate, Savior, and Redeemer was foredetermined in premortal realms and fulfilled by His Atonement.^{bh} Our responsibility is to remember, to repent, and to be righteous.

Judge

70 Closely allied to the Lord’s status as Savior and Redeemer is His responsibility as Judge. Jesus revealed this interrelationship after He had declared His definition of the gospel, which we cited earlier:

71 “As I have been lifted up [upon the cross] by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

72 “... Therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works”.^{bi}

73 The Book of Mormon sheds further light on how that judgment will occur. So does the temple endowment. When we approach that threshold of the eternal court of justice, we know

bg “Discourse on Abbaton,” in E. A. Wallis Budge, ed. and trans., *Coptic Martyrdoms etc. in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* [1977], brackets appear in printed text; see Moses 3:7; Moses 6:8–9, 51–52, 59

bh see Job 19:25–26; Matt. 1:21; Abr. 3:24–27

bi 3 Ne. 27:14–15

who will personally preside:

74 “The keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.

75 “And whoso knocketh, to him will he open”.^{bj}

76 Scriptures indicate that the Lord will receive apostolic assistance when exercising judgment upon the house of Israel.^{bk} Our personal encounter at judgment will be aided by our own “bright recollection”^{bl} and “perfect remembrance”^{bm} of our deeds, as well as by the desires of our hearts.^{bn}

Exemplar

77 Another overarching responsibility of the Lord is that of Exemplar. To people of the Holy Land, He said, “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you”.^{bo} To people of ancient America, He again emphasized His mission as Exemplar: “I am the light; I have set an example for you”.^{bp} In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged His followers with His admonition: “Be ye there-

fore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”.^{bq}

78 Sinless and flawless as Jesus was in mortality, we should remember that He viewed His own state of physical perfection as being yet in the future.^{br} Even He had to endure to the end. Can you and I be expected to do less?

79 When the crucified and resurrected Lord appeared to the people in ancient America, He again stressed the importance of His example. But now He included Himself as a perfected personage: “I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect”.^{bs}

80 Are you vexed by your own imperfections? For example, have you ever locked your keys inside the car? Or have you ever moved from one room to another, to accomplish a task, only to find you had forgotten what you wanted to do? (Incidentally, troubles of that nature don’t disappear as you grow older.) Please do not be discouraged by the Lord’s expression of hope for your perfection. You should have faith to know that He would not require development beyond your capacity. Of course you should strive to correct hab-

bj 2 Ne. 9:41–42
 bk see 1 Ne. 12:9; D&C 29:12
 bl Alma 11:43
 bm Alma 5:18
 bn see D&C 137:9
 bo John 13:15; see also John 14:6; 1 Pet. 2:21
 bp 3 Ne. 18:16; see also 3 Ne. 27:27; 2 Ne. 31:9, 16
 bq Matt. 5:48
 br see Luke 13:32
 bs 3 Ne. 12:48

its or thoughts which are improper. Conquering of weakness brings great joy. You can attain a certain degree of perfection in some things in this life. And you can become perfect in keeping various commandments. But the Lord was not necessarily asking for your errorless and perfect behavior in all things. He was pleading for more than that. His hopes are for your full potential to be realized: to become as He is! That includes the perfection of your physical body, when it will be changed to an immortal state that cannot deteriorate or die.

81 So while you earnestly strive for continuing improvement in your life here, remember that your resurrection, exaltation, completion, and perfection await you in the life to come. That precious promise of perfection could not have been possible without the Lord's Atonement and example.

Millennial Messiah

82 One of the Lord's ultimate responsibilities lies yet in the future. That will be His masterful status as the Millennial Messiah. When that day comes, the physical face of the earth will have been changed: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be

made straight, and the rough places plain".^{bt} Then Jesus will return to the earth. His Second Coming will be no secret. It will be broadly known: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together".^{bu}

83 Then, "the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace".^{bv} He will govern from two world capitals, one in old Jerusalem^{bw} and the other in the New Jerusalem, "built upon the American continent".^{bx} From these centers He will direct the affairs of His Church and kingdom. Then He "shall reign for ever and ever".^{by}

84 In that day He will bear new titles and be surrounded by special Saints. He will be known as "Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that [will be] with him [will be those who] are called, and chosen, and faithful" to their trust here in mortality.^{bz}

85 He is Jesus the Christ, our Master and more. We have discussed but 10 of His many responsibilities: Creator, Jehovah, Advocate with the Father, Immanuel, Son of God, Anointed One, Savior and Redeemer, Judge, Exemplar, and Millennial Messiah.

bt Isa. 40:4

bu Isa. 40:5

bv Isa. 9:6

bw see Jer. 3:17; Zech. 14:4-7; D&C 45:48-66; D&C 133:19-21

bx A of F 1:10; see also Ether 13:3-10; D&C 84:2-4

by Rev. 11:15; see also Ex. 15:18; Ps. 146:10; Mosiah 3:5; D&C 76:108

bz Rev. 17:14; see also Rev. 19:16

86 As His disciples, you and I bear mighty responsibilities too. Wherever I walk, it is my divine calling and sacred privilege to bear fervent testimony of Jesus the Christ. He lives! I love Him. Eagerly I follow Him, and willingly I offer my life in His service. As His special witness, I solemnly teach of Him. I testify of Him. And each of you also has the responsibility to know the Lord, love Him, follow Him, serve Him, and teach and testify of Him.

CHAPTER 3

The Creation - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2000 General Conference.

WE will long remember this inspiring conference in the new Conference Center. Not long ago, there was only a deep hole in the ground where this building now stands. We have watched its construction with interest and awe.

2 The process of construction is truly inspiring to me. From conception to completion, any major building project reflects upon the work of the Master Creator. In fact, the Creation—of planet

Earth and of life upon it—undergirds all other creative capability. Any manmade creation is possible only because of our divine Creator. The people who design and build are given life and capacity by that Creator. And all materials used in the construction of an edifice are ultimately derived from the rich resources of the earth. The Lord declared, “The earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things.”^a

3 It is difficult for mortal minds to comprehend the majesty of the Creation. It is much easier for us to think about good things to eat or fun things to do. But I would like to stretch our minds to think of things beyond our easy grasp. The creation of man and woman was wondrous and great.^b So was the creation of the earth as their mortal dwelling place.

4 The entire Creation was planned by God. A council in heaven was once convened in which we participated.^c There our Heavenly Father announced His divine plan.^d It is also called the plan of happiness,^e the plan of salvation,^f the plan of redemption,^g the plan of resto-

a D&C 104:17
 b See Russell M. Nelson, “The Magnificence of Man,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 64–69; “We Are Children of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 85–87
 c See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 349–50, 365.
 d See 2 Ne. 9:13; Alma 34:9; Abr. 3:22–27.
 e See Alma 42:8, 16.
 f See Jarom 1:2; Alma 24:14; Alma 42:5; Moses 6:62.
 g See Jacob 6:8; Alma 12:25–26; Alma 17:16; Alma 18:39; Alma 22:13; Alma 29:2; Alma 34:16, 31; Alma 39:18; Alma 42:11–13.

ration,^h the plan of mercy,ⁱ the plan of deliverance,^j and the everlasting gospel.^k The purpose of the plan is to provide opportunity for the spirit children of God to progress toward an eternal exaltation.

Components of the Plan

5 The plan required the Creation, and that in turn required both the Fall and the Atonement. These are the three fundamental components of the plan. The creation of a paradisiacal planet came from God.^l Mortality and death came into the world through the Fall of Adam.^m Immortality and the possibility of eternal life were provided by the Atonement of Jesus Christ.ⁿ The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement were planned long before the actual work of the Creation began.

6 While visiting the British Museum in London one day, I read a most unusual book. It is not scripture. It is an English translation of an ancient Egyptian manuscript. From it, I quote a

dialogue between the Father and the Son. Referring to His Father, Jehovah—the premortal Lord—says:

7 “He took the clay from the hand of the angel, and made Adam according to Our image and likeness, and He left him lying for forty days and forty nights without putting breath into him. And He heaved sighs over him daily, saying, ‘If I put breath into this [man], he must suffer many pains.’ And I said unto My Father, ‘Put breath into him; I will be an advocate for him.’ And My Father said unto Me, ‘If I put breath into him, My beloved Son, Thou wilt be obliged to go down into the world, and to suffer many pains for him before Thou shalt have redeemed him, and made him to come back to his primal state.’ And I said unto My Father, ‘Put breath into him; I will be his advocate, and I will go down into the world, and will fulfil Thy command.’”^o

8 Although this text is not scripture, it reaffirms scriptures that

h See Alma 41:2.

i See Alma 42:15, 31; 2 Ne. 9:6.

j See 2 Ne. 11:5.

k See Rev. 14:6; D&C 27:5; D&C 36:5; D&C 68:1; D&C 77:8–9, 11; D&C 79:1; D&C 84:103; D&C 99:1; D&C 101:22, 39; D&C 106:2; D&C 109:29, 65; D&C 124:88; D&C 128:17; D&C 133:36; D&C 135:3, 7; D&C 138:19, 25; JS—H 1:34.

l Latter-day revelation affirms that Michael (known also as Adam; see D&C 27:11; D&C 107:54; D&C 128:21) participated in the process of creation as well.

m See 2 Ne. 2:25; Moses 6:48; JST, Gen. 6:49, The Holy Scriptures: Inspired Version.

n See 2 Ne. 2:21–28.

o “Discourse on Abbatôn by Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria,” in *Coptic Martyrdoms etc. in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, ed. and trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (1914), 482. Timothy, archbishop of Alexandria, died in A.D. 385. Brackets are included in Budge’s English translation.

teach of the deep and compassionate love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for us—attesting that Jesus volunteered willingly to be our Savior and Redeemer.^p

9 The Lord God declared, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”^q He who, under direction of the Father, had created the earth, subsequently came into mortality to do the will of His Father^r and to fulfill all prophecies of the Atonement.^s His Atonement would redeem every soul from the penalties of personal transgression, on conditions that He set.^t

Phases of the Creation

10 Each phase of the Creation was well planned before it was accomplished. Scripture tells us that “the Lord God, created all things ... spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth.”^u

11 The physical Creation itself was staged through ordered periods of time. In Genesis^v and Moses,^w those periods are called days. But in the book of Abraham, each period is referred to as a time.^x Whether termed a day, a time, or an age, each phase was a period between two identifiable events—a division of eternity.^y

12 Period one included the creation of atmospheric heavens and physical earth, culminating in the emergence of light from darkness.^z

13 In period two, the waters were divided between the surface of the earth and its atmospheric heavens. Provision was made for clouds and rain to give life to all that would later dwell upon the earth.^{aa}

14 In period three, plant life began. The earth was organized to bring forth grass, herbs, trees, and vegetation—each growing from its own seed.^{ab}

p See John 3:16; John 10:14–15, 17–18.

q Moses 1:39.

r See 3 Ne. 27:13.

s For a comprehensive study of the prophecies of prophets pertaining to Christ, see D. Kelly Ogden and R. Val Johnson, “All the Prophets Prophesied of Christ,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1994, 31–37; *Liahona*, Apr. 1994, 10–18.

t See 2 Ne. 9:20–27; Mosiah 26:21–23; D&C 138:19.

u Moses 3:5; see Moses 6:51.

v See Gen. 1:5–2:3.

w See Moses 2:5–3:3.

x See Abr. 4:8–5:3.

y Abraham likened one day in the Lord’s time to 1,000 years (see Abr. 3:4).

z See Gen. 1:1–5; Moses 2:1–5; Abr. 4:1–5.

aa See Gen. 1:6–8; Moses 2:6–8; Abr. 4:6–8.

ab See Gen. 1:9–13; Moses 2:9–13; Abr. 4:9–13.

15 Period four was a time of further development. Lights in the expanse of the heaven were organized so there could be seasons and other means of measuring time. During this period, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the earth were placed in proper relationship to one another.^{ac} The sun, with its vast stores of hydrogen, was to serve as a giant furnace to provide light and heat for the earth and life upon it.^{ad}

16 In period five, fish, fowl, and “every living creature” were added.^{ae} They were made fruitful and able to multiply—in the sea and on the earth—each after its own kind.^{af}

17 In the sixth period, creation of life continued. The beasts of the earth were made after their kind, cattle after their kind, and everything which “creepeth upon the earth”—again, after its own kind.^{ag} Then the Gods counseled together and said: “Let us go down and form man in our image, after our likeness. ...

18 “So the Gods went down to organize man in their own im-

age, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.”^{ah} Thus, Adam and Eve were formed.^{ai} And they were blessed to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”^{aj}

19 The seventh period was designated as a time of rest.^{ak}

The Creation Testifies of a Creator
20 I testify that the earth and all life upon it are of divine origin. The Creation did not happen by chance. It did not come ex nihilo (out of nothing). And human minds and hands able to build buildings or create computers are not accidental. It is God who made us and not we ourselves. We are His people!^{al} The Creation itself testifies of a Creator. We cannot disregard the divine in the Creation. Without our grateful awareness of God’s hand in the Creation, we would be just as oblivious to our provider as are goldfish swimming

ac See Gen. 1:14–19; Moses 2:14–19; Abr. 4:14–19.

ad See Henry Eyring, “World of Evidence, World of Faith,” in *Of Heaven and Earth: Reconciling Scientific Thought with LDS Theology*, ed. and comp. David L. Clark (1998), 59.

ae Abr. 4:20–21.

af See Gen. 1:20–23; Moses 2:20–23; Abr. 4:22–23.

ag See Gen. 1:24–31; Moses 2:24–31; Abr. 4:24–31.

ah Abr. 4:26–27.

ai Note that the Lord called the first man and woman “Adam” (see Gen. 5:2; Moses 6:9).

aj Gen. 1:28; Moses 2:28; see also Abr. 4:28; JST, Gen. 1:30.

ak See Gen. 2:1–3; Moses 3:1–3; Abr. 5:1–3.

al See Ps. 100:3.

in a bowl. With deep gratitude, we echo the words of the Psalmist, who said, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.”^{am}

Purpose and Destiny of the Earth
 21 This earth is but one of many creations over which God presides. “Worlds without number have I created,” He said. “And I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.”^{an} Grand as it is, planet Earth is part of something even grander—that great plan of God. Simply summarized, the earth was created that families might be. Scripture explains that a husband and wife “shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation.”^{ao}

22 And as part of the planned destiny of the earth and its inhabitants, here our kindred dead are also to be redeemed.^{ap} Families are to be sealed together for all eternity.^{aq} A welding link is to be forged between the fathers and the children. In our time, a whole, complete, and perfect union of all dispensations, keys, and powers is to be welded together.^{ar} For these sacred purposes, holy temples now dot the earth.

23 Though our understanding of the Creation is limited, we know enough to appreciate its supernatural significance. And that store of knowledge will be augmented in the future. Scripture declares:

24 “In that day when the Lord shall come [again], he shall reveal all things—

25 “Things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof—

26 “Things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven.”^{as}

27 Yes, further light and knowledge will come. The Lord said, “If there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—

28 “All the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, ... and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times.”^{at}

29 Eventually, “the earth will be renewed and receive its para-

am Ps. 104:24.
 an Moses 1:33; see also D&C 76:23–24.
 ao D&C 49:16.
 ap See D&C 128:15.
 aq See D&C 2:2–3; D&C 49:17; D&C 138:48; JS—H 1:39.
 ar See D&C 128:18.
 as D&C 101:32–34.
 at D&C 121:30–31.

disiacal glory.”^{au} At the Second Coming of the Lord, the earth will be changed once again. It will be returned to its paradisiacal state and be made new. There will be a new heaven and a new earth.^{av}

Our Responsibilities

30 Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, we should understand our significant responsibilities. Both the creations of God and the creations of man teach us the importance of each component. Do you think that the absence of one piece of granite from the face of this building would be noticed? Of course it would!

31 So it is with each son or daughter of God. We cannot let “the head say unto the feet it [has] no need of the feet; for without the feet how shall the body be able to stand?”^{aw} Just as “the body [has] need of every member,”^{ax} so the family has need of every member. All members of a family are to be linked, sealed, and “edified together, that the system may be kept perfect.”^{ay}

32 The Creation, great as it is, is not an end in itself but a means to an end. We come to the earth for a brief period of time, endure our tests and trials, and prepare to move onward and upward to a glorious homecoming.^{az} Our thoughts and deeds while here will surely be more purposeful if we understand God’s plan and are thankful for and obedient to His commandments.^{ba}

33 As beneficiaries of the divine Creation, what shall we do? We should care for the earth, be wise stewards over it, and preserve it for future generations.^{bb} And we are to love and care for one another.^{bc}

34 We are to be creators in our own right—builders of an individual faith in God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith in His Church. We are to build families and be sealed in holy temples. We are to build the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth.^{bd} We are to prepare for our own divine destiny—glory,

au A of F 1:10.

av See Rev. 21:1; Ether 13:9; D&C 29:23–24.

aw D&C 84:109.

ax D&C 84:110.

ay D&C 84:110; see also 1 Cor. 12:14–26.

az See Ps. 116:15; Alma 42:8.

ba See D&C 59:20–21.

bb The Lord has entrusted us to care for the earth. He said: “It is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine. And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine” (D&C 104:13–15; see also Rev. 7:3).

bc See John 13:34–35; John 15:12; Rom. 12:10–13:8; Gal. 5:13; 1 Thes. 4:9; 1 Jn. 3:11–4:12; Mosiah 4:15; D&C 88:123.

bd See JST, Matt. 6:38 (KJV, Matt. 6:33, footnote a).

immortality, and eternal lives.^a These supernal blessings can all be ours, through our faithfulness.

35 I testify that God lives! Jesus is the Christ and Creator! He is Lord over all the earth. He has established His Church in these latter days to accomplish His divine purposes. Joseph Smith is the great prophet of the Restoration. President Gordon B. Hinckley is His prophet today, whom I sustain with all my heart, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 4

Identity, Priority, and Blessings - Delivered as a Devotional at BYU Provo September 10, 2000.

THANK you, President Robert L. Millet, for your introduction. We appreciate you and all who faithfully serve as leaders among the wonderful youth of Zion. We acknowledge the presence of Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy, and each of you wonderful young adults. Thousands are attending here tonight, and thousands more will participate via satellite broadcast or taped delay in North, South, and Central America; Europe; Africa; Asia; and the isles of the sea. I am told that about a quarter of a million youth will be participating with us on this occasion.

2 Sister Nelson and I express our

admiration for each of you. We bring greetings from President Gordon B. Hinckley, President Thomas S. Monson, President James E. Faust, and our brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. And we most sincerely thank Brother Stanley A. Peterson for his message and his ministry in the Church Educational System.

3 Sister Nelson and I appreciate your beautiful songs of faith and devotion. Although the world is experiencing a spiritual drift, you young people stand as living proof that Latter-day Saints can be different! Like a giant rock centered in a raging river, you are steadfast. We admire you! We wish we could meet each of you personally. Not knowing how to do that, we hope you can know of our love for you and of our prayers for your success and happiness.

4 My message tonight is about identity, priority, and blessings. An understanding of their interrelationship can help you deal better with life's challenges. It is important for you to know who you are and who you may become. It is more important than what you do, even as vital as your work is and will be. You pursue an education to prepare for life's work. But I want you also to prepare for life—eternal life. I emphasize this because some people on life's journey forget who they really are and what is really important. Without sure identity and priority,

a See Rom. 2:7; D&C 75:5; D&C 128:12; D&C 132:19–24.

blessings that matter most are at the mercy of things that matter least.

5 May I illustrate by reading from a letter written by a young mother:

6 Dear Elder and Sister Nelson,

My husband . . . just started his internship. . . . We have four children, ages twenty months to seven years (and would like to have more). My problem is that I don't see how he can give time to our family as the prophets have directed us to do. . . . My seven-year-old and five-year-old have already asked me, "Why doesn't Daddy come home anymore?" They seem to be comfortable with my answer that Daddy is busy helping many sick people, but what should I tell them when they are old enough to understand that Daddy could have chosen a less time-consuming specialty? . . . Please help me understand. I have been praying for peace and understanding.

Signed,

With much respect and admiration.

7 Now, why do I trouble you with their problems? Simply because in a few years many of you will be where they are now—very busy and very frustrated. They should solve their own problems, and I'm confident they will. Perhaps we can use their quandary as a springboard

for our discussion. It is best we prepare today for the challenges of tomorrow.

8 Such concerns are not limited to those in the medical profession. The wife of a doctor, like the wife of a truck driver, soldier, or airline pilot, must know that her husband's important work will take him away from home. That places the burden of fidelity, identity, and priority squarely on the shoulders of each individual and every married couple as they strive to merit the blessings of the Lord. It was never easy to be a committed Latter-day Saint, and it isn't now. But the rewards are well worth it.

Identity

9 If the Lord were speaking to you tonight, He would urge you to understand your identity—to know who you really are. He did so when He spoke to the people of ancient America. After identifying Himself, He informed His listeners of their identity:

10 And behold, ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.^b

11 You young adults share that same identity, which means even more when you are sealed to your companion in the temple. Some of you are already married. Most of you are still search-

b 3 Nephi 20:25; emphasis added

ing for the right one. I wish you well! Keep searching! Don't forget: "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord".^c Isn't that a nice scripture? I love it!

12 Whether married or single, you will all have work to do. I hope it will be enjoyable. It's nice to bounce out of bed each morning eager to enjoy a day's work, and it is especially gratifying when we can bless the lives of others. But please remember: You work to sustain life; you don't live to sustain work.

13 Your life will be a blessed and balanced experience if you first honor your identity and priority. Keep a good long-range view, knowing that the days of retirement from your work will come. There will also be an end to your mortal life. For hale and hearty young adults, those realities seem pretty remote—about the last things you worry about. But the day of your demise is coming, and eventually you will stand before the Lord in judgment.

14 Contemplation of life after retirement and life after death can help you deal with contemporary challenges. In our discussion, I hope you will pardon reference to my personal experience. Hopefully, lessons from my life may be relevant to you and to the busy intern husband and his wife who wrote the letter.

15 Retirement looks a long way off for this couple. Even a year of internship seems unbearable. And it will probably be followed by a residency that lasts even longer. Those terms intern and resident mean just what they say. An intern is "confined to" and a resident "resides in" a hospital. That portends double trouble for a family.

16 I remember when I was a resident in a large hospital in Boston. I was off duty every other night and every other weekend. On nights off, I arrived home to my wife and our four children after the babies' bedtime. I departed in the morning before they were all awake. In order for me to attend sacrament meeting, I had to trade hours of duty with some of my Jewish or Seventh-Day Adventist colleagues. They were willing to cover for me temporarily on my Sabbath as I covered for them on theirs. Incidentally, I enjoyed some of my very most successful home teaching experiences on those highly prized nights off.

17 My years of training were followed by a surgical career that was wonderful and filled with challenge and reward. But now it is behind me. Thankfully, my dear wife is still with me. Ten days ago we celebrated our fifty-fifth wedding anniversary. Our family is most precious to us. She has blessed us with ten children. The time that elapsed between my graduation from medical school and my enter-

don't be selfish in your expectations. Let your husband return to a home of affection, not contention. Meanwhile, learn the doctrines and teach them to your children. The days are gone when the husband was the theologian and the wife was the Christian.

24 President Gordon B. Hinckley gave counsel to you sisters. He said:

25 I urge each of you young women to get all of the schooling you can get. You will need it for the world into which you will move. . . . No other generation in all of history has offered women so many opportunities. Your first objective should be a happy marriage, sealed in the temple of the Lord, and followed by the rearing of a good family. Education can better equip you for the realization of those ideals.^e

26 President Hinckley also said, "In the process of educating your minds, stir within yourselves a greater sensitivity to the beautiful, the artistic, and the cultivation of the talent you possess, be it large or small."^f

27 Thank you, sisters, for your faith and devotion. The Church is greatly strengthened by your service. Your responsibilities are of such import that, should you fail, the brethren would not succeed.

28 Brothers and sisters, be of good cheer. Take life one step at a time and do the best you can each day. Life passes so swiftly. We do not know how many years we may have together here in mortality. For Sister Nelson and me, that number is dwindling down to a precious few. We are profoundly grateful that our love endures, even in our empty nest. Real love is not measured in terms of moonlight and roses, but in terms of who will care for you when you are old.

29 When mortal life is over, each of us will return to God, who gave us life. In a Judgment interview, I doubt that He will ask a surgeon, "How many operations did you perform?" or "Do you wish you had spent more time at the hospital?" But I know He will ask if Sister Nelson and I remained faithful to our covenants to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ and always remember Him. No doubt He will carefully scrutinize my apostolic ministry, but that vital subject will probably be subordinated to His evaluation of my record as a husband and father.

30 I don't fear death. In fact, a scripture describes a Saint's death as "precious in the sight of the Lord".^g It will be precious to me, too, as I am reunited with our parents and our precious daughter, Emily, who died some five years ago. Her passing left

e "Stand True and Faithful," Ensign, May 1996, 92.

f "Rise to the Stature of the Divine Within You," Ensign, November 1989, 96.

g Psalm 116:15

her young and righteous husband with five children. I will eagerly meet my ancestors and preceding prophets and apostles. And one day Sister Nelson and I will dwell together in the presence of our family and the Lord forevermore. We will have been faithful to covenants made in the temple, and to the oath and covenant of the priesthood, which have assured us, in the words of the Lord, that “all that my Father hath shall be given unto [you]”.^h

31 Faithful sisters share the blessings of the priesthood. Think of those words “all that my Father hath.” That concept is beyond our mortal comprehension. It means that no earthly reward—no other success—could compensate for the bounties the Lord will bestow upon those who love Him, keep His commandments,ⁱ and endure to the end.^j

An Inward Commitment to Christ
32 The Apostle Paul taught that divine doctrines, such as these of identity and priority, are to be written “not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart”.^k The importance of an in-

ward commitment to the Lord is symbolized as we partake of the sacrament. Contrast it to other promises made in life, usually symbolized by an outward sign, such as a raised hand or a written signature. The Lord has invited us to symbolize our covenant with Him by a sign that is inward as well as outward. When the sacred emblems of His flesh and blood are administered to us, we are invited to take them into our bodies. As we do, His atoning sacrifice literally becomes a part of our own identity.

33 One day you will be asked if you took upon yourself the name of Christ and if you were faithful to that covenant. The newest convert makes the same covenant that each of us has made, to take upon us the Lord’s name. We are all allowed—even encouraged—to achieve the fullness of the stature of Christ.^l

34 Tonight I come to you in my true identity as a husband, a father, and an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. My priorities are my wife, my family, and my ministry. I am to teach plain and precious things that have been

h D&C 84:38

i see Moroni 4:3

j see D&C 14:7

k Paul even told us how we can achieve that condition: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; [by] being rooted and grounded in love” (Ephesians 3:17). Alma taught how “a mighty change was . . . wrought in [the] hearts [of his people], and they humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God” (Alma 5:13). This change produced a visible transformation of their faces (see Alma 5:14). 2 Corinthians 3:3

l see Ephesians 4:13

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restored in these latter days. As special witnesses of His name in all the world, the Apostles “talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ”.^m

35 In a very real way, you bear similar responsibility. As Jesus said to His faithful followers in ancient America, He would surely say to you, “Ye are my disciples; and ye are a light unto this people, who are a remnant of the house of Joseph”.ⁿ You and I are to bear witness; we are to minister; we are to enlighten; we are to be an example to all who come within our sphere of influence.

36 This privilege is ours, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year—even on vacation. The Savior stated simply: “What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am”.^o Your most sincere sign of adoration of Jesus is your emulation of Him. You know of Him. You know of His divine parentage. You know of His mission and ministry in mortality. You know of Him, not by direct visitation, but through the testimony of the Holy Ghost. “The testimony of the Holy Ghost is the strongest testimony that can be given. It is better than a personal visit.”^p

*Connecting Identity,
Priority, and Blessings*

37 The Lord has revealed our identity, inspired our proper priority, and will fulfill blessings as covenanted to the remnants of the house of Israel. The pages of scripture are replete with historical documentation of this interrelationship. In 1836, under the direction of the Lord, “Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed”.^q That scripture bears upon our identity.

38 Delve deeper into sacred history and you will find that approximately four thousand years ago the heavens were opened to Father Abraham. To him these words were spoken:

39 Abraham, behold, my name is Jehovah. . . .

40 Behold, I will lead thee by my hand, and I will take thee, to put upon thee my name, . . . and my power shall be over thee.

41 . . . Through thy ministry my name shall be known in the earth forever, for I am thy God.^r

42 And I will bless [my people] through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall

m 2 Nephi 25:26

n 3 Nephi 15:12

o 3 Nephi 27:27

p Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 3:153.

q D&C 110:12

r Abraham 1:16, 18–19

know that your “duty is unto the church forever, and this because of [your] family”.^y

54 How do you obtain your blessings? How can you qualify for eternal blessings—even “all that [the] Father hath”? With your identity preserved and your priorities properly honored, our Father’s blessings will flow to you by virtue of the holy priesthood, which is without beginning or end.^z

55 You can lay claim to all the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, destined to be fulfilled in these latter days.^{aa} Blessings and responsibilities once extended to other nations^{ab} have now been given to us.^{ac} Patriarchal blessings reveal our linkage to the great patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.^{ad} We are the seed of Abraham through whom

all the nations of the earth will be blessed. That identity merits our precious priority, which in turn brings to us the blessings of heaven.

56 These blessings include access to the Book of Mormon, which stands as another testament of Jesus Christ. It also stands as a sign that God will keep His covenants with the remnants of the house of Israel.^{ae}

57 This Church has been restored to the earth to fulfill divine prophecies and purposes. Israel is to be gathered. Families are to be sealed in holy temples.^{af} And the world is to be prepared for the Second Coming of the Savior.

58 Members of the Church are among the “elect of God”,^{ag} to whom truths of the gospel and

y D&C 23:3

z Adam held that priesthood. It was passed on by Methuselah to Noah. Melchizedek received it through the lineage of his fathers, and Abraham received it from Melchizedek (see D&C 84:14–17). To Abraham was specifically revealed the promise that through him and his seed—his biological and his spiritual heirs—“all the families of the earth [would] be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abraham 2:11; see also Abraham 2:8–10; Genesis 12:2–3).

aa see 1 Nephi 15:18

ab see Galatians 3:7–9, 14, 27, 29

ac see D&C 110:12

ad Patriarchal blessings are conferred upon faithful members of the Church, that they might know who they are and that they might accept the responsibility of making the blessings of the priesthood available to their children and to all whom they can teach by word of mouth and by example.

ae see 3 Nephi 16:11–12; 29:3; Mormon 5:20; 8:21; 9:37

af Eventually, the families of all nations will be given the opportunity to be so blessed, whether in earth life or the spirit world. see 1 Peter 3:18–20; 4:6; D&C 1:11; 138:10–37; Abraham 2:8–11

ag Colossians 3:12; see also Titus 1:1; D&C 84:34

ed detour that led us astray. In order to get back on course, we stopped the car. We studied the map with great care. Then we made the necessary course correction.

5 What if you are lost and have no map? Suppose you are alone. You do not know where you are. What can you do? You call for help! You call home! Call the Church! Pray! When connected with your help line, you learn that you need to make a climb here or a turn there to get back on course. Or you may have to go back to the beginning in order to be certain that you can get where you want to go.

Where We Obtain Guidance

6 That brings us to the question of where do we obtain the guidance we need. We turn to Him who knows us best—our Creator. He allowed us to come to earth with freedom to choose our own course. In His great love, He did not leave us alone. He provided a guide—a spiritual road map—to help us achieve success in our journey. We call that guide the standard works, so named because they—the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—constitute the standard by which we should live. They serve as a standard of reference, as are standards of time, weights, and measures that are kept in national bureaus of standards.

7 To reach our objective of eternal life, we need to follow teachings in the standard works and other revelations received from prophets of God.^e Our loving Lord foresaw our need for guidance: “For strait is the gate,” He said, “and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it.”^f

8 Few find the way because they ignore the divine road map provided by the Lord. An even more serious mistake is to ignore the Maker of the map. God declared in the first of His Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”^g Yet carnal man tends to let his loyalty drift toward idols.

9 For example, we marvel at computers and the Internet that enable transmission of data with remarkable speed. We are truly grateful for these electronic servants. But if we let them take over our time, pervert our potential, or poison our minds with pornography, they cease being servants and become instead false gods.

10 The Master warned of those who “seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol.”^h

e See D&C 1:38.
f D&C 132:22.
g Ex. 20:3.
h D&C 1:16.

11 False gods can only lead to dead ends. If our journey through life is to be successful, we need to follow divine direction. The Lord said, “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”ⁱ And the Psalmist wrote, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”^j

12 Following such counsel demands not only conviction but conversion and often repentance. That would please the Lord, who said, “Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn ... from all your abominations.”^k

13 In your journey through life, you meet many obstacles and make some mistakes. Scriptural guidance helps you to recognize error and make the necessary correction. You stop going in the wrong direction. You carefully study the scriptural road map. Then you proceed with repentance and restitution required to get on the “strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life.”^l

14 Brothers and sisters, our busy lives force us to focus on things we do from day to day. But the development of character comes only as we focus on who we really are. To establish and accomplish those greater goals, we do need heavenly help.

*How We Can Achieve
Scriptural Guidance*

15 Once we understand why we need guidance and where we obtain it, we then ask, how can we achieve it? How can we truly live, not “by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”?^m

16 We begin with a determination to “liken all scriptures unto us ... for our profit and learning.”ⁿ If we “press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, ... [we] shall have eternal life.”^o

17 To feast means more than to taste. To feast means to savor. We savor the scriptures by studying them in a spirit of delightful discovery and faithful obedience.^p When we feast upon the words

i D&C 6:36.
 j Ps. 119:105.
 k Ezek. 14:6.
 l 2 Ne. 31:18; see also Matt. 7:14; Jacob 6:11; 3 Ne. 14:14; 3 Ne. 27:33; D&C 132:22.
 m Matt. 4:4.
 n 1 Ne. 19:23.
 o 2 Ne. 31:20.
 p Scriptures give encouragement to live in accord with the will of our Maker, who said, “If thou turn away ... from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, ... and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, ... then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord” (Isa. 58:13–14). Self-esteem is also earned by obedience to God’s commandments regarding chastity (see Ex. 20:14; Lev. 18:22; Matt. 5:28; 1 Cor. 6:9; 3 Ne. 12:28; D&C 42:24; D&C 59:6).

of Christ, they are embedded “in fleshy tables of the heart.”^q They become an integral part of our nature.

18 Many years ago a medical colleague chastised me for failing to separate my professional knowledge from my religious convictions. That startled me because I did not feel that truth should be fractionalized. Truth is indivisible.

19 Danger lurks when we divide ourselves with expressions such as “my private life,” “my professional life,” or even “my best behavior.” Living life in separate compartments can lead to internal conflict and exhausting tension. To escape that tension, many people unwisely resort to addicting substances, pleasure seeking, or self-indulgence, which in turn produce more tension, thus creating a vicious cycle.

20 Inner peace comes only as we maintain the integrity of truth in all aspects of our lives. When we covenant to follow the Lord and obey His commandments, we accept His standards in every thought, action, and deed.

21 Living the Lord’s standards

requires that we cultivate the gift of the Holy Ghost. That gift helps us understand doctrine and apply it personally. Because truth given by revelation can only be understood by revelation,^r our studies need to be prayerful. Scriptures attest to the efficacy of prayer in daily life. One is in Proverbs: “In all thy ways acknowledge [God], and he shall direct thy paths.”^s Another comes from the Book of Mormon: “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good.”^t

22 As you ponder and pray about doctrinal principles, the Holy Ghost will speak to your mind and your heart.^u From events portrayed in the scriptures, new insights will come and principles relevant to your situation will distill upon your heart.

23 You cultivate such revelatory experiences by living according to the light already given you and by searching the scriptures with pure motives—with real intent to “come unto Christ.”^v As you do so, your confidence will “wax strong in the presence of God,” and the Holy Ghost will be your constant companion.^w

24 Achieving scriptural guid-

q 2 Cor. 3:3.

r See 1 Cor. 2:11–14.

s Prov. 3:6.

t Alma 37:37.

u See D&C 8:2.

v Jacob 1:7; Omni 1:26; Moro. 10:30, 32.

w D&C 121:45; see also D&C 121:46.

ance is aided by posing pertinent questions.^x You might ask, “What principle can be learned from these teachings of the Lord?” For example, scriptures teach that the Creation was accomplished in six periods of time.^y Principles learned from that study show that any great attainment requires proper planning, timing, patience, labor, and no shortcuts.

25 Next, I suggest that you shape the style of your study to fit you.^z One way is to read a book of scripture from the first page to the last. This method gives good overall perspective. But other approaches also have merit. Attention to a particular topic or a specific theme, supplemented by use of cross-referencing footnotes and study guides, can help to switch on the light of doctrinal understanding.

26 Guidance can come when

grappling with a serious challenge in life. Years ago, in the days of my early scientific research in a field that was then new to medical practice, a scriptural standard of truth gave me the courage needed to persevere. I leaned heavily upon these verses in the Doctrine and Covenants:

27 “All kingdoms have a law given;

28 “And there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space. ...

29 “And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions.”^{aa} We learned laws that pertained to the “kingdom” of our concern and mastered control that had previously been relegated by ignorance to chance alone.

x As any good thing can be misused, a word of warning may be appropriate. The scriptures don’t have the answers to every question. Many important truths have yet to be revealed. Preoccupation with the so-called “mysteries” should be avoided. Beware also of private interpretation. Look to the living prophets and official policies for interpretation. Don’t judge others whose circumstances are not yours to judge. We are reassured, however, that they who “diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (1 Ne. 10:19). Keep in mind, too, that many revelations have been given in response to prophetic inquiry.

It is interesting to note that the first and last books of the Old Testament pose important questions: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9), and “Will a man rob God?” (Mal. 3:8).

y See Ex. 20:11; Ex. 31:17; Mosiah 13:19; D&C 77:12; Abr. 4:31.

z In your personal scripture study, you may wish to correlate your reading with a Church-outlined course of study, such as the Gospel Doctrine curriculum. Some like to prepare memorization cards that they can use while waiting for appointments or meetings.

aa D&C 88:36–38.

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30 Motivation for scriptural guidance comes when important choices must be made—even between options that are equally right. The Brethren are often faced with these kinds of decisions. On such an occasion, we turn to the scriptures. We may read all of the standard works afresh, looking for insights relative to a specific issue.

31 Time for scripture study requires a schedule that will be honored. Otherwise, blessings that matter most will be at the mercy of things that matter least. Time for family scripture study may be difficult to establish. Years ago when our children were at home, they attended different grades in several schools. Their daddy had to be at the hospital no later than 7:00 in the morning. In family council we determined that our best time for scripture study was 6:00 A.M. At that hour our little ones were very sleepy but supportive. Occasionally we had to awaken one when a turn came to read. I would be less than honest with you if I conveyed the impression that our family scripture time was a howling success. Occasionally it was more howling than successful. But we did not give up.

32 Now, a generation later, our children are all married with families of their own. Sister Nelson and I have watched them enjoy family scripture study in their own homes. Their efforts are much more successful than were ours. We shudder to think what might have happened if we had quit trying.^a

33 We all need guidance through life. We obtain it best from the standard works and teachings of the prophets of God. With diligent effort, we can achieve that guidance and thus qualify for all of the blessings that God has in store for His faithful children. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 6

Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings - Delivered in the Saturday Afternoon Session of the April 2001 General Conference. Reprinted in the March 2002 Ensign.

UNDER President Gordon B. Hinckley’s inspired direction, temples are now more accessible than ever. Inscribed on each temple are the words “Holiness to the Lord.”^b That statement designates both the temple and its purposes as holy. Those who enter the temple are also to bear

a Personal and family scripture study can employ books, recordings, or other material. Those who will establish a time for scripture study and endure in that endeavor will maintain a positive spirit throughout their days.

b See Ex. 28:36; Ex. 39:30; Ps. 93:5. Translated equivalents are used on temples in non-English-speaking localities.

the attribute of holiness.^c It may be easier to ascribe holiness to a building than it is to a people. We can acquire holiness only by enduring and persistent personal effort. Through the ages, servants of the Lord have warned against unholiness. Jacob, brother of Nephi, wrote: "I would speak unto you of holiness; but as ye are not holy, and ye look upon me as a teacher, [I] must ... teach you the consequences of sin."^d

2 Now I feel that same sense of responsibility to teach. As temples are prepared for our members, our members need to prepare for the temple.

The Temple

3 The temple is the house of the Lord. The basis for every temple ordinance and covenant—the heart of the plan of salvation—is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Every activity, every lesson, all we do in the Church, point to the Lord and His holy house. Our efforts to proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead all lead to the temple. Each holy temple stands as a symbol of our membership in the Church,^e as a sign of our

faith in life after death, and as a sacred step toward eternal glory for us and our families.

4 President Hinckley said that "these unique and wonderful buildings, and the ordinances administered therein, represent the ultimate in our worship. These ordinances become the most profound expressions of our theology."^f

5 To enter the temple is a tremendous blessing. But first we must be worthy. We should not be rushed. We cannot cut corners of preparation and risk the breaking of covenants we were not prepared to make. That would be worse than not making them at all.

The Endowment

6 In the temple we receive an endowment, which is, literally speaking, a gift. In receiving this gift, we should understand its significance and the importance of keeping sacred covenants. Each temple ordinance "is not just a ritual to go through, it is an act of solemn promising."^g

7 The temple endowment was given by revelation. Thus, it is

c See Ex. 19:5–6; Lev. 19:1–2; Ps. 24:3–5; 1 Thes. 4:7; Moro. 10:32–33; D&C 20:69; D&C 110:6–9; see also Bible Dictionary, "Holiness," 703–4.

d 2 Ne. 9:48.

e See "Following the Master: Teachings of President Howard W. Hunter," Ensign, Apr. 1995, 21–22; Howard W. Hunter, "The Great Symbol of Our Membership," Tambuli, Nov. 1994, 3.

f "Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship," Ensign, Nov. 1995, 53.

g Gordon B. Hinckley, Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley (1997), 638.

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best understood by revelation, prayerfully sought with a sincere heart.^h President Brigham Young said, “Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, ... and gain your eternal exaltation.”ⁱ

Sealing Authority

8 In preparing to receive the endowment and other ordinances of the temple, we should understand the sealing authority of the priesthood. Jesus referred to this authority long ago when He taught His Apostles, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.”^j That same authority has been restored in these latter days. Just as priesthood is eternal—without beginning or end—so is the effect of priesthood ordinances that bind families together forever.

9 Temple ordinances, covenants, endowments, and sealings enable individuals to be reconciled with the Lord and families to be sealed beyond the veil of death. Obedience to temple covenants qualifies us for eternal life, the greatest gift of God to man.^k Eternal life is more than immor-

tality. Eternal life is exaltation in the highest heaven—the kind of life that God lives.

Temple Recommend

10 Preparation also includes qualification for a temple recommend. Our Redeemer requires that His temples be protected from desecration. No unclean thing may enter His hallowed house.^l Yet anyone is welcome who prepares well. Each person applying for a recommend will be interviewed by a judge in Israel—the bishop—and by a stake president.^m They hold keys of priesthood authority and the responsibility to help us know when our preparation and timing are appropriate to enter the temple. Their interviews will assess several vital issues. They will ask if we obey the law of tithing, if we keep the Word of Wisdom, and if we sustain the authorities of the Church. They will ask if we are honest, if we are morally clean, and if we honor the power of procreation as a sacred trust from our Creator.

11 Why are these issues so crucial? Because they are spiritual separators. They help to determine if we truly live as children of the covenant,ⁿ able to resist temptation from servants of sin.^o

h See Moro. 10:4–5.

i Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1941), 416.

j Matt. 16:19.

k See D&C 14:7.

l See D&C 109:20; see also Isa. 52:11; Alma 11:37; 3 Ne. 27:19.

m Or the branch president and mission president.

n See 3 Ne. 20:26; see also Russell M. Nelson, “Children of the Covenant,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 32.

o See Rom. 6:17, 20; D&C 121:17.

These interviews help to discern if we are willing to live in accord with the will of the true and living God or if our hearts are still set “upon riches and ... vain things of the world.”^p

12 Such requirements are not difficult to understand. Because the temple is the house of the Lord, standards for admission are set by Him. One enters as His guest. To hold a temple recommend is a priceless privilege and a tangible sign of obedience to God and His prophets.^q

Physical Preparation for the Temple

13 One prepares physically for the temple by dressing properly. It is not a place for casual attire. “We should dress in such a way that we might comfortably attend a sacrament meeting or a gathering that is proper and dignified.”^r

14 Within the temple, all are

dressed in spotless white to remind us that God is to have a pure people.^s Nationality, language, or position in the Church are of secondary significance. In that democracy of dress, all sit side by side and are considered equal in the eyes of our Maker.^t

15 Brides and grooms enter the temple to be married for time and all eternity. There brides wear white dresses—long sleeved, modest in design and fabric, and free of elaborate ornamentation. Grooms also dress in white. And brethren who come to witness weddings do not wear tuxedos.

16 Wearing the temple garment has deep symbolic significance. It represents a continuing commitment.^u Just as the Savior exemplified the need to endure to the end, we wear the garment faithfully as part of the enduring armor of God.^v Thus we demonstrate our faith in Him and in

p Alma 7:6.

q President Hinckley said, “I urge our people everywhere, with all of the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein” (“Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 53).

r Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (1980), 73.

s See Neal A. Maxwell, “Not My Will, But Thine” (1988), 135; see also D&C 100:16.

t This reminds us that “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34; see also Moro. 8:12).

u The Lord assured that even though “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; ... my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my people be removed” (JST, *Inspired Version*, Isa. 54:10). Surely we would not ever want knowingly to discard from us an emblem of His everlasting covenant.

v See Eph. 6:11–13; see also Alma 46:13, 21; D&C 27:15.

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His eternal covenants with us.^w

*Spiritual Preparation
for the Temple*

17 In addition to physical preparation, we prepare spiritually. Because the ordinances and covenants of the temple are sacred, we are under solemn obligation not to speak outside the temple of that which occurs in the temple. There are, however, some principles we can discuss.

18 Each temple is a house of learning.^x There we are taught in the Master's way.^y His way differs from modes of others.

His way is ancient and rich with symbolism. We can learn much by pondering the reality for which each symbol stands.^z Teachings of the temple are beautifully simple and simply beautiful. They are understood by the humble, yet they can excite the intellect of the brightest minds.

19 Spiritual preparation is enhanced by study. I like to recommend that members going to the temple for the first time read short explanatory paragraphs in the Bible Dictionary, listed under seven topics:^{aa} "Anoint,"^{ab}

w In a letter dated 10 October 1988, the First Presidency wrote: "Practices frequently observed among the members of the Church suggest that some members do not fully understand the covenant they make in the temple to wear the garment in accordance with the spirit of the holy endowment.

"Church members who have been clothed with the garment in the temple have made a covenant to wear it throughout their lives. This has been interpreted to mean that it is worn as underclothing both day and night. ... The promise of protection and blessings is conditioned upon worthiness and faithfulness in keeping the covenant.

"The fundamental principle ought to be to wear the garment and not to find occasions to remove it. Thus, members should not remove either all or part of the garment to work in the yard or to lounge around the home in swimwear or immodest clothing. Nor should they remove it to participate in recreational activities that can reasonably be done with the garment worn properly beneath regular clothing. When the garment must be removed, such as for swimming, it should be restored as soon as possible.

"The principles of modesty and keeping the body appropriately covered are implicit in the covenant and should govern the nature of all clothing worn. Endowed members of the Church wear the garment as a reminder of the sacred covenants they have made with the Lord and also as a protection against temptation and evil. How it is worn is an outward expression of an inward commitment to follow the Savior."

x See D&C 88:119; D&C 109:8.

y In fact, He is the way (see John 14:6).

z See John A. Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, Apr. 1921, 62.

aa Members of the Church who do not read English may find comparable terms in their language editions of the Guide to the Scriptures.

ab Page 609, paragraphs 1, 4.

when death takes a loved one away from the family circle. To know that the pain of separation is only temporary provides peace that passes ordinary understanding.^a Death cannot sever families sealed in the temple. They understand death as a necessary part of God's great plan of happiness.^b

24 Such perspective helps us to maintain fidelity to covenants made. President Boyd K. Pack-er emphasized that "ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into [God's] presence. To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality."^c

25 Ordinances of the temple relate to personal progress and to the redemption of departed ancestors as well. "For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, ... they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect."^d Service in their behalf provides repeated opportunities for temple worship. And that service deserves commitment to a planned schedule. By doing for others what they cannot do for themselves, we emulate the pattern of the Savior, who wrought the Atonement to bless the lives of other people.

26 One day we will meet our Maker and stand before Him at Judgment.^e We will be judged according to our ordinances, covenants, deeds, and the desires of our hearts.^f

27 Meanwhile, in this world smitten with spiritual decay, can individuals prepared for temple blessings make a difference? Yes! Those Saints are "the covenant people of the Lord, ... armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory."^g Their example can lift the lives of all humankind. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 7

Love Of The Lord—In Language And Living - Delivered as a commencement address at BYU-Idaho on April 28, 2001.

ON this historic occasion, I salute you graduates on your achievement. Some finished with high honors and deserve special praise. And I suppose there are some who just barely made it. No matter! We all rejoice together. To each of you and your families, I extend sincere congratulations.

2 May I take this opportunity to express thanks for the beautiful music rendered at general conference by the combined choir

a See Philip. 4:7.

b See Alma 42:8.

c "Covenants," Ensign, May 1987, 24

d D&C 128:15.

e See 2 Ne. 9:41.

f See D&C 137:9.

g 1 Ne. 14:14.

from Ricks College. It was wonderful.

3 This is likely to be the last year for students to graduate from Ricks College. The institution itself will soon be graduating--to become Brigham Young University - Idaho. Kudos to Ricks College, President Bednar, faculty, and staff for that significant prospect and promotion.

4 Normally at commencement exercises, the invited speaker is expected to encourage graduates to pursue proud dreams and high hopes. Sorry, but I won't do that. It is too easy. It doesn't take much determination to dream or to hope. It is much more difficult, especially in our day and age, to achieve in those areas that really matter most.

Personal And Family Responsibilities

5 I refer to the need to measure up to one's personal potential and to succeed in one's family responsibilities. Today I would like to chat with you about these matters. Your greatest challenges and rewards will be found in mastering yourself and in strengthening your family. Above all else, you should strive to become a good husband or wife, a responsible father or mother, and a respected citizen in the kingdom and family of God. Many, if not most of you, have not yet selected a spouse. I can't think of a more import-

ant decision for you to make. My counsel to you on this topic is simple: "O be wise"^h and good luck! Remember, at the side of each successful man is a wonderful wife and a surprised mother-in-law.

6 Seriously, in this world smitten and saturated with spiritual decay, we often hear slogans that appeal to appetites and temptations of the flesh, such as "obey your thirst," "buy now, pay later," "everyone is doing it," and so on. It takes a resolute character to resist enticements that would take one on a downward path.

7 Regarding such, James counsels, "Blessed is the man that [withstands] temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."ⁱ

8 Society's spiritual slide has developed during a time of unparalleled progress in communication, technology, and transportation. Meanwhile, despite this progress, human nature hasn't changed. We still eat bread by the sweat of our brow.^j And we still have physical appetites that need to be disciplined.

9 Reports in the media describe newsworthy events. But the truly good deeds--the small, everyday actions of ordinary life--generally go unreported. Noteworthy

h Jacob 6:12.
i James 1:12.
j See Gen. 3:19; Moses 4:25; 5:1.

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examples are the employee who gives an honest day's work, the employer who rewards loyalty and service, and the Samaritan who stops to help someone in need. They include the hiker who carries out his own trash and the craftsman who works with a sense of enduring creation. Especially praiseworthy are the man who accepts responsibility for the children he has fathered, the father who wants the respect of his children more than worldly acclaim, and the mother who nurtures an infant as a sacred trust and not as a second-class chore.

10 You graduates have gained a degree designed to give you opportunity in the global marketplace. In most cases you will be compensated according to the value society places upon your service. But remember--there is another side to your diploma from Ricks College. It bears an unwritten code that prompts you to heed teachings of prophets such as President David O. McKay, who said,

11 "True education does not consist merely in the acquiring of a few facts of science, history, literature or art, but in the development of character. True education awakens a desire to conserve health by keeping the body clean and undefiled. True education trains in self-denial and self-mastery. True education regulates the temper, subdues passion and makes obedience

to social laws and moral order a guiding principle of life. It develops reason and inculcates faith in the living God as the eternal loving Father of all."^k

Love Of The Lord—In Language

12 I urge you to live your lives in accord with the Lord's teachings and let your language reflect that refinement. Your manner of speech will then stand in stark contrast to the lazy language of our day, so liberally laced with casual slang and sleazy, filthy, and profane expressions. Sloppy language portends sloppy ways.

13 In your language, strive for a more excellent way.^l Pattern your manner after that of President Gordon B. Hinckley. Even in his informal conversation, his language is elegant and eloquent. Carry from this institution--sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints--a language that lifts and a personal patina that radiates purity and refinement.

Love Of The Lord—In Living

14 Your investment here at Ricks will bring joy to you if you live as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Acquire His qualities of civility and concern for others. Learn to reach out, to lift and encourage people. As you cultivate qualities of kindness, courtesy, and respect for others, your life's work will be more fulfilling than if you were to pursue goals strictly with an eye single to your own glory.

k Conference Report, April 1928, 102.

l See 1 Cor. 12:31; Ether 12:11.

21 One of the peculiar ironies of life is that the very source of help being offered is the very thing from which we, with our mortal myopia, tend to flee. I have seen good people balk at baptism. I have seen wonderful young men turn their backs on mission calls. I have seen sweethearts run from marriage and married couples flee from the privilege of parenthood. Why should we run from the very opportunity that would bless us and bring us joy? Gospel commitments are never to be feared, but to be pursued with purpose and hope.

22 We have a covenant relationship with the Lord. We have been bought with a price--through His atoning blood. We are His disciples, dependent upon Him for light, life, and all blessings.

23 As you leave Ricks to advance your education or career, you can make a difference in this world. You are the "hope of Israel, Zion's army, children of the promised day."^a As disciples of the Lord engaged in His holy work, each of you can lend a hand. As you remain true to your covenants, your power will be enriched by His power.

24 Together we go forward as His Saints, "the covenant people of the Lord, . . . armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory."^b May you ever love the Lord and manifest that love by your language and your living.

25 I love you, dear brethren and sisters, and leave my blessing with you, with thanks for your faith and all that you can become. God lives! Jesus is the Christ! His church has been restored in these latter days! President Gordon B. Hinckley is God's prophet to all the world, I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 8

Set In Order Thy House - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the October 2001 General Conference.

YEARS ago when Sister Nelson and I had several teenaged daughters, we took our family on a vacation far away from telephones and boyfriends. We went on a raft trip down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. As we started our journey, we had no idea how dangerous this trip could be.

2 The first day was beautiful. But on the second day, when we approached Horn Creek rapids and saw that precipitous drop ahead, I was terrified. Floating on a rubber raft, our precious family was about to plunge over a waterfall! Instinctively I put one arm around my wife and the other around our youngest daughter. To protect them, I tried to hold them close to me. But as we reached the precipice, the bended raft became a giant sling and shot me into the air. I landed into the roiling rapids

a Hymns, "Hope of Israel," [1985] 259.
 b 1 Ne. 14:14.

of the river. I had a hard time coming up. Each time I tried to find air, I hit the underside of the raft. My family couldn't see me, but I could hear them shouting, "Daddy! Where's Daddy?"

3 I finally found the side of the raft and rose to the surface. The family pulled my nearly drowned body out of the water. We were thankful to be safely reunited.

4 The next several days were pleasant and delightful. Then came the last day, when we were to go over Lava Falls, known as the most dangerous drop of the journey. When I saw what was ahead, I immediately asked to beach the raft and hold an emergency family council meeting, knowing that if we were to survive this experience, we needed to plan carefully. I reasoned with our family: "No matter what happens, the rubber raft will remain on top of the water. If we cling with all our might to ropes secured to the raft, we can make it. Even if the raft should capsize, we will be all right if we hang tightly to the ropes."

5 I turned to our little seven-year-old daughter and said, "All of the others will cling to a rope. But you will need to hold on to your daddy. Sit behind me. Put your arms around me and hold me tightly while I hold the rope."

6 That we did. We crossed those steep, rough rapids—hanging on for dear life—and all of us made it safely.^c

The Lesson

7 Brothers and sisters, I nearly lost my life learning a lesson that I now give to you. As we go through life, even through very rough waters, a father's instinctive impulse to cling tightly to his wife or to his children may not be the best way to accomplish his objective. Instead, if he will lovingly cling to the Savior and the iron rod of the gospel, his family will want to cling to him and to the Savior.

8 This lesson is surely not limited to fathers. Regardless of gender, marital status, or age, individuals can choose to link themselves directly to the Savior, hold fast to the rod of His truth, and lead by the light of that truth. By so doing, they become examples of righteousness to whom others will want to cling.

The Commandment

9 With the Lord, families are essential. He created the earth that we could gain physical bodies and form families.^d He established His Church to exalt families. He provides temples so that families can be together forever.^e

10 Of course, He expects fathers to preside over, provide for, and

c See Russell M. Nelson and Rebecca M. Taylor, "Friend to Friend," *Friend*, Mar. 1997, 6–7.

d See D&C 2:1–3.

e See D&C 138:47–48.

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protect their families.^f But the Master has asked for much more. Etched in sacred scripture is a commandment to “set in order thy house.”^g Once we as parents understand the importance and meaning of that commandment, we need to learn how to do it.

How to Set Your House in Order

11 To set our house in an order pleasing to the Lord, we need to do it His way. We are to employ His attributes of “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, [and] meekness.”^h Each father should remember that “no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned.”ⁱ

12 Parents are to be living examples of “kindness, and pure knowledge, which ... greatly enlarge the soul.”^j Each mother and father should lay aside selfish interests and avoid any thought of hypocrisy, physical force, or evil speaking.^k Parents soon learn that each child has an

inborn yearning to be free. Each individual wants to make his or her own way. No one wants to be restrained, even by a well-intentioned parent. But all of us can cling to the Lord.

13 Ages ago, Job taught that concept. He said, “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go.”^l Nephi also taught, “Whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and ... hold fast unto it, ... would never perish.”^m

14 These tenets are timeless as the gospel and endless as eternity. Ponder these additional scriptural admonitions:

15 From the Old Testament Proverbs we read, “Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.”ⁿ

16 From the New Testament: “Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught.”^o

17 From the Book of Mormon we learn about multitudes who were “continually holding fast

f See 1 Tim. 5:8.

g D&C 93:44; see also 2 Kgs. 20:1; Isa. 38:1.

h 1 Tim. 6:11.

i D&C 121:41.

j D&C 121:42.

k See 1 Pet. 2:1.

l Job 27:6.

m 1 Ne. 15:24.

n Prov. 4:13.

o 2 Thes. 2:15. Other related scriptures include “Hold fast the ... sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13), and “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering” (Heb. 10:23).

ty can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.”^v

What Should Parents Teach?

28 With this sacred charge in mind, let us consider what we should teach. Scriptures direct parents to teach faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.^w Parents are to teach the plan of salvation^x and the importance of living in complete accord with the commandments of God.^y Otherwise, their children will surely suffer in ignorance of God’s redeeming and liberating law.^z Parents should also teach by example how to consecrate their lives—using their time, talents, tithing, and substance^{aa} to establish the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth.^{ab} Living in that manner will literally bless their posterity. A scripture states, “Thy duty is unto the church forever, and this because of thy family.”^{ac}

Opposition to the Family

29 Parents and children should realize that strong opposition will always come against the work and will of the Lord.^{ad} Because the work (and glory) of God is to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life as a family,^{ae} it logically follows that the work of the adversary will strike directly at the heart of the home—the family. Relentlessly Lucifer attacks the sanctity of life and the joy of parenthood.

30 Because the evil one is ever at work, our vigilance cannot be relaxed—not even for a moment. A small and seemingly innocent invitation can turn into a tall temptation which can lead to tragic transgression. Night and day, at home or away, we must shun sin and “hold fast that which is good.”^{af}

31 The seditious evils of pornography, abortion, and addiction to harmful substances serve as ter-

v In that letter dated 11 February 1999, signed by Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and James E. Faust, they also described what parents might do: “We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform” (in “policies, announcements, and appointments,” *Ensign*, June 1999, 80).

w See Moro. 8:10; D&C 19:31; D&C 68:25–34; D&C 138:33; A of F 1:4.

x See Moses 6:58–62.

y See Lev. 10:11; Deut. 6:7; Mosiah 4:14.

z See 2 Ne. 2:26; Mosiah 1:3; Mosiah 5:8; D&C 98:8.

aa See Mosiah 4:21–26; Mosiah 18:27; Alma 1:27.

ab See JST, Matt. 6:38.

ac D&C 23:3.

ad See Moro. 7:12–19.

ae See Moses 1:39.

af 1 Thes. 5:21.

mites to erode the undergirding strength of a happy home and a faithful family. We cannot yield to any iniquity without putting our families at risk.

32 Satan wants us to be miserable just as he is.^a He would animate our carnal appetites, entice us to live in spiritual darkness and doubt the reality of life after death. The Apostle Paul observed, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."^b

Perpetuation of Family Blessings

33 An understanding of God's great plan of happiness, however, fortifies our faith in the future. His plan provides answers to ageless questions: Are all our sympathies and love for each other only temporary—to be lost in death? No! Can family life endure beyond this period of mortal probation? Yes! God has revealed the eternal nature of celestial marriage and the family as the source of our greatest joy.

34 Brethren and sisters, material possessions and honors of the world do not endure. But your union as wife, husband, and family can. The only duration of family life that satisfies the loftiest longings of the human soul is forever. No sacrifice is too great to have the blessings of an eternal marriage. To qualify, one needs only to deny oneself of ungodliness and hon-

or the ordinances of the temple. By making and keeping sacred temple covenants, we evidence our love for God, for our companion, and our real regard for our posterity—even those yet unborn. Our family is the focus of our greatest work and joy in this life; so will it be throughout all eternity, when we can "inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, ... powers, dominions, ... exaltation and glory."^c

35 These priceless blessings can be ours if we set our houses in order now and faithfully cling to the gospel. God lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. President Gordon B. Hinckley is His prophet. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 9

How Firm A Foundation - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2002 General Conference.

ABOUT two decades ago when a temple was to be built in Mexico City, architects faced a great challenge. Because Mexico City is situated on a basin over water, some of its buildings settle and become tilted with the passage of time. Construction of a temple there required a special foundation. Two hundred twenty-one large, reinforced concrete piles^d were driven more than 100 feet deep into the ground. Onto

a See 2 Ne. 2:17–18, 27.

b 1 Cor. 15:19.

c D&C 132:19

d Each pile was 18 inches in diameter.

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those pilings, steel straps were anchored and fastened to a unit that can be adjusted if need be to keep the building level.^e With this unseen but sure foundation, that temple today stands steady and straight.

2 A firm foundation is necessary for any building, institution, or individual to endure. With that in mind, let us consider the foundation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Then let us see how the solid foundation of the Church supports our foundation of faith as individual members of the Church.

I. Foundation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

3 This Church stands on a unique foundation, anchored to a bedrock of timeless truth. Brothers and sisters, the holy cause in which we are engaged did not begin in 1820 in the state of New York. It did not begin in Bethlehem. It did not begin in the Garden of Eden. The underpinnings of the everlasting gospel were in place even before the world was.

4 This reality is affirmed repeat-

edly in holy writ. I have studied the scriptures pertaining to that part of eternity before the earth was formed. Don't worry. I won't quote them all. But I will append some of those citations to the published text of this message. These unseen and timeless truths constitute "premortal pillars" that undergird the foundation of this Church.

The Plan of Redemption and Possibility of an Inheritance in the Kingdom of God

5 Before the foundation of the earth, the plan of salvation was prepared.^f It included the glorious possibility of a divine inheritance in the kingdom of God.^g

The Atonement of Jesus Christ

6 Central to that plan was the Atonement of Jesus Christ. In premortal councils, He was foreordained by His Father to atone for our sins and break the bands of physical and spiritual death.^h Jesus declared, "I ... was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. ... In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name."ⁱ Later, Paul added that

e See John Forres O'Donnal, *Pioneer in Guatemala* (1997), 288.

f See 1 Ne. 10:18; Mosiah 15:19; Alma 12:25, 30; Alma 18:39; Alma 22:13-14; Alma 42:26; D&C 76:12-13.

g To people of the Old World, the Lord said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). People of ancient America were also taught that "they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel ... shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world" (2 Ne. 9:18; see also Ether 4:19).

h See John 17:5, 24; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Mosiah 4:6-7; Mosiah 18:13; 3 Ne. 26:3-5; D&C 93:7-9; Moses 5:57; JST, Gen. 5:43; JST, Gen. 14:30-31.

i Ether 3:14.

*Blessings Predicated upon
Obedience to Law*

11 Then conditions were established that allowed us to receive blessings from God—upon obedience to laws upon which those blessings were predicated.^v

*Sacred Things to Be
Revealed in the Latter Days*

12 Another pillar pertains to revelation reserved for the latter days. The Lord had long planned to reveal “things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”^w Those things included revelations recorded in the Book of Mormon.^x They also included ordinances and covenants of the holy temple.^y To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord declared that “I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.”^z

Redemption of the Dead

13 The Lord revealed that “the ordinance of baptizing for the dead ... was instituted from before the foundation of the world.”^{aa} Salvation was thus

made available for those “who should die without a knowledge of the gospel.”^{ab} A welding link between generations was provided, that a whole, complete, and perfect union of dispensations, keys, powers, and glories should take place.^{ac}

14 Brothers and sisters, these unseen but sure pillars were in place before the world was. They undergird the everlasting gospel—now restored in its fullness.^{ad} With such a foundation, this Church will not be moved from its place,^{ae} even through the Millennium.^{af}

*II. Foundation of Individual
Members of the Church*

15 Just as buildings and institutions have foundations, so do we as individuals have foundations that support our faith. Some are weak; some are strong. We can waffle “like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed,”^{ag} or we can stand on a firm foundation and anchor ourselves with straps of spiritual steel, rooted and grounded to the timeless pillars of the gospel.^{ah}

v See D&C 130:20–21; D&C 132:5, 11–12.

w Matt. 13:35.

x See 2 Ne. 27:10.

y See D&C 124:40–41.

z D&C 124:41.

aa D&C 124:33.

ab D&C 128:5.

ac See D&C 128:18.

ad See Acts 3:20–21.

ae See Dan. 2:28, 31–44; D&C 65:2–6; D&C 124:45.

af See Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah* (1982), 672.

ag James 1:6.

ah See Eph. 3:17–19; Col. 2:6–7.

16 President Gordon B. Hinckley has asked that our new converts be sustained in the Church by a friend, a call to serve, and be nourished by the good word of God.^{ai} Often we sing, “How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in his excellent word!”^{aj} When we receive that nurturing word of God, we feast upon His love.^{ak}

17 Remember: “It is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, ... when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power ... to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation.”^{al}

18 Even firm foundations cannot prevent life’s problems. Wayward children cause parents to grieve. Some broken families don’t get fixed. Gender disorientation is poorly understood. Married couples, for whatever reason, may not be blessed with

children. Even in our day, “the guilty and the wicked go unpunished because of their money.”^{am} Some things just don’t seem fair.^{an}

19 With strong underpinnings, however, we are better able to reach upward for help, even when faced with questions without easy answers. The poet so wrote:

*20 Who Thou art I know not,
But this much I know:
Thou hast set the Pleiades
In a silver row;
Thou hast sent the trackless winds
Loose upon their way;
Thou hast reared a colored wall
’Twixt the night and day;
Thou hast made the flowers to
bloom
And the stars to shine;
Hid rare gems of richest ore
In the tunneled mine;
But chief of all Thy wondrous
works,
Supreme of all Thy plan,
Thou hast put an upward reach
In the heart of Man.^{ao}*

ai See “Some Thoughts on Temples, Retention of Converts, and Missionary Service,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 51; also Jacob 6:7; Moro. 6:4.

aj Hymns, no. 85; see also 2 Ne. 28:27–30.

ak See Jacob 3:2.

al Hel. 5:12. Remember also that a wise man builds his house upon a rock and not upon shifting sand (see Matt. 7:24–27).

am Hel. 7:5.

an Whether things seem “fair” relate to the limits of one’s perspective. Paul taught, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor. 15:19).

ao Harry Kemp, “God the Architect,” in James Dalton Morrison, ed., *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (1948), 46–47.

21 Though we don't know all things,^{ap} we know that God lives and that He loves us.^{aq} Standing on that firm foundation, we can reach up and find strength to endure the heavy burdens of life.

22 For example, I honor those special souls who face challenges of parenthood with unwavering faith in their Maker. To a family dear to Sister Nelson and me, a son was recently born. This child was afflicted with multiple anomalies affecting virtually every system of his little body. Two operations were required in his first week of life. More will be necessary. When I spoke with the child's parents, they did not ask, "Why did this happen to us?" Instead, they declared: "We know that this child is meant for us. God has entrusted this special baby to us. We will love him and care for him to the best of our ability." Thank the Lord for such parents!

23 Not long ago, death came to the husband of a friend of ours, suddenly and without warning. Of her, these words were penned by her own sister: "Searching the years and days just past, she is awestruck, recognizing spe-

cific skills and experiences put into her life by a loving Father, things that might have seemed circumstantial at the time but that have specifically prepared her to cope successfully with this heart-breaking loss. Rather than feeling abandoned and bitter, she feels cradled and cared for. ... She said to me, 'When I see how carefully Heavenly Father has prepared and planned for my present circumstance, how can I be frightened about my future? Surely He is putting into place today all that I will need to face the unknown times ahead.'"^{ar}

24 From a missionary I received an unforgettable letter. He wrote: "I still am not certain why it was that I was [afflicted] with [cancer], particularly during the time I was serving the Lord on a mission, but I can say with all honesty and sincerity that I am eternally grateful to our gracious Heavenly Father for allowing me to have that experience. ... Not a day goes by," he continued, "that I don't think about the days I spent lying in the hospital suffering through chemotherapy or grimacing with the pain from another operation. ... Not

ap Compared with the omniscience of our Creator, we know relatively little about dinosaurs or the details of the Creation, for example. But this we do know: "Verily I say unto you, in that day when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things—things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof—things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven" (D&C 101:32–34; see also D&C 121:29–32).

aq See 1 Ne. 11:16–17.

ar Virginia H. Pearce, in *Why I Believe* (2002), 245–46.

a day passes when I don't think of the days I spent studying the scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon, and remembering the overwhelming feelings of comfort and peace which I felt. I often think of the nights when I would retire to bed and pour out my soul to my Heavenly Father and thank Him for preserving my life." Then the elder shared this wonderful news: "I returned to the doctor this week ... and ... he found no evidence of any disease in my body."^a I love such faithful missionaries!

25 How firm our foundation? The foundation of this Church was forged long before the world was. It is strong. It is true. It is eternal. The foundation of one's individual faith, if anchored firmly to eternal truth, allows each of us to reach upward with an eternal perspective.^b That faith will give hope when there is no hope. It will give us joy here and eternal life hereafter. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 10

Blessed Are The Peacemakers - Delivered in the Saturday Afternoon Session of the October 2002 General Conference.

AMONG the most memorable of all our family activities have been trips to the Holy Land. For us, visits to that part of the world have been life changing. But now the Holy Land is a cauldron of turmoil and off-limits to those who would like to go there for spiritual enrichment. Virtually all parts of the world are plagued by acts of terror previously unknown. Confusion comes to many who pray for peace but fearfully face this foe of terror.

Peace versus Contention

2 The perilous times in which we live have been prophesied in the scriptures. Our day has been foreseen as one with "fires, and tempests, and vapors of smoke in foreign lands; ... wars, rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places ... great pollutions upon the face of the earth; ... and all manner of abominations."^c

3 That prophecy echoes an earlier scriptural account of the second generation of human life^d upon the earth: "In those days Satan had great dominion among men, and raged in their hearts; and from thenceforth came wars and bloodshed; and a man's hand was against his own

a Personal correspondence, 15 Jan. 2002.

b Our mortal probation has been likened to the second act of a three-act play. When the curtain comes down on act two, the play is not over. Without the vision gained from acts one and three, the second act could seem either too short, too long, too hard, or too confusing. When we know about all three acts, the second act acquires greater significance. Thus the need for an eternal perspective.

c Morm. 8:29–31; see also 2 Tim. 3:1–7, 12–13; D&C 45:26–27.

d Dating back to the time of Seth, son of Adam and Eve.

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brother, in ... seeking for power."^e From the days of Cain and Abel,^f Esau and Jacob,^g and Joseph who was sold into Egypt,^h the flames of hostility have been fueled by family feuding.

4 Hatred among brothers and neighbors has now reduced sacred cities to sites of sorrow. When I think of the plight of such places, I am reminded of an ancient proverb: "Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath."ⁱ

Doctrinal Direction

5 Scripture sheds light on both the cause of and the cure for the sickness of human hatred: "The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ."^j

6 Peace can prevail only when that natural inclination to fight is superseded by self-determination to live on a loftier level. Coming unto Jesus Christ as the

"Prince of Peace"^k is the pathway to peace on earth and goodwill among men.^l He made a promise to us: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."^m

7 Jesus taught people how to live with one another. He declared the two great commandments: first, to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,"ⁿ and the second, to "love thy neighbour as thyself."^o

8 Then He added, "Love your enemies, [and] bless them that curse you."^p

9 He taught the Golden Rule: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."^q This principle is found in nearly every major religion. Others such as Confucius and Aristotle have also taught it.^r After all, the gospel did not begin with the birth of the Babe in Bethlehem. It is everlasting. It was proclaimed in the beginning to Adam and Eve. Portions of the gospel have been preserved in many cultures.

e Moses 6:15.

f See Gen. 4:8–10.

g See Gen. 27:41.

h See Gen. 37:28.

i Prov. 29:8.

j Mosiah 3:19.

k Isa. 9:6.

l See Luke 2:14.

m Matt. 5:9; see also 3 Ne. 12:9; Joseph Smith Translation, Matt. 5:11.

n Matt. 22:37.

o Matt. 22:39; see also Luke 10:27; D&C 59:5–6.

p Matt. 5:44.

q Matt. 7:12; see also Luke 6:31; 3 Ne. 14:12.

r See B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (1909–11), 3:492–93.

are brothers because God really is our Father. Nevertheless, scriptures are studded with stories of contention and combat. They strongly condemn wars of aggression but sustain obligations of citizens to defend their families and their freedoms.^z Because “we believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law,”^{aa} members of this Church will be called into military service of many nations. “We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society.”^{ab}

20 During the Second World War, when members of the Church were forced to fight on opposing sides, the First Presidency affirmed that “the state is responsible for the civil control of its citizens or subjects, for their political welfare, and for the carrying forward of political policies, domestic and foreign. ... But the Church itself, as such, has no responsibility for these

policies, [other] than urging its members fully to render ... loyalty to their country.”^{ac}

Peace Is Possible

21 Because of the long history of hostility upon the earth, many feel that peace is beyond hope. I disagree. Peace is possible. We can learn to love our fellow human beings throughout the world. Whether they be Jewish, Islamic, or fellow Christians, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or other, we can live together with mutual admiration and respect, without forsaking our religious convictions. Things we have in common are greater than are our differences. Peace is a prime priority that pleads for our pursuit. Old Testament prophets held out hope and so should we. The Psalmist said, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”^{ad} “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth.”^{ae}

22 Father Abraham was uniquely called a “Friend of God.”^{af} Peace was one of Abraham’s highest priorities. He sought to be a “prince of peace.”^{ag} His influence could loom large in our present pursuit of peace. His

z See Alma 43:45–47; Alma 46:11–12, 19–20; Alma 48:11–16.

aa A of F 1:12.

ab D&C 134:1.

ac In James R. Clark, comp. *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 6:155–56.

ad Ps. 46:1.

ae Ps. 46:9.

af James 2:23; see also 2 Chr. 20:7; Isa. 41:8. Long ago our Creator made a covenant with Abraham which was to apply to “a thousand generations” (Deut. 7:9; see also 1 Chr. 16:15; Ps. 105:8). It is to be fulfilled in the latter days (see 1 Ne. 15:13, 18; D&C 124:58; D&C 132:30).

ag Abr. 1:2.

sons, Ishmael and Isaac, though born of different mothers, overcame their differences when engaged in a common cause. After their father died, they worked together to bury the mortal remains of their exalted father.^{ah} Their descendants could well follow that pattern.

23 Abraham's posterity has a divinely decreed potential. The Lord declared that Ishmael would become a great nation^{ai} and that the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would bless all the nations of the earth.^{aj}

24 So descendants of Abraham—entrusted with great promises of infinite influence—are in a pivotal position to emerge as peacemakers. Chosen by the Almighty, they can direct their powerful potential toward peace.

25 Resolution of present political problems will require much patience and negotiation. The process would be enhanced greatly if pursued prayerfully.

26 Isaiah prophesied of hope for our day. Speaking of the gathering of Israel and the Restoration of the Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith, Isaiah wrote:

27 "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, ...

28 "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."^{ak}

29 These prophecies of hope could materialize if leaders and citizens of nations would apply the teachings of Jesus Christ. Ours could then be an age of unparalleled peace and progress. Barbarism of the past would be buried. War with its horrors would be relegated to the realm of maudlin memory. Aims of nations would be mutually supportive. Peacemakers could lead in the art of arbitration, give relief to the needy, and bring hope to those who fear. Of such patriots, future generations would shout praises, and our Eternal God would pass judgments of glory.

30 The hope of the world is the Prince of Peace—our Creator, Savior, Jehovah, and Judge. He offers us the good life, the abundant life, and eternal life. Peaceful—even prosperous—living

ah See Gen. 25:9. Abraham's original name, Abram, means "exalted father" (see Bible Dictionary, "Abraham," 601).

ai See Gen. 21:13, 18.

aj See Gen. 17:19; Gen. 21:12; Gen. 22:18; Gen. 28:13–14; Gen. 35:9–12; Ex. 32:13; Deut. 9:5; Abr. 2:11; Joseph Smith Translation, Gen. 17:25.

ak Isa. 11:11–12; see also Rom. 15:12.

can come to those who abide His precepts^a and follow His pathway to peace. This I declare to all the world.

Church Members

31 Now, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, what does the Lord expect of us? As a Church, we must “renounce war and proclaim peace.”^b As individuals, we should “follow after the things which make for peace.”^c We should be personal peacemakers. We should live peacefully—as couples, families, and neighbors. We should live by the Golden Rule. We have writings of the descendants of Judah as now merged with writings of the descendants of Ephraim.^d We should employ them and expand our circle of love to embrace the whole human family. We should bring divine love and revealed doctrines of restored religion to our neighbors and friends. We should serve them according to our abilities and opportunities. We should keep our principles on a high level and stand for the right. We should continue to gather scattered Israel from the four corners of the earth and offer the ordinances and covenants that seal families together forever. These blessings we are to bring to people of all nations.

32 By so living, our Master will bless us. He provided this promise: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”^e

33 Ours is His supernal cause. Ours is the cause of eternal glory for all humankind. And as peacemakers, we shall be called the children of God. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 11

Christ the Savior Is Born - Delivered as a Devotional at BYU Provo on December 10, 2002.

WITH Christmas only a fortnight away, thoughts turn to our homes and families. Sister Nelson and I enjoy many Christmas traditions. On our mantle over the fireplace we display a small framed photograph of each member of the family. With 10 children, their spouses, and 54 grandchildren, that’s quite a flock of photos. We have been doing this for so long that most of the pictures are no longer current. The children scramble to find their own pictures among the many.

a See 2 Chr. 20:20; Matt. 6:24–33; John 10:10; 1 Ne. 2:20; 1 Ne. 4:14; 2 Ne. 1:9, 20; 2 Ne. 4:4; Jarom 1:9; Mosiah 1:7; Mosiah 2:22, 31; Alma 9:13; Alma 36:1, 30; Alma 37:13; Alma 38:1; Alma 48:25; Alma 50:20; Hel. 3:20; D&C 64:34.

b D&C 98:16.

c Rom. 14:19.

d See Ezek. 37:16–19; 2 Ne. 3:12.

e Isa. 41:10.

2 They also admire Sister Nelson's large assortment of dolls collected from various countries throughout the world. Those dolls are nestled among the branches of our Christmas tree. Her cookies, cakes, and candies are always in great demand. And we love to read scriptures of the Christmas story with our family.

3 Through all of our various Christmas traditions, I hope that we are focused first upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Wise men still adore Him. At this special devotional, many of you have come with a prayer in your hearts that you may learn from one of the Twelve Apostles more about our Lord and Master.

4 We commemorate His humble birth at this time of year, even though we know it did not occur in December but more likely in April. Scriptures declare that His mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph. They had participated in the first of two components of a Jewish marriage ceremony. Their espousal might be likened to an engagement in our culture, which is followed later by the second component of a marriage ceremony.

5 Luke's account records the appearance of the Angel Gabriel to Mary when she first learned of her favored future. I read from chapter 1:

6 "Hail, thou that art highly favoured . . . : blessed art thou among women. . . .

7 "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

8 "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

9 "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest."^f

10 God is the Highest. Jesus was to be the Son of the Highest.

11 "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"^g

12 She knew of her virginal status.

13 "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."^h

14 Before Joseph and Mary came together, she was expecting that holy child. Joseph desired to protect her privacy,ⁱ hoping to spare Mary the punishment given to a woman pregnant without a completed marriage. While he pondered these things, the An-

f Luke 1:28, 30–32. (Note the capital S; capital H.)

g Luke 1:34.

h Luke 1:35.

i See Matthew 1:18–19.

gel Gabriel appeared to Joseph, saying,

15 “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

16 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”^j

17 Mary and Joseph did not need to be taught the deep significance of the name Jesus. The Hebrew root from which it was derived, Jehoshua, means “Jehovah is salvation.” So the mission of Jehovah, soon to be named Jesus, was salvation, and His supreme destiny was to become the Savior of the world.

18 Let’s turn to the Book of Mormon for the dialogue that Nephi had with an angel as recorded in 1 Nephi 11:

19 The angel asked: “Knowest thou the condescension of God?”^k

20 Nephi replied: “I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things.

21 “And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

22 “. . . I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look!

23 “And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms.

24 “And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!”^l

25 Now let’s turn to the second chapter of Luke—the fond and familiar story that we read at Christmastime:

26 “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.”^m

27 This was really a capitation tax, a census, an enrollment—a registration of the citizenry of the empire of Rome. Herod made a decision that people should be counted in the land of their ancestors. Mary and Joseph, then living in Nazareth, had to travel southward to the city of David, a distance approximately as far as from Salt Lake City to Nephi. Perhaps they traveled even farther if they went around the hostile intermediate province of Samaria. Almost certainly they traveled with relatives who likewise were summoned to the land

j Matthew 1:20–21.

k 1 Nephi 11:16.

l 1 Nephi 11:17–21.

m Luke 2:1.

of their ancestry. This difficult travel was no doubt made with their animals, such as dogs and donkeys. They likely camped out several nights, as three to four days would have been required for that journey.

28 Verse 7: "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."ⁿ

29 Let's pause to ponder this verse. We need to be aware of the culture of that time and region, and we need to learn one word from the original Greek text. In the Greek New Testament, the root from which inn was translated is kataluma. We don't have an equivalent word in the English language. The Greek prefix kata-(or cata-) means "a bringing down." We see it in English words such as catabolism, catastrophe, and cataclysm. When the prefix kata- was joined with the suffix -luma, it meant literally "a breaking down of a journey." A kataluma was a guest chamber in a lodging place.

30 In those days an inn was not like a Holiday Inn or a Bethlehem Marriott. A lodging place in that part of Asia had to provide accommodations for traveling caravans, including the people and their animals. Caravans stayed at what was then known (and is still known) as a caravansary, or a khan. You may

look in your own dictionary and find caravansary and khan, each defined as a rest house in some Asian countries.

31 Such a facility is typically rectangular in shape. It has a central courtyard for the animals that is surrounded by walled cubicles where the people rest. These quarters allowed guests to be elevated slightly above their animals with open doorways so that owners could watch over their animals.

32 The Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 2:7 indicates that there was no room for them in the "inns," suggesting that all of the katalumas or cubicles of the caravansary were occupied. In the Greek New Testament the word kataluma appears in only two other passages,^o translated in each instance not as "inn" but as a "guestchamber," which fits the concept that we have discussed.

33 As a youngster, whenever I heard those words "no room in the inn," I assumed that No Vacancy signs were posted at local motels or that the innkeepers were inhospitable or even hostile. Such an assumption is probably way off the mark. People of that part of the world were no doubt then as they are now—most hospitable. Particularly would this have been true at a season when the normal population of Jerusalem and neighboring Bethlehem would be swollen with large numbers of relatives.

n Luke 2:7.
o See Mark 14:14 and Luke 22:11.

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34 At a caravansary, animals were secured for the night in the center courtyard. In that courtyard there would have been donkeys and dogs, sheep, and possibly camels and oxen, along with all of the animals' discharges and odors. Because the guest chambers surrounding the courtyard were filled, Joseph possibly made the decision to care for Mary's delivery in the center courtyard of a caravansary—among the animals. There, in that lowly circumstance, the Lamb of God was born.

35 Why was reference made twice in Luke 2 to His being wrapped in swaddling clothes?^p What is the meaning of those five words "wrapped him in swaddling clothes"? I sense a significance beyond the use of an ordinary diaper and receiving blanket. Instead of those five words in the English text, only one word is needed in the Greek New Testament. That word is *sparganoō*, which means to envelop a newborn child with special cloth, strips of which were passed from side to side.^q The cloth would probably bear unique family identification. That procedure was especially applicable to the birth of a firstborn son.

36 You remember the announcement of an angel at the birth of Jesus:

37 "This shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."^r His wrappings surely would have been distinctive.

38 I think that such a concept of a cloth with family markings might also have been relevant when Joseph, son of Israel, became the birthright son and received the unique cloth coat of many colors—a fabric symbolic of the birthright.

39 What about the manger? Those of you who speak French will recognize the word to be the same as the French word *manger*, meaning "to eat." A manger is a trough or an open box in a stable designed to hold feed, provender, or fodder for animals to eat. Elevated from the floor of the contaminated courtyard, a manger was probably the cleanest site available. Such a feeding trough became the cradle for our Lord!

40 Now, two millennia later, though we don't know all the details pertaining to His birth, we certainly understand the unique parentage of this Babe of Bethlehem. Several scriptures ask the question "Who shall declare His generation?"^s We declare solemnly and with conviction: Jesus was born of an immortal Father and a mortal mother. From His

p See Luke 2:7, 12.

q See word number 4683 on page 66 of the Greek Dictionary of the New Testament in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (Nashville, New York: Abingdon Press, 1890).

r Luke 2:12.

s See Isaiah 53:8; Acts 8:33; Mosiah 14:8; 15:10.

immortal Father, Jesus inherited the power to live forever. From His mortal mother He inherited the fate of physical death.

41 He declared this reality regarding His own life: “No man taketh it from me,” He said, “but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”^t

42 Those unique attributes were essential for His mission to atone for the sins of all mankind. Thus Jesus the Christ was born to die.^u He died that we might live. He was born that all humankind could live beyond the grave.^v His Atonement was wrought in Gethsemane—where He sweat great drops of blood—and on Golgotha (or Calvary)—where His body was lifted up upon a cross above the place of the skull, which signified death. This infinite Atonement would release man from the infinitude of death.^w His Atonement made the Resurrection a reality and the gift of eternal life a possibility for all who would obey His teachings. His Atonement became the central act of all human history.

43 Our recollections of Christmas are enriched by these realities. Each one of us with a testimony of the Lord has the privilege in

faith to know of His divine parentage and to testify that Jesus is the Son of the living God.

44 True testimony includes the fact that the Father and the Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith, whose birth we commemorate on December 23. That testimony includes the fact that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true, led by the living Lord via prophecy and revelation through authorized administrators who receive and respond to direction from Him.

45 With this background in mind, I share comforting counsel with you today. It comes from section 68 of the Doctrine and Covenants, where we read this commandment from our Master: “Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come.”^x

46 Lovingly we cling to that promise. Difficult days are ahead for all mankind. Sin is on the increase. We live in a time of wars and rumors of wars. The Church and its members will come under attack and endure persecution.^y

47 Jesus descended below all things in order to rise above all

t John 10:18.

u See 3 Nephi 27:13–14.

v See 3 Nephi 27:14–15.

w See 2 Nephi 9:7.

x D&C 68:6.

y See 2 Timothy 3:1–13; D&C 112:24.

things. He expects us to follow His example. Yoked with Him, we can rise above all challenges, no matter how difficult they may be.^a Peter offered this counsel: "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."^b

48 The time is coming when those who do not obey the Lord will be separated from those who do. Our safest insurance is to continue to be worthy of admission to His holy house. How blessed we are to have temples available. The greatest gift you could give to the Lord at this or any other time of year is to keep yourself unspotted from the world, worthy to attend His holy house. His gift to you will be the peace and security of knowing that you are worthy to meet Him, whenever that time shall come.

49 Brothers and sisters, I plead with you to rise above the tasks of the day and the hurdles ahead. You can do more than the deeds scheduled in your daily planners. You can take the name of the Lord upon you and become more like Him. You can rise to your great potential. You can prepare for the future with greater spiritual capacity.

50 Remember that the fulness of Christ's ministry lies in the future. The prophecies of His Second Coming have yet to be fulfilled.

filled. At Christmas, of course, we focus upon His birth. But, He will come again. At His First Coming Jesus came almost in secret. Only a few mortals knew of His birth. At His Second Coming the whole of humankind will know of His return. Then He will come, not as "a man traveling on the earth,"^c but His glory "shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."^d

51 As a special witness of His holy name, I testify that Jesus is the divine Son of the living God. He will love you, lift you, and manifest Himself unto you if you will love Him and keep His commandments.^e

52 I express my love and blessing for each of you, along with my best wishes for a very merry Christmas, and do so prayerfully in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 12

Divine Love - Published in the February 2003 Ensign Magazine.

IN today's world trembling with terror and hatred, our knowledge of divine love is of utmost importance. We bear responsibility to understand and testify that Heavenly Father and Jesus the Christ are glorified, living, and loving personages. "For God so loved the world, that

a See Matthew 11:29–30.

b 1 Peter 4:16.

c D&C 49:22.

d Isaiah 40:5; see also D&C 101:23.

e See John 14:21.

expression may be found in the scriptures:

7 “If ... [certain conditions exist], then ... [certain consequences follow].” (The indicators if and then may be written or implied.)

8 “*Inasmuch as* ... [certain conditions exist], ... [certain consequences follow].”^s

9 “*Except ... cannot ...*”^t

10 “*Prove ... , if ...*” For example, a verse pertaining to our creation reveals a prime purpose for our sojourn here in mortality: “We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.”^u Life here is a period of mortal probation. Our thoughts and actions determine whether our mortal probation can merit heavenly approbation.^v

*The Conditional Nature
of Divine Love*

11 With scriptural patterns of conditional statements in mind,

we note many verses that declare the conditional nature of divine love for us. Examples include:

12 “If ye keep my commandments, [*then*] ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”^w

13 “If you keep not my commandments, [*then*] the love of the Father shall not continue with you.”^x

14 “If a man love me, [*then*] he will keep my words: and my Father will love him.”^y

15 “I love them that love me; and those that seek me ... shall find me.”^z

16 “God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”^{aa}

17 The Lord “loveth those who will have him to be their God.”^{ab}

s For examples, see 1 Ne. 2:20; 1 Ne. 4:14; 2 Ne. 1:9, 20; 2 Ne. 4:4; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Alma 9:13; Alma 36:1, 30; Alma 38:1; Alma 50:20; Hel. 4:15.

t Examples are: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5; emphasis added), and “Except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory” (D&C 132:21; emphasis added). See also Ether 12:34; D&C 25:15; D&C 132:21.

u Abr. 3:25; emphasis added; see also Mal. 3:10; 3 Ne. 24:10.

v See Matt. 25:21, 23.

w John 15:10; emphasis added.

x D&C 95:12; emphasis added.

y John 14:23; emphasis added.

z Prov. 8:17.

aa Acts 10:34–35.

ab 1 Ne. 17:40.

18 "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."^{ac}

The Conditional Nature of Divine Blessings

19 It is equally evident that certain blessings come from a loving Lord only if required conditions are met. Examples include:

20 "If thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, ... *then* I will lengthen thy days."^{ad}

21 "If thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments ... ; *then* will I perform my word with thee."^{ae}

22 "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise."^{af}

23 "When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."^{ag}

24 "Unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions."^{ah}

25 The Lord declares: "All who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof. ...

26 "And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

27 "... The conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed ... of him who is anointed, ... are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead."^{ai}

28 Other laws are designed to bless us here in mortality. One such law is tithing: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse ... and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord ... , if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."^{aj} Such a blessing is conditional. Those who fail to

ac John 14:21.
ad 1 Kgs. 3:14; emphasis added; see also Deut. 19:9.
ae 1 Kgs. 6:12; emphasis added.
af D&C 82:10.
ag D&C 130:21.
ah D&C 88:38; see also D&C 132:5.
ai D&C 132:5-7; see also Alma 9:12; Alma 42:13, 17.
aj Mal. 3:10; emphasis added; see also 3 Ne. 24:10. The Lord did not restrict how He would bless tithe payers. Some are blessed spiritually more than they are temporally.

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tithe have no promise.^{ak}

29 Again, “all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; and he has promised ... that if ye would keep his commandments ye should prosper in the land; and he never doth vary from that which he hath said; therefore, if ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you.”^{al}

30 Why is divine love conditional? Because God loves us and wants us to be happy. “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.”^{am}

*Our Defense against
False Ideologies*

31 Understanding that divine love and blessings are not truly “unconditional” can defend us against common fallacies such as these: “Since God’s love is unconditional, He will love me regardless ...”; or “Since ‘God is

love,’^{an} He will love me unconditionally, regardless ...”

32 These arguments are used by anti-Christos to woo people with deception. Nehor, for example, promoted himself by teaching falsehoods: He “testified unto the people that all mankind should be saved at the last day, ... for the Lord had created all men, ... and, in the end, all men should have eternal life.”^{ao} Sadly, some of the people believed Nehor’s fallacious and unconditional concepts.

33 In contrast to Nehor’s teachings, divine love warns us that “wickedness never was happiness.”^{ap} Jesus explains, “Come unto me and be ye saved; ... except ye shall keep my commandments, ... ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”^{aq}

Divine Love and the Sinner

34 Does this mean the Lord does not love the sinner? Of course not. Divine love is infinite and universal. The Savior loves both saints and sinners. The Apostle

ak See D&C 119:4–5. Tithing is also required for one to be enrolled with the people of God (see D&C 85:3).

al Mosiah 2:22; emphasis added. That conditional counsel is repeated many times throughout the scriptures. See 1 Ne. 2:20; 1 Ne. 4:14; 2 Ne. 1:9, 20; 2 Ne. 4:4; Jacob 2:17–19; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7; Mosiah 2:31; Alma 9:13; Alma 36:1, 30; Alma 37:13; Alma 38:1; Alma 48:15, 25; Alma 50:20; Hel. 3:20.

am Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 255–56; emphasis added.

an 1 Jn. 4:8, 16.

ao Alma 1:4; emphasis added; see also Alma 1:3, 5–6; 2 Ne. 28:8–9. Such an unconditional concept (eternal life for all) would negate the need for ordinances, covenants, and temple work.

ap Alma 41:10.

aq 3 Ne. 12:20; emphasis added.

of, and I never expect to receive blessings that I do not merit."^{bc}

38 President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said that the Lord "cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance."^{bd} ... We will better appreciate his love ... if similar abhorrence for sin impels us to transform our lives through repentance."^{be}

39 Given the imperfections we all have, individual initiative is imperative: "He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;

40 "And he that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord."^{bf}

41 In climbing the pathway of repentance, both the effort and the result count. The Lord taught that spiritual gifts are given to "those who love me and keep all my commandments, and [who] seeketh so to do."^{bg}

*Divine Love Provides Us
with a Pattern*

42 Jesus asked us to love one another as He has loved us.^{bh} Is that possible? Can our love for others really approach divine love? Yes it can!^{bi} The pure love of Christ is granted to all who seek and qualify for it.^{bj} Such love includes service^{bk} and requires obedience.^{bl}

43 Compliance with divine law requires faith—the pivotal point of mortality's testing and trials. At the same time, faith proves our love for God.^{bm} The more committed we become to patterning our lives after His, the purer and more divine our love becomes.^{bn}

44 Perhaps no love in mortality approaches the divine more than the love parents have for their children. As parents, we have the same obligation to teach obedience that our heavenly parents felt obliged to teach us. While we can teach the need for tolerance of others' differences,^{bo} we cannot tolerate their infractions of the laws of God. Our children

bc Deseret News, 12 Nov. 1873, 644.

bd D&C 1:31.

be The Miracle of Forgiveness (1969), 59.

bf D&C 1:32–33.

bg D&C 46:9; emphasis added.

bh See John 13:34; John 15:12.

bi See Ether 12:33–34; Moro. 7:46–47.

bj See Moro. 7:48.

bk See Gal. 5:13; Mosiah 2:18–21; Mosiah 4:15.

bl John taught, "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (1 Jn. 2:5).

bm See Deut. 13:3; John 14:15; John 15:6–7.

bn See Matt. 6:19–22; D&C 88:67–68; D&C 93:11–20.

bo See A of F 1:11.

6 Prophets have long told us to pray humbly and frequently.^e

How to Pray

7 Jesus taught us how.^f We pray to our Heavenly Father,^g in the name of Jesus Christ,^h by the power of the Holy Ghost.⁷ⁱ This is the “true order of prayer,”^j in contrast to “vain repetitions”^k or recitations given to “be seen of men.”^l

8 Jesus revealed that we pray to a wise Father who knows what things we have need of, before we ask Him.^m

9 Mormon taught his son, Moroni, that we should pray “with all the energy of heart.”ⁿ Nephi exclaimed, “I pray continually for [my people] by day, and

mine eyes water my pillow by night, ... and I cry unto my God in faith, and I know that he will hear my cry.”^o

10 The sweet power of prayer can be intensified by fasting, on occasion, when appropriate to a particular need.^p

11 Prayers can be offered even in silence. One can think a prayer, especially when words would interfere.^q We often kneel to pray; we may stand or be seated.^r Physical position is less important than is spiritual submission to God.

12 We close our prayer “in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”^{1s} When we hear another’s prayer, we audibly add our

e For examples, see Jer. 29:11–13; Joel 2:32; Philip. 4:6; 1 Ne. 15:8–11; Alma 37:37.

f As Jesus wrought the Atonement, He maintained prayerful communication with His Father, both in Gethsemane (see Luke 22:39–44) and on Calvary’s cross (see Luke 23:33–34, 46).

g See Matt. 6:9; Joseph Smith Translation, Matt. 6:10; Luke 11:2; 3 Ne. 13:9.

h See Jacob 4:4–5; 3 Ne. 20:31; 3 Ne. 27:9; Moses 5:8.

i See Moro. 6:9; Moro. 10:4–5.

j Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (1985), 380.

k Matt. 6:7.

l Matt. 6:5.

m See Matt. 6:8.

n Moro. 7:48.

o 2 Ne. 33:3; see also Jacob 3:1; Alma 31:38; D&C 37:2.

p See Matt. 17:21; Mark 9:29; 1 Cor. 7:5; Mosiah 27:22–23; Alma 5:46; 3 Ne. 27:1; D&C 88:76.

q One of our hymns recounts that “Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, / Uttered or unexpressed, / ... The upward glancing of an eye / When none but God is near” (Hymns, no. 145).

r As may be appropriate for the occasion.

s For other helpful instruction, see Dallin H. Oaks, “The Language of Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 15–18.

“amen,” meaning, “That is my prayer, too.”^t

When to Pray

13 When should we pray? The Lord said, “Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good.”^u

14 Alma said, “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God.”^v

15 We pray privately, with our families regularly, at mealtime, and in daily activities. Simply summarized, we are a praying people.

Personal Experience with Prayer

16 Many of us have had experiences with the sweet power of prayer. One of mine was shared with a stake patriarch from southern Utah. I first met him in my medical office more than 40 years ago, during the early pioneering days of surgery of the heart. This saintly soul suffered much because of a failing heart.

He pleaded for help, thinking that his condition resulted from a damaged but repairable valve in his heart.

17 Extensive evaluation revealed that he had two faulty valves. While one could be helped surgically, the other could not. Thus, an operation was not advised. He received this news with deep disappointment.

18 Subsequent visits ended with the same advice. Finally, in desperation, he spoke to me with considerable emotion: “Dr. Nelson, I have prayed for help and have been directed to you. The Lord will not reveal to me how to repair that second valve, but He can reveal it to you. Your mind is so prepared. If you will operate upon me, the Lord will make it known to you what to do. Please perform the operation that I need, and pray for the help that you need.”^w

19 His great faith had a profound effect upon me. How could I turn him away again? Following a fervent prayer together, I agreed to try. In preparing for that fateful day, I prayed over and over again, but still did not know what to do for his leaking

t See The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed. (2000), 57: “amen. ... Used at the end of a prayer or a statement to express assent or approval. [Middle English, from Old English, from Late Latin amen, from Greek, from Hebrew ‘amen, certainly, verily, from ‘aman, to be firm.]”

u D&C 90:24; emphasis added.

v Alma 37:37; emphasis added. See also Mosiah 26:39; Alma 26:22. For comparable teaching from Paul, see 1 Thes. 5:17.

w While his words may not have been quoted verbatim, this is an accurate representation of his declaration.

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tricuspid valve. Even as the operation commenced,^x my assistant asked, “What are you going to do for that?”

20 I said, “I do not know.”

21 We began the operation. After relieving the obstruction of the first valve,^y we exposed the second valve. We found it to be intact but so badly dilated that it could no longer function as it should. While examining this valve, a message was distinctly impressed upon my mind: Reduce the circumference of the ring. I announced that message to my assistant. “The valve tissue will be sufficient if we can effectively reduce the ring toward its normal size.”

22 But how? We could not apply a belt as one would use to tighten the waist of oversized trousers. We could not squeeze with a strap as one would cinch a saddle on a horse. Then a picture came vividly to my mind, showing how stitches could be placed—to make a pleat here and a tuck there—to accom-

plish the desired objective. I still remember that mental image—complete with dotted lines where sutures should be placed. The repair was completed as diagrammed in my mind. We tested the valve and found the leak to be reduced remarkably. My assistant said, “It’s a miracle.”

23 I responded, “It’s an answer to prayer.”

24 The patient’s recovery was rapid and his relief gratifying. Not only was he helped in a marvelous way, but surgical help for other people with similar problems had become a possibility. I take no credit. Praise goes to this faithful patriarch and to God, who answered our prayers. This faithful man lived for many more years and has since gone to his eternal glory.

Inquire of the Lord

25 When we pray, we should not presume to give counsel but should inquire of the Lord^z and hearken to His counsel.^{aa} Joseph Smith’s first prayer ushered in the Restoration of the gospel.^{ab}

x This operation was performed 24 May 1960.

y He had stenosis (narrowing) of his mitral valve, caused by an earlier attack of rheumatic fever.

z The Lord said, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge” (D&C 42:61). For an example, refer to section 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord explained that “you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought” (D&C 9:8–9). See also Jacob 4:10.

aa See Ex. 15:26; Deut. 13:17–18; 1 Sam. 15:22; Jer. 26:4–6; Omni 1:13; D&C 41:1; D&C 133:16.

ab See JS—H 1:15–20.

In 1833, he received the Word of Wisdom after asking the Lord for counsel.^{ac} The revelation on the priesthood received in 1978 by President Spencer W. Kimball came after intense inquiry.^{ad} Inspiration regarding the construction of smaller temples came after the pondering of President Gordon B. Hinckley.^{ae}

Answers to Prayers

26 Not all of our prayers will be answered as we might wish. Occasionally the answer will be no. We should not be surprised. Loving mortal parents do not say yes to every request of their children.^{af}

27 At a recent extended family home evening, our grandchildren were having a wonderful time. A six-year-old grandson became very upset when his father said it was time to go home. So what did this dear boy do? He came to me and said, "Grandfather, may I have your permission to disobey my father?"

28 I said, "No, sweetheart. One of life's great lessons is to learn

that happiness comes through obedience.^{ag} Go home with your family, and you will be happy." Though disappointed, he dutifully obeyed.

29 We should pray in accord with the will of our Heavenly Father.^{ah} He wants to test us, to strengthen us, and to help us achieve our full potential. When the Prophet Joseph Smith was held in Liberty Jail, he pled for relief. His prayers were answered with an explanation: "All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good."^{ai}

Song of Prayer

30 I have felt impressed to conclude this message on prayer with a prayer—presented as a hymn. The Lord has said that "the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me."^{aj} The music comes from our book of Hymns,^{ak} for which I have written new words. With thanks to Craig Jessop, Mack Wilberg, and other dear friends in the Tabernacle Choir, we may hear that song of prayer. Brother Jessop, please:

ac See D&C 89.
ad See Official Declaration 2.
ae See Church News, 1 Aug. 1998, 3, 12; 13 Mar. 1999, 9; 4 Mar. 2000, 7; 24 June 2000, 9.
af Even the Son of God endured such an experience, "saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). The Father and the Son both knew what had to be done.
ag Regarding obedience to divine law, see Abr. 3:25. Regarding obedience to wise counsel from loving parents, see Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20.
ah See Hel. 10:4–5.
ai D&C 122:7.
aj D&C 25:12.
ak Hymns, no. 337; music composed by Joseph Parry; tune: SWANSEA.

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31 Our Prayer to Thee

We pray to Thee, our Heavenly Father,

With grateful hearts and fond emotion.

We thank Thee for our great Exemplar—

Thy beloved and atoning Son—

Who gave Himself as sacred ransom,

That we could live again with Thee!

Our joy is full, our song so glad-some;

Renew our faith and hope in Thee.

We pray to Thee, our Heavenly Father,

With thankful hearts and adoration.

We thank Thee for our loving Savior,

Who redeemed us from death and sin;

He gave to us His truth to brighten

Our path, to help us walk His way,

To love and serve, to lift and lighten

The lives of all who will obey.

We pray to Thee, our Heavenly Father,

With gratitude and deep devotion

For loving faith and endless splendor—

Eternal glory—bound as one!

We pray for mercy and forgiveness

And hope to know Thy holy will.

We yearn for Thee, we plead in meekness,

Thy trust in us may we fulfill.

32 In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 14

Young Adults and the Temple - Delivered as a CES Fireside Address at the Salt Lake University Institute May 2003.

THANK you, President Porter, for your kind introduction, and thank you, choir, for your beautiful music. You do well! I would like to invite Sister Nelson to stand beside me briefly, so that you can see what a sweet lady I married. We are delighted to be with all of you—and grateful to be with each other. Not far from here we first met and fell in love. We graduated from this university and, with her great encouragement and support, I completed medical school here. We have happy memories of our university days here, including our first two years of married life. Our temple marriage has since been blessed with ten children and fifty-four grandchildren, a few of whom are also in attendance here tonight. Would our family members please stand for a moment? Thank you, family, and thank you, dear Dantzel.

2 Broadcasting tonight from near the University of Utah campus symbolizes the global scope of Church membership. Young adults are participating from all parts of the world. Thanks to each of you for coming.

3 My topic tonight is the temple. I would like to help you delve deeply into its doctrine, to explore the heights of its glory, and to grasp its eternal significance.

ernacle erected by Moses was a type of portable temple,^j since the Israelites were traveling in the wilderness.^k The Old Testament is replete with references to ordinances, covenants, and even the clothing of the temple.^l

10 The best known biblical temple was built in Jerusalem in the days of Solomon. President Hinckley recently told us that Solomon's Temple was smaller than any of our temples today. The Lord personally accepted that holy house.^m It was partially destroyed in 600 b.c.

11 Almost a hundred years later it was restored by Zerubbabel. This structure was damaged by fire in 37 b.c., and subsequently reconstructed by Herod. He enlarged and leveled the Temple Mount and rebuilt the second temple.

12 This was the temple known by Jesus. He was there as a child when His anxious mother could not find Him.ⁿ

13 At the first cleansing of the temple, Jesus called it "my Father's house".^o At the second cleansing, Jesus called it "My

house".^p Finally, as the temple was further desecrated, Jesus called it "your house . . . left unto you desolate"^q—a prophecy fulfilled when it was destroyed in a.d. 70.

14 Several years ago, Sister Nelson and I were in Jerusalem being guided through recent excavations in a tunnel to the left of the present "wailing wall" of the old temple. In that tunnel we saw Jewish rabbis praying for the day that the third temple would be built in Jerusalem. We were told that someone had asked Israel's famous archeologist, Yigael Yadin, what would they do in the temple if rebuilt. His reply: "I don't know. Ask the Mormons. They'll know."

15 From the Book of Mormon we know that Nephi built a temple "after the manner of the temple of Solomon," only it was less ornate.^r

16 "From Adam to the time of Jesus, ordinances were performed in temples for the living only. After Jesus opened the way for the gospel to be preached in the world of spirits, . . . work for the dead, as well as for the living, has been done in temples".^s

j Scriptures describe it as a "tent of the testimony" (Numbers 9:15) and as a "tabernacle of testimony" (Exodus 38:21).

k Bible Dictionary, "temple," 781

l see, for example, Exodus 28-29; Leviticus 8

m see 2 Chronicles 7:12

n see Luke 2:43, 49

o John 2:16; see vv. 13-16

p Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17

q Luke 13:35

r 2 Nephi 5:16

s Bible Dictionary, "temple," 781

dren and the hearts of the children to their fathers.^{ac}

24 Elijah did come, on 3 April 1836, on Easter Sunday, at the beginning of Passover. He came to the Kirtland Temple to confer keys of sealing authority, precisely as prophesied by the angel Moroni.^{ad}

25 In the temple, ordinances are administered through which the power of God is manifest.^{ae} Without those ordinances and the authority of the priesthood, “the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh”.^{af}

26 The entablature on modern temples reads, “Holiness to the Lord”.^{ag} Those words describe the building, yes. They also describe the ordinances and covenants of the temple and the people who worship within its walls.

Temples of the Restoration

27 The Kirtland Temple was a preparatory temple. It stands today as a monument to the faith of the people who built it. Later, when the Saints reached Illinois, the Lord once again asked His people to build a temple. Why?

28 Turn with me to section 124, verse 29: “For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—

29 “For this ordinance belongeth to my house (v. 30).

30 Verse 32 carries this stern warning: “If you do not these things . . . ye shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God.”

31 Verses 40-41: “Let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

32 “For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.”

33 In verse 47 we see another warning: “If you build a house unto my name, and do not do the things that I say, I will not perform the oath which I make unto you, neither fulfil the promises which ye expect at my hands, saith the Lord.”

34 I now turn to section 128. The chapter heading notes that this was received as an epistle. Why was the Prophet writing a letter to the Saints instead of addressing them directly? He was in seclusion. He was being hunted by angry mobs. He couldn’t even go home. He was sequestered in the home of his friend, Edward Hunter. Listen to these wondrous words, written under the roof of Edward Hunter’s house.

ac see Malachi 4:5-6; D&C 2:1-2
ad see D&C 110:14-16
ae see D&C 84:20
af D&C 84:21
ag see Exodus 28:36; 39:30

35 Verse 1: “I now resume the subject of the baptism for the dead, as that subject seems to occupy my mind, and press itself upon my feelings the strongest, since I have been pursued by my enemies.”

36 Verse 15: “These are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect.”

37 Skipping to verse 18: “The earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children. . . . Baptism for the dead . . . is necessary . . . that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place. . . . Things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed . . . in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.”

38 The Saints obeyed. They built the temple in Nauvoo. You know the history of that monumental and matchless undertaking. Some six thousand Saints received their endowments and

sealings before they had to leave and lose their temple. Now it stands again—rebuilt in all its majesty—as a very busy temple.

39 Some thirty years after the exodus from Nauvoo, the St. George Temple was finished. It was the first temple in which vicarious ordinances for the dead were carried out on an organized scale.

40 At the dedication of the St. George Temple, on 1 January 1877—the very year that President Brigham Young died—he said:

41 “What do you suppose the fathers would say if they could speak from the dead? Would they not say, ‘We have lain here thousands of years, here in this prison house, waiting for this dispensation to come? . . .’ What would they whisper in our ears? Why, if they had the power the very thunders of heaven would be in our ears, if we could but realize the importance of the work we are engaged in. All the angels in heaven are looking at this little handful of people, and stimulating them to the salvation of the human family. . . . When I think upon this subject I want the tongues of seven thunders to wake up the people”.^{ah}

Continuing Revelation

42 In 1894 President Wilford Woodruff instructed members of the Church: “We want the Latter-day Saints from this time

ah Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 403-4; see also D&C 138:47-50

to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. . . . This is the will of the Lord to this people".^{ai}

43 The purpose of family history work is to obtain the names and data of our ancestors so that temple ordinances can be performed in their behalf.

44 President Woodruff declared that Brigham Young "did not receive all the revelations that belong to this work; neither did President Taylor, nor has Wilford Woodruff. There will be no end to this work until it is perfected".^{aj}

45 Doctrine and Covenants section 138 is the crowning jewel of the remarkable ministry of President Joseph F. Smith. As you know, it was received the month before President Smith passed away. In that unique circumstance, he was still in the world but could see into the next world. It is dated October 1918.

46 I'll begin at verse 11: "I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great.

47 "And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality;

48 " . . . These had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

49 "I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand.

50 "They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death. . . .

51 "While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives. . . .

52 "And there he preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and the redemption of mankind from the fall, and from individual sins on conditions of repentance".^{ak}

53 Verse 48: "Foreshadowing the great work to be done in the temples of the Lord in the dispensation of the fulness of times, for the redemption of the dead, and the sealing of the children to their parents, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse and utterly wasted at his coming."^{al}

ai The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 157

aj Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, 154

ak vv. 11-12, 14-16, 18-19

al That terminology appears three times in the scriptures. The others are in Doctrine and Covenants 2:3; Joseph Smith—History 1:39.

54 Verse 51: “These the Lord taught, and gave them power to come forth, after his resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father’s kingdom, there to be crowned with immortality and eternal life.”

55 Temples catalyze that crown! How grateful we are for this knowledge!

56 May I digress a moment to relate an amusing experience we had a few years ago. Sister Nelson and I had the privilege of taking President and Sister Spencer W. Kimball to an activity. Our five-year-old son was with us. I asked him to tell President Kimball about the picture he had on the wall of his bedroom. Our son dutifully replied, “It’s the temple.” (The President had fostered this practice.)

57 President Kimball, with his global perspective, asked, “Which temple?”

58 That completely stumped our little boy, with his limited perspective. He thought a minute and then replied, “Why, the marriage temple, of course.” President Kimball gave a broad smile.

59 President Howard W. Hunter said in 1994, the year before he passed away: “I . . . invite the members of the Church to establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting

for their most sacred covenants. . . I would hope that every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it”.^{am}

60 President Gordon B. Hinckley has reaffirmed that hope. He has also expanded temple and family history work exponentially. In May 1999 he launched the FamilySearch™ Internet service. It is now averaging 14 million hits from more than 131,000 visitors—every day. From the Pedigree Resource File, a component of that endeavor, we are receiving an income of more than a million names per month, all lineage-linked.

61 When President Hinckley was called to serve in the First Presidency in 1981, how many temples did we have in the Church? 19! Now we have 114. More are under construction, and others have been announced.

*Personal Preparation
for the Temple*

62 To each young adult I emphasize that the temple can bless you—even before you enter it. By maintaining a standard of moral conduct high enough to qualify for a temple recommend, you will find inner peace and spiritual strength. Now is the time to cleanse your lives of anything that is displeasing to the Lord. Now is the time to eliminate feelings of envy or enmity

am in Jay M. Todd, “President Howard W. Hunter: Fourteenth President of the Church,” Ensign, July 1994, 5

and seek forgiveness for any offense.

63 Recently the First Presidency issued a letter to priesthood leaders regarding the optimum time for members to receive a temple recommend. From it I quote:

64 “Single members in their late teens or early twenties who have not received a mission call or who are not engaged to be married in the temple should not be recommended to the temple for their own endowment. They can, however, receive a Limited-Use Recommend to perform baptisms for the dead. The desire to witness temple marriages of siblings or friends is not sufficient reason for a young adult to be endowed”.^{an}

65 Please note that this instruction applies to singles in their “late teens and early twenties.” We hope that a few years later, the younger will become older—married or established in a stable manner—that will allow temple worship to be a high priority all throughout life.

66 Before you enter the temple for the first time, participation in a ward Temple Preparation Seminar will be helpful. So will reading a new booklet that your

bishop will provide, *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*.^{ao} These will help you understand the magnificence of the ordinances and covenants of the temple.

67 Plan now to be married in the temple and conduct your courtship with the temple in mind. When you kneel with your companion at the altar of a holy temple, you do so as equal partners. You become an eternal family unit. Anything that might erode the spirituality, love, and sense of true partnership is contrary to the will of the Lord. Fidelity to these sacred ordinances and covenants will bring eternal blessings to you and to generations yet unborn.

*Physical Bodies Are
Our Personal Temples*

68 Our physical bodies have also been declared as temples of God. Paul said, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”.^{ap}

69 We constantly care for our bodies as our very own temples—created for our eternal purpose and potential. Our temples of flesh and our spirits are both blessed by the ordinances and covenants of a dedicated temple.

an 12 Nov. 2002

ao pamphlet, 2002 This booklet is also used as the student manual in the Temple Preparation Seminar (item no. 36793).

ap 1 Corinthians 3:16. See also 1 Corinthians 6:19. Even the body of Jesus was described in scripture as His personal temple (see John 2:19-21).

this do in remembrance of me".^d Then He took the cup, said a blessing of thanks, and passed it to those gathered about Him, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood",^e "which is shed ... for the remission of sins".^f "This do ... in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do [proclaim] the Lord's death".^g In this way, He linked the sacrament to His impending Crucifixion.

4 God had declared, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man".^h Then the Son of God voluntarily laid down His life to complete the will of His Father. Thus, immortality became a reality and eternal life a possibility for all who would ever live upon the earth.

5 We commemorate His Atonement in a very personal way. We bring a broken heart and a contrite spirit to our sacrament meeting. It is the highlight of our Sabbath-day observance.ⁱ

6 The sacramental prayers have been revealed by the Lord. These prayers contain covenants and a promise.^j We covenant to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. We eat the broken bread in remembrance of His body. We

drink the water in remembrance of His blood that was shed for us. And we witness that we will always remember Him. The promise: we will always have His Spirit to be with us. What a blessing!

Planning Sacrament Meeting

7 With these doctrines in mind, bishoprics and branch presidencies need to plan sacrament meetings thoughtfully in order to keep the meetings focused on the Lord and His Atonement, His example, and the doctrines of the gospel.

8 Invitations to speak should be extended well in advance and include a clear description of the topic assigned and time allotted, along with an offer to help. Those asked to pray should include members not often called upon. Avoid patterns of prayers given by a husband and wife at the same meeting. This conveys an unintentional message of exclusion to those who are single. And remember: prayers are not sermons.

9 Departing missionaries may be given an opportunity to speak in a sacrament meeting. Their family members and friends are not invited to speak. Two or more departing missionaries may speak in the same service. Returning missionaries who have served

d Luke 22:19
 e Luke 22:20
 f Matt. 26:28
 g 1 Cor. 11:25–26
 h Moses 1:39
 i see D&C 59:8–13
 j see D&C 20:77, 79

Music

17 The hymns of the Church are the basic music for worship services and the standard for congregational singing. Other appropriate selections may be used for prelude and postlude music, choir music, and special musical selections. Opening and closing hymns are usually sung by the congregation. The sacrament hymn is always sung by the congregation.

18 Ideally, each Church unit has a choir, with an invitation to sing periodically. A choir can bless lives. Sister Nelson and I have fond memories of our participation—years ago—in the choir of our small branch in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When we and the others came forward to sing, there were more of us in the choir than there were members remaining in the congregation.

19 Pianos, organs, or their electronic equivalents are the standard for use in Church meetings. If other instruments are used, their use should be in keeping with the spirit of the meeting. Instruments with a loud or less worshipful sound, such as most brass and percussion, are not appropriate for sacrament meeting. If a piano, organ, or accompanist is not available, appropriate recordings may be used for accompaniment.

20 The song of the righteous is a prayer unto the Lord.^k Some members seem reluctant to sing,

perhaps because of fear. We each need to forget our fears and sing as an opportunity to praise our Creator prayerfully. Music in sacrament meeting is for worship, not performance. We must not let our sacred music slip away from us nor allow secular music to replace it.

Conducting Sacrament Meeting

21 Bishoprics and branch presidencies have responsibility not only to plan these meetings, but to conduct them. They should do so reverently. Some in the congregation are praying for delicate promptings and communication from heaven. Establishing a spirit of reverence will help them receive those promptings. Remember: reverence invites revelation.

22 Those conducting the meeting begin by extending a cordial greeting. Detailed announcements are more appropriately handled some other time. Because we invite all to come unto Christ, friends and neighbors are always welcome but not expected to take the sacrament. However, it is not forbidden. They choose for themselves. We hope that newcomers among us will always be made to feel wanted and comfortable. Little children, as sinless beneficiaries of the Lord's Atonement, may partake of the sacrament as they prepare for covenants that they will make later in life.

23 Our meetings are always to

k see D&C 25:12

CHAPTER 16

Personal Priesthood Responsibility - Delivered in the Priesthood Session of the October 2003 General Conference.

MY dear brethren of the priesthood, though we are from many nations, we are, as Paul said, of “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”^a But the strength of the faith within each of us is developed individually, not as a group.

2 For example, think of the faith of a boy, about eight years of age, who was facing an emergency operation for acute appendicitis. As he lay on the operating table, he looked up at the surgeon and said, “Doctor, before you begin to operate, will you pray for me?”

3 The surgeon looked at the boy in amazement and said, “Why, I can’t pray for you.”

4 Then the little fellow said, “If you won’t pray for me, please wait while I pray for myself.” There on the operating table, the boy got on his knees, folded his hands, and began to pray. He said: “Heavenly Father, I am only a little orphan boy. I am awful sick, and these doctors are going to operate. Will you please help them that they will do it right? Heavenly Father, if you will make me well, I will be a good boy. Thank you for mak-

ing me well.” He then lay on his back, looked up at the tear-filled eyes of the doctors and nurses, and said, “Now I am ready.”^b

5 His physical recovery was complete, and his spiritual power was developing. You brethren are older and have had the priesthood conferred upon you. Your priesthood quorums provide opportunities for friendship, service, and learning. But the responsibility to develop power in the priesthood is personal. Only as an individual can you develop a firm faith in God and a passion for personal prayer. Only as an individual can you keep the commandments of God. Only as an individual can you repent. Only as an individual can you qualify for the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. And when your wife is sealed to you, her power and potential will increase yours.

6 I belong to a wonderful priesthood quorum. We enjoy a precious brotherhood. We pray together; we serve together. We teach, love, and sustain one another. The Twelve come from different backgrounds—business, education, law, and science. But not one was called to serve because of that background. In fact, all men called to positions of priesthood responsibility are chosen because of who they are and who they can become.^c

a Eph. 4:5.

b See George Albert Smith, *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, comp. Preston Nibley (1948), 144–45.

c See Matt. 20:16; Matt. 22:14; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 17:14; Alma 13:3, 6, 9; 3 Ne. 12:1; D&C 3:10; D&C 52:1; D&C 95:5; D&C 121:34, 40–46.

isted in many dispensations, such as those of Adam, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, the meridian of time, the Jaredites, the Nephites, and others. All previous dispensations were limited in time, as each ended in apostasy. They were also limited to small segments of planet Earth. In contrast, our dispensation—the dispensation of the fulness of times—will not be limited in time or place. Globally, it will host a whole, complete, and perfect union, welding together dispensations, keys, powers, and glories from the days of Adam even to the present time.ⁱ

15 The Aaronic Priesthood was restored May 15, 1829, by John the Baptist; the Melchizedek Priesthood was restored shortly thereafter by Peter, James, and John.^j Other heavenly messengers conveyed specific keys of the priesthood. Moroni held keys of the Book of Mormon.^k Moses brought keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the ten tribes.^l Elias conveyed keys of the restoration of all things,^m including the Abrahamic cove-

nant.ⁿ And Elijah conferred keys of the sealing authority.^o

16 You know something about keys. In your pocket there might be a key to your home or car. Priesthood keys, on the other hand, are intangible and invisible. They “switch on” the authority of the priesthood. Some keys even convey power to bind in heaven as well as on earth.^p

17 Joseph Smith conferred priesthood keys upon all of the Twelve.^q Those keys have been transferred to successive leaders. Today President Gordon B. Hinckley holds authority for every restored key held by “all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation.”^r

18 With this doctrinal history in mind, it is clear that one cannot buy the priesthood. Scripture declares that “no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”^s

19 To bear the priesthood means you have a personal responsi-

i See D&C 128:18.

j See JS—H 1:72; D&C 27:8, 12.

k See D&C 27:5.

l See D&C 110:11.

m See D&C 27:6.

n See D&C 110:12.

o See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 337–38; see also D&C 27:9; D&C 110:13–16; D&C 128:21.

p See Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18; D&C 124:93; D&C 127:7; D&C 128:8, 10; D&C 132:46.

q See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 3:154–56.

r D&C 112:31; see also D&C 128:18.

s Heb. 5:4.

when you honor your wife. A husband's foremost priority should be the care of his wife. Be true to her. Don't ever allow your eyes to gaze upon pornography or let your language be lewd. The very choices made by reason of agency limit one's agency in the future. You cannot exercise agency and escape accountability and responsibility for each choice.

25 Never forget that "the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven. ... [This power] cannot be controlled nor handled [except] upon the principles of righteousness."^a If we abuse that power to cover our sins, to gratify our pride, to pursue vain ambition, or to control others in any degree of unrighteousness, we lose both the authority and the power of the priesthood.^b

26 Brethren, serve with gentleness, long-suffering, kindness, meekness, love unfeigned, pure knowledge, and charity toward all.^c Then the "doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon [your] soul as the dews from heaven."^d

27 Please know of our love and gratitude for each of you. We thank you for your faith, your service, and your sustaining strength. May you, your loved ones, and your posterity be blessed by your righteous pursuit of power in the priesthood.

28 God lives. Jesus is the Christ. He directs His Church through His prophets and apostles. I so testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 17

Roots and Branches - Delivered in the Saturday Afternoon Session of the April 2004 General Conference.

EACH time we experience security checks at an airport, we are asked to show photographic identification. We understand the need and comply, knowing that it is necessary and helpful. But I submit my photograph as evidence of my true identity somewhat apologetically. If someone were to examine my passport photo and say that it's a good likeness, I would know it's time to go home. But I feel apologetic for another reason. The photo shows nothing about my roots and branches. They are important parts of my identity. Could you tell much about a tree by looking at a photograph of only its trunk? No! Roots and branches of trees provide much more information. So it is with us both personally and with our religion.

Personal Roots

2 Personal roots are really important. Sister Nelson and I know a family that proudly display evidence of their ancestral roots with large paintings portrayed on the outside walls of

a D&C 121:36.

b See D&C 121:37.

c See 2 Thes. 1:3; D&C 121:41–42.

d D&C 121:45.

their home. Beautiful artwork there depicts distinctive patterns of identity for both of their family lines.

3 When relatives gather around a new baby, one inevitably hears comments such as “She has red hair, just like her mother” or “He has a dimple in his chin, just like his father.”

4 Each of us has ancestral roots. Each man has received some genetic markers that are just like those of his father. Each woman has received some genetic markers that are just like those of her mother.^e In addition, each of us has received other genetic gifts that make us unique.

5 Because we have a spirit as well as a physical body,^f we also have spiritual roots that go way back. They shape our values, our beliefs, and our faith. Spiritual roots guide our commitment to the ideals and teachings of the Lord.^g

6 Children have a natural desire to emulate the examples of their parents. Generally, boys incline toward the attitudes and work of their fathers; girls aspire to live as their mothers do. And you

parents, don’t be too surprised if, sometime along the way, your children become better than you.

7 Personal roots, physical and spiritual, merit gratitude. For my life, I am grateful to my Creator as well as to my dear parents and progenitors. I try to honor them by learning of them and serving them in the temple.^h Parents have a responsibility to share knowledge of their personal roots with their children and grandchildren. Learning their history together unifies a family.

Religious Roots

8 We also need to know the roots of our religion. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, though officially organized in 1830, has been restored from roots that also go way back. Truths from previous dispensations have now been gathered, amplified, and clarified.ⁱ For us as parents and teachers, we have an excellent teaching resource in the Articles of Faith. Written by the Prophet Joseph Smith,^j this document refers to many doctrines that undergird our religion. It mentions the Godhead, moral agency, the Fall of Adam, and the Atonement of

e In addition to the genetic information each child receives from his or her mother and father, a small set of mitochondrial DNA comes from the mother to both her son(s) and her daughter(s).

f See D&C 88:15.

g See Eph. 3:14–19; Col. 2:6–7.

h See D&C 128:15

i See D&C 128:18.

j The Articles of Faith were included in a letter to Mr. John Wentworth, editor and proprietor of a Chicago newspaper; first published in the Times and Seasons, 1 Mar. 1842; see Ensign, July 2002, 26–32.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

Jesus Christ. It spells out the foundational principles and ordinances of faith, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. It addresses matters of priesthood authority and organization. It notes as sacred scripture the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, and an open canon of continuing revelation from God. And it proclaims the actuality of the gathering of Israel.^k What a treasure-house of truth is this precious document as we teach of our religious roots.

9 Other revealed doctrines at the root of our religion include the Creation, the Resurrection, the law of tithing, prayer, and the consummate blessings of the temple. As we teach of these doctrines, we realize how very firm is our foundation. As we apply these doctrines in our lives, the roots of our religion become part of our own spiritual strength.

10 Converts need to strengthen their religious roots. President Gordon B. Hinckley has taught that each convert needs a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing by the good word of God. With such roots to support them and their children, precious converts become pioneers for their own families to follow.

11 Unfortunately, some members of faithful families drift away because their own roots are weak. My heart aches when I learn of those who turn from the faith of their pioneer predecessors. One professionally acclaimed friend and gifted son of faithful ancestors has allowed one doctrinal doubt to dim his view of the fullness of the gospel and drive an ever-widening wedge between him and the temple. Another acquaintance, a sweet sister with illustrious pioneer progenitors, now politely states that she is not a “practicing member” of the Church.

12 Have these dear people become so fashionable that they have forgotten their roots? Have they forgotten what the Restoration really means and what it cost? Have they forgotten their pioneer heritage and their lineage as declared in patriarchal blessings? For a few fleeting favors now, would they forget and forfeit eternal life? Oblivious to the roots that have blessed them, they no longer enjoy the spiritual sparkle of Saints engaged in the work of Almighty God.

13 Their noble ancestors “were brought to the knowledge of the truth, ... according to the spirit of revelation and of prophecy, and the power of God.” Their

^k This document also mentions gifts of the Spirit that enlighten lives of members of the Church. It foretells of great events of the latter days, such as the restoration of the ten tribes, the establishment of Zion, and the millennial reign of Jesus Christ upon a renewed earth. It includes principles of freedom of worship, tolerance, and obedience to law. And it concludes with an expression pertaining to our perception of life and of lofty personal ideals.

goodness, [and] faith.”^p President Harold B. Lee once said: “Beautiful, luscious fruit does not grow unless the roots of the ... tree have been planted in rich, fertile soil and unless due care is given to proper pruning, cultivation, and irrigation. So likewise the luscious fruits of virtue and chastity, honesty, temperance, integrity, and fidelity are not to be found growing in that individual whose life is not founded on a firm testimony of the truths of the gospel and of the life and the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.”^q

21 The fruits of the gospel are delicious to those who obey the Lord. We pursue an education knowing that “the glory of God is intelligence.”^r The blessing of tithing comes by paying tithing.^s Rewards are reaped from the Word of Wisdom by obedience to it.^t We learn from experience borne of gospel living that prayer, honoring the Sabbath day, and partaking of the sacrament protect us from the bondage of sin. We shun pornography and immorality, knowing that the peace of personal purity can be ours only as we live according to the laws of the gospel.

22 The Lord gave this promise and commandment: “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. ... Abide in me, and I in you. ... I am the vine, ye are the branches.”^u Simply summarized, life’s greatest blessings will come to us if our love of Jesus Christ is rooted deeply in our hearts.^v

Testimony

23 Personal identity is much more than a passport photograph. We also have roots and branches. Divinity is rooted in each of us. “We all are the work of [our Creator’s] hand.”^w We are eternal beings. In premortal realms, we brethren were fore-ordained for our priesthood responsibilities.^x Before the foundation of the world, women were prepared that they may bear children and glorify God.^y

24 We came to this mortal experience to acquire a body, to be tried and tested.^z We are to form families and be sealed in holy temples, with joy and loving relationships that endure eternally. To these everlasting truths, we are personally rooted.

25 Branches of our families and of the gospel bear fruit to en-

p Gal. 5:22.
q Stand Ye in Holy Places (1974), 218–19.
r D&C 93:36.
s See Mal. 3:10; 3 Ne. 24:10.
t See D&C 89:18–21.
u John 15:3–5.
v See Eph. 3:17.
w Isa. 64:8.
x See Alma 13:1–5.
y See D&C 132:63.
z “Even as Abraham” (D&C 101:4). See also Heb. 11:17.

rich our lives. God’s work and His glory—“to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man”—can become ours.^a We can dwell with Him and with our families forever. Those blessings will be granted to the faithful in His own way and time.^b

26 God lives. Jesus is the Christ. Joseph Smith is the revelator and prophet of this last dispensation. The Book of Mormon is true. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s kingdom established once again upon the earth. President Gordon B. Hinckley is His living prophet. If rooted to these truths, the fruit of our branches will remain.^c I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 18

Senior Missionaries and the Gospel - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Sessions of the October 2004 General Conference.

GRATEFULLY we welcome Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf and Elder David A. Bednar to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Prayer-

fully and unitedly we will serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Assignments this year have taken me to many nations of the earth. In some of those countries, the Church is relatively new. No matter where I go, I meet our missionaries. They are remarkably resilient and ever effective. They give visible and tangible evidence that the Church of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fulness. It was He who said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”^d This commandment throbs in the heart of every missionary who testifies of Jesus Christ and teaches His message.

3 When we think of missionaries, we generally picture in our minds young men with shirts and ties and young women dressed modestly. But along with them are marvelous senior missionaries who have answered the pleadings of prophets and apostles for more missionary couples.^e

4 I express gratitude for our

a Moses 1:39.

b See D&C 88:68. When any blessing is obtained from God, “it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:21).

c See John 15:16.

d Mark 16:15; see also Matt. 28:19; Morm. 9:22; D&C 42:58; D&C 68:8; D&C 80:1; D&C 84:62; D&C 112:28.

e For example, see Gordon B. Hinckley, “There Must Be Messengers,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 2–5; see also L. Tom Perry, “Go Ye Therefore, and Teach All Nations,” *Ensign*, May 1984, 78–80; M. Russell Ballard, “Missionary Couples,” *Tambuli*, May 1990, 16–21; *Ensign*, June 1988, 8–12; Robert D. Hales, “Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 28–31; *Ensign*, May 2001, 25–27.

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senior missionaries. They are young in spirit, wise, and willing to work. They even tolerate remarks from their fun-filled children who might change President Spencer W. Kimball's plea "Lengthen your stride" to "Hasten your shuffle."^f These dear members are willing to serve and strengthen the lives of others.^g Even if these seniors don't know the local language, their accomplishments are great and their spirit of sacrifice is precious.^h

*Examples of Senior
Missionary Service*

5 For example, I think of Elder Lloyd Poelman and his wife, Sister Catherine Poelman. Parents of 9 grown children and grandparents of 20 grandchildren, they now serve in a remote part of Chile, working in a small branch. They make frequent visits among less-active members and with families recently converted to the Church. These visits provide opportunity for the Poelmans to read with those families and bear testimony of temple blessings. In their

f See "Serving as Couple Missionaries," *Ensign*, Sept. 1997, 15.

g See Luke 22:32.

h Concerns pertaining to a mission may be considered in four categories:

(1) Finances: Any expenses over and beyond what would have been needed at home may be subsidized by children, friends, quorums, or by other members of the family.

(2) Fear: Mature missionaries need not fear tracting or learning a new language. Much can be contributed using talents already acquired. Missionaries can venture into another language situation knowing that they will learn what they need to know without demanding fluency of themselves. They will learn some of their mission language and find joy in using each new expression.

(3) Fitness: While a risk-free environment cannot be guaranteed either at home or in the mission field, appropriate provisions can be made for proper diet and exercise. Routine needs for physical care can generally be met in the mission field. In the event of an emergency, evacuation, if advisable, is possible.

(4) Families: Children and grandchildren of senior missionaries will be blessed because of their service. To a missionary the Lord provided this promise: "Behold, you have had many afflictions because of your family; nevertheless, I will bless you and your family, yea, your little ones; and the day cometh that they will believe and know the truth and be one with you in my church" (D&C 31:2). As those "little ones" pray for their missionary parents, they will be drawn toward the Lord as well as to parents or grandparents.

9 Earlier this year Elder Douglas L. Callister and I were in Kiev, capital city of Ukraine. We were there to create the first stake in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We were pleased to note that the Kiev Ukraine District was well prepared to become a stake—fully organized and ready to take its place among the stakes of Zion. There we also met with the missionaries, among whom were several stalwart senior couples. We listened attentively to their expressions.

10 We remember the account of Elder Rudi and Sister Eva Hegewald, who grew up in what was then known as East Germany. Speaking with a slight and sweet German accent, they recounted the difficult days of World War II and the subsequent Soviet occupation. They spoke of their many deprivations. Finding the Lord's true Church and later immigrating to America were counted as treasured blessings. The ensuing years brought them five healthy children, along with spiritual and financial increase. They felt that serving a mission would be a good way for them to show gratitude to the Lord. They expressed a deep desire to serve in Eastern Europe. Their call came to serve in the Ukraine Kiev Mission. Elder and Sister Hegewald write: "Now, close to the end of our mission in the land of our former enemy, we are thankful for the opportunity to teach and

love the Ukrainian people. As we have served the Lord, our souls have been healed and our family has become more united. We have had a truly remarkable and satisfying experience and have seen many small miracles."^k

11 Notice that all three couples wrote of their blessings. Another couple tells of blessings that come from missionary service. They wrote: "Good people replaced our parenting functions better than we. ... If a family problem has not yielded to prayer and fasting, a mission might be considered."^l

12 No senior missionary finds it convenient to leave. Neither did Joseph or Brigham or John or Wilford. They had children and grandchildren too. They loved their families not one whit less, but they also loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him. Someday we may meet these stalwarts who helped to establish this dispensation. Then will we rejoice that we did not seek the shadows when a call to missionary service came from the prophet, even in the autumn years of our lives.

13 At general conference in October 1925, President Heber J. Grant issued a clarion call for "men of mature years and sound judgment, who have had experience in the preaching of the gospel, ... to go forth and labor in the mission field."^m

k Personal letter, received 1 July 2004.

l Letter addressed to Elder Dallin H. Oaks from Dr. Brent and Carol Petersen, dated 27 June 2004.

m In Conference Report, Oct. 1925, 10.

*Limitations Imposed by
Age and Health*

19 As I extol the work of senior missionaries, I realize that there are many more who would like to serve but are not able to do so. Limitations imposed by age or by poor health deserve realistic appraisal, as do the important needs of family members. When desire burns within yet such limitations exist, you can extend your service through others. They can be your arms and legs, and you can provide needed funds. Still others can contribute time and talents as live-at-home missionaries.^s Each will be pleasing to the Lord, and each will receive His praise.

The Gospel

20 All of us may preach the gospel by precept and example. The word gospel means “good news.” The good news is the Lord Jesus Christ and His message of salvation.^t Jesus equated the gospel with both His mission and with His ministry in mortality. In His mission statement, Jesus said:

21 “This is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

22 “And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross.”^u

23 The Savior’s mortal mission we know as the Atonement.

24 The Savior’s mortal ministry includes everything else that He did—His teachings, expressions of love, attention to ordinances, patterns of prayer, perseverance, and more. He lived to be our Exemplar, which He also equated to the gospel in His ministerial statement. “This is my gospel,” He said, “... for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do.”^v Thus, faith; repentance; baptism by water, fire, and of the Holy Ghost; the gathering of the elect; and enduring to the end are all part of the gospel.^w All of us can emulate the Lord’s example, regardless of age, status, or location.

25 As one among the “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world,”^x I declare that He is the Son of the living God, our atoning Savior and Redeemer. This is His Church, restored in these latter days to fulfill its divine destiny. His prophet today is President Gordon B. Hinckley. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

s Additional information can be found on the Church Web site www.lds.org under “Service Opportunities for Senior Missionaries” (click on “Other Resources” on the home page, then on “Church-Service Missionary Opportunities”).

t See Bible Dictionary, “Gospels,” 682–83.

u 3 Ne. 27:13–14.

v 3 Ne. 27:21.

w See D&C 33:6–12; D&C 39:6.

x D&C 107:23.

titatively and qualitatively.

7 More than 50 years ago we were young adults, as you are now. This photograph was taken at that time. We were both university students. [A photograph of them as a young couple was shown.] I was a sophomore premedical student; she was a freshman on a scholarship. We were very much in love. I think you can sense that in the photo. Brethren, you can't blame me for being in love with her, can you?

8 Thank you for showing the photo. We really don't look like that anymore. But to me, Sister Nelson is now even more beautiful!

9 My career as a doctor of medicine has been completed. All of my many surgical operations have been done. Likewise, Sister Nelson has had extremely demanding responsibilities as a mother of 10 children. I forgot to mention that our first nine children were all little girls. Our home was like a girls' dormitory, until our one and only son came along. Poor boy! He didn't know who his real mother was for his first couple of years.

10 Now Sister Nelson's life has matured. She has taken on a less rigorous role as grandmother of our grandchildren, many of whom are here this evening. Would all members of our family please stand for a moment? I would like the cameramen to focus upon you so others can see you as well. We are blessed with 56 grandchildren and 14

great-grandchildren. Our newest grandchild is here—only two weeks old. Those numbers are likely to increase.

11 I considered showing photos of each of our 106 family members. Then I thought of the grandmother traveling in an airplane beside a stranger. Her animated conversation about her family led to her asking, "Did I show you a picture of my grandchildren?"

12 Her seatmate replied, "No! And thank you!"

13 I won't show you any more pictures. That wouldn't help anyway. The beauty of our family is much more than physical. It is spiritual. No two members are alike. Each is unique and special.

14 What is most important to Sister Nelson and me now? That we are husband and wife, wedded for time and all eternity. Our children are born in the covenant and are sealed to us forever. What joy that knowledge brings!

15 When we married in the temple, we didn't know many scriptures. But we did know Matthew 6:33: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." As mentioned earlier, that became the lodestar for every decision we made together. Only years later did we learn that the Joseph Smith Translation of that verse was even more compelling and clear: "Seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom

pane and asked, “Do you think we will ever be able to afford a lamp?”

20 Brethren, I suggest that you look for a companion with long-range vision, like Sister Nelson. To each sister I suggest that you motivate your husband to become all he can become, even if it takes a long time.

21 We have tasted of life’s successes and sorrows. We have dealt with disappointment, disease, and death among our children. But death cannot divide families sealed in the temple. That period of separation is only temporary. Thanks to the Lord’s great plan of happiness, we can all face the future with great faith and optimism.

22 Sister Nelson and I have learned that life is not a one-act play. There really is a premortal period. And there really is life after death. Premortal and mortal portions are but preludes to our postmortal life. Knowledge of the three degrees of glory, as revealed to prophets, gives us a

glimpse of our postmortal potential.^e Eternal life is glorious and well worth the quest.

23 The premortal period has important doctrinal underpinnings that fortify our faith. Then, the everlasting gospel was set in place. Before the foundation of the earth, the plan of salvation was prepared.^f It included the glorious possibility of a divine inheritance for us in the kingdom of God.^g

24 Central to that plan of salvation is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. In premortal councils He was foreordained by His Father to atone for our sins and break the bands of physical and spiritual death.^h Jesus declared: “I . . . was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. . . . In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name”.ⁱ Later, Paul added that the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone”.^j

e See 1 Corinthians 15:40–41; D&C 76:50–113; 88:17–32; JST, 1 Corinthians 15:40.

f See 1 Nephi 10:18; Mosiah 15:19; Alma 12:25, 30; 18:39; 22:13–14; 42:26; D&C 76:12–13.

g To people of the Old World, the Lord said, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). People of ancient America were also taught that “they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world” (2 Nephi 9:18; see also Ether 4:19).

h See John 17:5, 24; 1 Peter 1:19–20; Mosiah 4:6–7; 18:13; 3 Nephi 26:3–5; D&C 93:7–9; Moses 5:57; JST, Genesis 5:43; 14:30–31.

i Ether 3:14

j Ephesians 2:20

holy cause.^z The manner of conferring the priesthood was to come “down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, . . . even . . . before the foundation of the earth”.^{aa}

29 The Lord teaches that in order to obtain the highest [degree of celestial glory], a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.^{ab}

30 Sisters were given a special gift. They were enabled, according to the Lord, “to multiply and replenish the earth, . . . and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, . . . for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; . . . herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified”.^{ac} Think of the majesty of that decree. When a mother worthily bears and cares for a child, she not only helps the

earth answer the end of its creation,^{ad} she glorifies God!

31 We, as children of the covenant, were chosen to serve the Savior. The Apostle Paul taught that the Lord “hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world”.^{ae} As part of that foreordination, God established conditions that allowed us to receive His blessings. Those blessings were to be conferred upon obedience to the laws upon which His blessings are predicated.^{af}

32 One of those conditions pertains to our need to overcome worldly temptations.^{ag} Before the world was formed, opposition was allowed to come from Satan.^{ah} He has always fought against the Savior’s sacred work and will continue to do so. He has opposed the prophets and the scriptures of the Restoration. And in our day Satan has chosen to wage war directly at the heart of God’s plan, which is the family. Signs of his attacks are all about us. The proportion of

z See Luke 11:49–51.

aa Abraham 1:3

ab D&C 131:2–3

ac D&C 132:63

ad See D&C 49:16–17.

ae Ephesians 1:4 See also Ephesians 1:5. Paul also taught that God “hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, . . . according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9; see also D&C 38:1–4; Abraham 3:22–26). It is important to note that the Book of Mormon serves “to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord” (Book of Mormon title page).

af See D&C 130:20–21; 132:5, 11–12.

ag See 2 Nephi 2:11–13.

ah See JST, Revelation 12:6–8.

mature adults who are married is declining,^{ai} as are birth rates.^{aj} The age at which couples get married is increasing,^{ak} as are the numbers of unmarried couples.^{al} Immorality and pornography are pervasive and pernicious.^{am}

33 With such spiritual sickness all about us, it takes real faith in the Lord and in His gospel to withstand attacks from the adversary. I urge you to deny yourselves of all ungodliness, both physical and spiritual.^{an} Keep a firm grasp on the iron rod of the gospel!

34 Brothers and sisters, before the world was, the gospel was central to God's eternal plan. It is an everlasting gospel—now restored in its fulness.^{ao} With such a foundation, this Church will not

be moved from its place,^{ap} even through the Millennium.^{aq} The gospel of Jesus Christ is a sure foundation upon which we can build our individual faith. Some of us are weak; some are strong. We can waffle "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed",^{ar} or we can anchor ourselves with cords of spiritual steel, rooted and grounded to the eternal truths of the gospel.^{as}

35 Such faith will not prevent life's problems but will help when things go wrong. Bad things happen to good people. Accidents occur. Some married couples may not be blessed with children. Others may not marry in this life, or they may find themselves married to one who fails to keep the commandments of God. The Lord is aware of these circumstances. He will be-

ai See David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America*, 2004 (Rutgers University: The National Marriage Project, June 2004), 16–18 (<http://marriage.rutgers.edu>).

aj See Popenoe and Whitehead, *The State of Our Unions*, 21–23.

ak Jason Fields, "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2003," U.S. Census Bureau, November 2004, 12–13 (www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p20-553.pdf).

al See Popenoe and Whitehead, *The State of Our Unions*, 20–21.

am B. J. Sigismund, "XXX-ceptable," *Newsweek* Web Exclusive, 2 July 2003 (www.keepmedia.com/pubs/Newsweek/2003/07/02/309790). Pornography is big business in the United States, generating a reported \$12 billion annually (see www.internetfilterreview.com/internet-pornography-statistics.html).

an See Moroni 10:32; JST, Matthew 16:26.

ao See Acts 3:20–21.

ap See Daniel 2:28, 31–44; D&C 65:2–6; 124:45.

aq See Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 672.

ar James 1:6

as See Ephesians 3:17–19; Colossians 2:6–7; Helaman 5:12. Remember that a wise man builds his house upon a rock and not upon shifting sand (see Matthew 7:24–27).

stow all the blessings that He has in store for His faithful children—in His own way and in His own time.^{at} Be righteous, be patient, keep an eternal perspective, and you will be protected.^{au}

36 Through the years you will note that apostles and prophets teach the rule. We don't teach exceptions to the rule. Exceptions are left to individual agency and accountability. The Lord knows we live in an imperfect world. He knows it is "ripening in iniquity".^{av} His judgments will be fair, just, and merciful.

37 A decade ago the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, foreseeing this spiritual slide, prepared a proclamation to the world on the family. It is even more relevant today. We proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

38 All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal,

and eternal identity and purpose.

39 The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

40 We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

41 Now, dear friends, note this warning:

42 Individuals who violate covenants of chastity, . . . or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.^{aw}

43 If you will heed that proclamation, brothers and sisters, you

at See D&C 130:20–21.

au The limits of one's perspective should be eternal in scope. Paul taught, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19).

av D&C 18:6

aw "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," Ensign, November 1995, 102

will be blessed. God lives and loves us.^a With His help, we can foster our faith and families. We can qualify for this promise from the Lord: "If a man marry a wife by my word, . . . and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, . . . [they] shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, . . . powers, [and] dominions".^b

44 I testify that your faith and your families will bring you great joy, here and hereafter. God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored. We are led by His prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley. Upon each of you beloved young adults of the Church, I leave my love and blessing, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 20

Now Is The Time To Prepare - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the April 2005 General Conference.

MY dear brethren and sisters, since our last general conference, my sweetheart—my beloved wife for 59 years—passed away. While I was at home on a rare Saturday with no assignment, we had worked together. She had washed our clothing. I had helped to carry it, fold it, and put it in place. Then while we were sitting on the sofa, holding hands, enjoying a program on television, my precious Dantzel

slipped peacefully into eternity. Her passing came suddenly and unexpectedly. Just four days earlier, our doctor's report at a routine checkup indicated that her laboratory tests were good. After my efforts to revive her proved fruitless, feelings of shock and sorrow overwhelmed me. My closest friend, angel mother of our 10 children, grandmother of our 56 grandchildren, had been taken from us.

2 Dantzel was not only a loved and loving companion. She was a teacher: by her noble example, she taught faith, virtue, obedience, and mercy. She taught me how to listen and to love. Because of her, I know all the blessings that can come to a husband, father, and grandfather.

3 With deep gratitude, I acknowledge the tremendous outpouring of love from dear friends across the world. Countless letters, calls, cards, and other messages have been sent. All tributes expressed loving admiration for her and sympathy for us whom she left behind. Those messages came in such large numbers that we, regretfully, were unable to respond to all of them individually. May I thank each and all for your great kindness toward us. Thank you so very, very much. Your expressions have brought much comfort through this time of heartache for our family. We really love dear Dantzel! We miss her!

a See 1 Nephi 11:16–17.
b D&C 132:19

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4 From her sudden departure we can learn a very important lesson: now is the time to prepare to meet God. Tomorrow may be too late. Prophets through the ages have so declared: "This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God. ... Do not procrastinate the day of your repentance."^c

The Need to Prepare Now

5 Yet many do procrastinate.^d A prophet warns us: "Ye cannot say ... that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will ... possess your body in that eternal world."^e Another prophet adds, "He that is filthy shall be filthy still; and he that is righteous shall be righteous still."^f

6 Great is the knowledge that "whatever principle of intelligence we attain ... in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection."^g From the Prophet Joseph Smith we also learn that "God has ... a time ... appointed ... when He will bring all His subjects, who have obeyed His voice

and kept His commandments, into His celestial rest. This rest^h is of such perfection and glory, that man has need of a preparation before he can, according to the laws of that kingdom, enter it and enjoy its blessings. ... God has given certain laws to the human family, which, if observed, are sufficient to prepare them to inherit this rest."ⁱ Sister Nelson was so prepared!

7 That glorious goal seems mighty distant if one is discouraged by worldly trouble and gloom. I remember when a friend having a difficult day exclaimed, "Oh, why was I ever born?" God's plan answers his question. We came into this life to acquire a physical body. We may fall in love and be married. We may have children and experience the trials of mortal life. (Please forgive me for mentioning children and the trials of life in the same breath. I sense that they are both part of our growing process.) The Church was restored—the earth was created—so that those families could be sealed in holy temples. Otherwise, the whole earth would

c Alma 34:32–33; see also Alma 13:27.

d Scripture admonishes each of us to "harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, now is the time and the day of your salvation; ... therefore, if ye will repent ..., immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you" (Alma 34:31).

e Alma 34:34; emphasis added.

f Morm. 9:14; see also 2 Ne. 9:15–16; D&C 88:27–32, 34–35; D&C 130:2.

g D&C 130:18.

h In the New Testament, the term rest has been translated from the Greek feminine noun *katapausis*, which means "the heavenly blessedness in which God dwells." Thus, rest connotes an element of glory.

i Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 54.

be “utterly wasted.”^j

8 We came to be tried, to be tested, and to choose.^k Our decisions determine our destiny. We are “free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator ..., or to choose captivity and death.”^l Those who choose the Lord’s way will likely endure persecution.^m But their reward is certain. Those who prove faithful “shall inherit the kingdom of God, ... and their joy shall be full forever.”ⁿ Sister Nelson has earned that reward. What comfort that brings to me and our family!

9 Trials and tests apply to rich and poor alike. Years ago, I was asked to perform an operation upon a very wealthy man. A surgical biopsy confirmed that he had an advanced cancer that had spread throughout his body. As I reported this news, his immediate response was to rely upon his wealth. He would go anywhere or do anything to treat his condition. He thought he could buy his way back to health. But he soon passed away. Someone asked, “How much wealth did he leave?” The answer, of course, was, “All of it!”

10 His priorities were set upon things of the world. His lad-

der of success had been leaning against the wrong wall. I think of him when I read this scripture: “Behold, your days of probation are past; ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation until it is ... too late.”^o

11 In radiant contrast, Sister Nelson prepared throughout her life for the time when she would return to God. She lived each day as though it were her last. She cherished every hour, knowing that time on earth is precious.

12 Some people live as if there were no day of reckoning. Others waste today’s time with a disabling fear of tomorrow or a paralyzing preoccupation over mistakes of yesterday. Each of us might well heed the words of a poet, as posted on a sundial:

*13 The shadow by my finger cast
Divides the future from the past:
Before it, sleeps the unborn hour,
In darkness, and beyond thy power:
Behind its unreturning line,
The vanished hour, no longer thine:
One hour alone is in thy hands,—
The NOW on which the shadow
stands.^p*

How Do We Prepare?

14 Now is the time. But how do we prepare? Begin with repentance! Scripture declares, “If ye

j See D&C 2:1–3; D&C 138:48; JS—H 1:39.

k See 2 Ne. 9:27; D&C 98:12; Abr. 3:24–26.

l 2 Ne. 2:27.

m See 2 Tim. 3:12.

n 2 Ne. 9:18.

o Hel. 13:38.

p Henry Van Dyke, “The Sun-Dial at Wells College,” in *The Poems of Henry Van Dyke* (1911), 345. Sundial and poem displayed at Wells College, Aurora, New York.

have sought to do wickedly in the days of your probation, then ye are found unclean before the judgment-seat of God; ... no unclean thing can dwell with God.”^q He gave this simple rule: “Except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.”^r

15 Now is the time to show reverent respect for one’s physical body. It serves as the tabernacle for one’s spirit throughout all eternity. Physical appetites are to be controlled by the will of one’s spirit. We are to “deny [our]selves of all ungodliness.”^s We are to “forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, [and] live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.”^t

16 Because of frequent and frightening calamities in the world, some people doubt the existence of God. But, in fact, He is trying to help us. He revealed these words: “How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunderings, and ... tempests, ... earthquakes, ... great hailstorms,

... famines and pestilences of every kind, ... and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not!”^u

17 His hope for us is eternal life. We qualify for it by obedience to covenants and ordinances of the temple—for ourselves, our families, and our ancestors. We cannot be made perfect without them.^v We cannot wish our way into the presence of God. We are to obey the laws upon which those blessings are predicated.^w

18 God’s plan is fair. Even those “who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God.”^x His plan is also merciful. He “will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.”^y

19 Now is the time to enroll our names among the people of God. This we do by paying tithing. He tithes His people to bless them.^z Sister Nelson taught that lesson to our family, over and over again.^{aa}

q 1 Ne. 10:21.

r D&C 132:21; see also D&C 88:36–39.

s Moro. 10:32; see also 2 Ne. 2:21; Morm. 9:28.

t D&C 98:11.

u D&C 43:25.

v See D&C 128:15, 18.

w See D&C 130:20–21.

x D&C 137:7.

y D&C 137:9.

z See Mal. 3:10; 3 Ne. 24:10. Tithing also prepares people against a future day of vengeance and burning (see D&C 85:3).

aa See Spencer J. Condie, Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle (2003), 104.

CHAPTER 21

The Mission and Ministry of the Savior - Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met with a member of the Church magazines staff to discuss the calling of an Apostle and the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Here is a portion of their discussion. Published in the June 2005 Ensign Magazine.

CHURCH Magazines: What is the difference between the office of Apostle and that of other General Authorities?

2 Elder Nelson: There are five offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood: elder, high priest, patriarch, Seventy, and Apostle. So, first of all, it's an ordination to a different office. There is a quorum of the Apostles. There are also quorums of the Seventy. One responsibility that Seventies and Apostles have in common is that they are each called to be special witnesses of Jesus Christ in all the world. The best way to answer the question is to refer you to Doctrine and Covenants section 107, which says that the Twelve Apostles, or traveling high council, under the direction of the First Presidency, regulate the affairs of the Church in all the nations, and they call on the Seventy to assist them.^a The Lord is pretty clear about the difference.

3 Church Magazines: In all the world—that must involve a great deal of travel.

4 Elder Nelson: That's implicit in the name Apostle. It comes from the Greek apóstolos, meaning "one sent forth." So the Lord called His special witnesses and asked them to go into all the world.

5 Church Magazines: What is the most difficult aspect of your calling?

6 Elder Nelson: As the Church grows—now in the vicinity of 12 million people—and with the turnover, with bishops in office less than five years on average, our great concern will always be imposed by the growth of the Church. How can we have our bishops well trained? How can we keep the doctrine pure? How can we keep apostasy from working into the traditions of different wards and branches? That's our great concern.

7 Church Magazines: What is the most rewarding aspect of your calling?

8 Elder Nelson: Clearly the most rewarding aspect is on an individual plane. When you see what obedience to the principles of the gospel does in the lives of people, it is so thrilling. For example, in West Africa, where those dear Saints have lived for so many years without the hope of a temple, we now have a temple in Ghana. To see the difference in the lives of those people, the happiness in the families, the hope and light that come into their lives—there's nothing quite like that.

a see D&C 107:23–26

celed out so partially. I think we need to learn a lesson from the Lord Himself who taught us how to pray. In the Lord's Prayer He said: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven".^c If we can train ourselves to pray to God that we might conform to His will rather than have Him conform to our will, that problem will disappear. It's a matter of learning who is the Father and who is the son or the daughter. You pray to be consonant with the will of God and to let your life be consonant with His will and direction for you. Maybe that means you have to suffer through a death or an illness in the family in order to get the growth and the experience that will be to your eternal advantage. Remember who you are when you pray and to whom you're praying. Blessings are always granted upon obedience to the law upon which those blessings are predicated. I learned in doing surgery that all the prayers in the world could be undone by a single mistake because blessings are predicated upon obedience to laws. Therefore, if you really want a certain blessing, you'd better find out what the laws are that govern that blessing and then work on becoming obedient to those laws.^d

17 Church Magazines: What would you want every member of the

Church to know about the Savior?

18 Elder Nelson: As I go around to visit the members of the Church in stake conferences and regional conferences, often I ask them what they know about the life of the Savior. How can you describe what you know about the Savior in a word or two? And maybe I don't phrase the question very well, but quite often their answers are rather nebulous. I've learned that generally people in the world do not understand who the Lord is, what His mission was, or what His ministry meant. The Lord's mission in mortality was to accomplish the Atonement, which is a gift of immortality to every individual who has ever lived. That is an incredible gift. Part of that mission was to make eternal life a possibility for anyone who would qualify for it. That is a gift conditioned upon obedience to the laws and temple ordinances and covenants. What was His ministry? His ministry was everything else that He did—His miracles, His teachings, His love, His focus on ordinances, His teaching us how to pray. His mission—the Atonement—was uniquely His. Only one was required to do that. He did it once for all. On the other hand, His ministry was to be an example for us. There is no limit to the number of people who can learn to love as He loved, to serve, obey, pray, and endure to the end as He did. We can all

c Matt. 6:9–10

d see D&C 130:20–21

emulate that example. We need to make a clear distinction between the things we can do that the Lord did and the things we need not worry about that the Lord did once for all. If we can understand that, then we can really emulate the Lord in our own lives and follow the example He set for us.

19 Church Magazines: Is there anything else you would like to say to the members of the Church?

20 Elder Nelson: Just to bear my testimony that this is the work of the Lord. We are engaged in His holy service. The Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ, as is the New Testament, as is the Old Testament. But the Book of Mormon is a very special document that teaches us more about the life, the mission, and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ than any other book. I'm so grateful for the Book of Mormon. And I'm very grateful to be led by a living prophet. To have a prophet at the helm of this Church is a wonderful privilege. It is my testimony that we are engaged in the work of the living God in His living Church, the only true and living church upon the face of the earth. And I leave that testimony with you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 22

Keys of the Priesthood - The ninth in a series of articles about the priesthood and its purposes. Published in the October 2005 Ensign Magazine.

KEYS are important and valuable. Most of us carry keys in pockets or purses wherever we go. Other keys are not only important and valuable; they are precious, powerful, and invisible! They have eternal significance. They are the keys of the priesthood.^a

2 The Prophet Joseph Smith taught "the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church are vested in the keys of the kingdom."^b Those keys refer to the right to preside over priesthood authority in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Keys carry the right to preside over a local organization of the Church, such as a stake, a ward or branch, a mission or district, a priesthood quorum, or a temple. Keys are conferred by the laying on of hands by one who holds proper authority and whose authority is known to the Church.^c

3 All the keys of the kingdom of God on earth are held by members of the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The President of the Church—the senior Apostle—presides over the entire

a See Russell M. Nelson, "Keys of the Priesthood," Ensign, Nov. 1987, 36–39.

b Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 21.

c See D&C 42:11.

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Church and is the only person on earth who exercises all the keys in their fulness.^d He delegates authority by conferring or authorizing the conferral of keys upon other bearers of the priesthood in their specific offices and callings.^e

4 Priesthood is the authority of God delegated to man to minister for the salvation of men. “The power of directing these labors constitutes the keys of the Priesthood.”^f We distinguish between holding the priesthood and holding keys of the priesthood. When an individual is given keys, he does not receive additional priesthood. What he has is the right to direct the work of the priesthood.

Preparation and Permission

5 To serve well as one who bears the holy priesthood, one needs both preparation and permission. May I relate a personal experience? Prior to my call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I served as a medical doctor and surgeon. I had earned two doctor’s degrees. I had been certified by two specialty boards. That long preparation had consumed many years, yet the education itself did not allow me to serve the public. Why? Because I needed legal permission.

6 That could be granted only by authorities of the state government and directing boards

of hospitals in which I desired to work. Once officials holding proper authority granted me a license and permission, then I could care for patients who needed surgical relief from their ailments. After legal administrators had exercised their keys, then I could render the service for which I had been prepared.

7 In return, I was accountable to those who granted those privileges. I was required to obey legal and ethical expectations and never abuse the power entrusted to me.

8 Just as the important steps of preparation and permission pertain to medicine (and other professions), they also relate to priesthood service. Those who hold the priesthood—Aaronic and Melchizedek—have authority to render priesthood service. As agents of the Lord, they have the right to perform sacred ordinances of the gospel. Keys authorize the performance of that service.

9 A distinction also exists between priesthood authority and priesthood power. When ordained to an office in the priesthood, one is granted authority. But power comes from exercising that authority in righteousness.^g Thus, although priesthood holders have authority, they must prepare themselves to have power. That they do

d See D&C 132:7.

e See D&C 107:8–9, 91–92; D&C 124:123.

f Joseph F. Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 141.

g See Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Priesthood Responsibility,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 44.

through making themselves personally worthy and through learning and practicing the duties and doctrines of the priesthood.

10 Why do these things matter? Why is the power to act in the name of God so important? Why is it important that bearers of the priesthood prepare to serve with power? Because the priesthood is of eternal significance. The priesthood benefits every man, woman, and child who now lives, who has lived, and who yet will live upon the earth. Those who hold the priesthood need to prepare in order to make the blessings of priesthood power readily available to all of God’s children. Those who hold priesthood keys need to understand how to use those keys wisely and righteously.^h

History of Priesthood Keys

11 Keys and authority of the priesthood can be traced through three periods of history: in ancient days, during the Lord’s mortal ministry, and in modern times.

**Period One:
Ancient Days**

12 Priesthood authority was known anciently, even before

creation of the earth. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity.”ⁱ President Brigham Young (1801–77) added that the priesthood “is the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue for ever and ever.”^j

13 In a premortal realm we existed as spirit children of God. Abraham was one of us. He was told that he was among those chosen before birth to be “rulers” (spiritual leaders).^k Scriptures also relate that the Lord God foreordained after His holy order priests who were prepared from the foundation of the world according to His foreknowledge. Thus, our callings to bear the holy priesthood were portended even before we were born.^l

14 Adam received priesthood authority before the world was formed.^m We know that “the Priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation.”ⁿ The priesthood was conferred through generations from Adam to Moses “through the lineage of their fathers.”^o Referring to prophets of Old Testa-

^h Information regarding priesthood keys is summarized in Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders (1998), 161.

ⁱ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 157.

^j Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young (1997), 125.

^k See Abr. 3:23.

^l See Alma 13:1–5.

^m See Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 157, 167–68; see also D&C 78:16.

ⁿ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 157.

^o D&C 84:15; see also D&C 84:6–17; D&C 107:41–57.

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ment times, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that “all the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood.”^p

Period Two:

The Lord’s Mortal Ministry

15 During His mortal ministry Jesus conferred priesthood upon His Twelve Apostles and revealed the principle of priesthood keys. To His Apostle Peter the Savior said, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”^q The Lord also promised these keys to James and John.^r

16 Within a week of that promise, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a high mountain. There, under the direction of the Lord, keys of the priesthood were bestowed upon those Apostles by Moses and Elijah (also known as Elias).^s

17 The Master reminded His disciples of the source of their authority: “Ye have not chosen

me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.”^t

18 Not long thereafter, the Savior was crucified. Even before the early Apostles completed their labors, the Apostasy began. It occurred, as prophesied, when teachings of men with priesthood keys were rejected and sacred ordinances were defiled.^u

Period Three: Modern Times

19 The restoration of priesthood keys is one of the many miracles of this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.^v As the Prophet taught, “The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent.”^w In 1820 our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith. In May 1829 John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.^x In so doing, he conferred “the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.”^y Shortly thereafter the Prophet and his associate re-

p Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 181.

q Matt. 16:19; see also D&C 128:10.

r See D&C 7:7.

s See Matt. 17:1–5; see also Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 158.

t John 15:16; see also D&C 7:7.

u Restoration scripture carries a similar prophecy and promise: “If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place” (D&C 124:45).

v See D&C 27:13; D&C 128:18, 20–21.

w Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 157.

x See D&C 13; D&C 27:8; JS—H 1:69, 72.

y D&C 13:1; D&C 107:20; JS—H 1:69; see also D&C 129.

your borrower's success. So you teach and train adequately to protect the user and, at the same time, safeguard your own valuable property. The receiver also has obligations. He or she must know applicable laws and obey them, take care of your property, and report back on how well he or she has used it.

24 The same concepts apply to keys of the priesthood. Temple presidents, mission presidents, stake presidents, district presidents, bishops, branch presidents, and quorum presidents hold priesthood keys of presidency. Their keys control the power of their unit of the Church. That the mission of the Church be accomplished, those leaders not only call and release, but they also train and hold accountable those whom they call. Thus, members who receive priesthood ordinations or callings to serve in the Church have obligations of obedience and accountability.

25 Every priesthood quorum has a president, whether it is a quorum of deacons, teachers, priests, elders, or high priests. Each president holds keys of authority. Quorum activities and opportunities for service are authorized by the president who holds those keys. Although a quorum president holds keys, his counselors do not. Auxiliary presidents do not hold keys.

Counselors and auxiliary presidents serve on assignment from one holding keys who, in turn, has delegated authority for each of them to act.

26 When one is released from his calling in the priesthood, if keys have been conferred, those keys are relinquished, to be given by proper authority to the new leader. When a bishop is released, for example, his priesthood ordination to the office of bishop remains, but his priesthood keys to serve as the bishop of the ward are conferred upon the new bishop.

*Revelation, Loyalty, and
the Privilege of Service*

27 Those who receive the Melchizedek Priesthood are under solemn oath and covenant to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God."^{ah} By so doing, one becomes worthy to receive personal revelation.

28 Loyalty too is vital to receiving power in one's priesthood. Loyalty to him who holds the keys to call and to release will foster unity, and unity is essential to success.^{ai} The Lord so explained when He said, "If ye are not one ye are not mine,"^{aj} and "Israel shall be saved in mine own due time; and by the keys which I have given shall they be led."^{ak}

ah D&C 84:44.

ai See D&C 124:45–46.

aj D&C 38:27.

ak D&C 35:25.

rected His friends to “go ... and tell ... what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, [and] the dead are raised.”^e

5 The books of Matthew,^f Mark,^g Luke,^h and Johnⁱ repeatedly report that Jesus went about preaching the gospel and healing all types of sickness.

6 When the risen Redeemer appeared to the people of ancient America, He mercifully invited those “afflicted in any manner”^j to come unto Him and be healed.

7 Marvelously, His divine authority to heal the sick was conferred upon worthy priesthood bearers in earlier dispensations^k and again in these latter days, when His gospel has been restored in its fulness.^l

Influence of Prayer on Healing

8 We can also access His healing power through prayer. I’ll never forget an experience that Sister Nelson and I had about three decades ago with President Spencer W. Kimball and his beloved Camilla. We were in Hamilton, New Zealand, for a large conference with the Saints. I was not a

General Authority at that time. I had been invited to participate in this and similar meetings in other Pacific Islands while serving as general president of the Sunday School. And as a doctor of medicine, I had attended President and Sister Kimball for many years. I knew each of them very well—inside and out.

9 A Saturday evening cultural program had been prepared for this conference by local youth of the Church. Unfortunately, President and Sister Kimball both became very ill, each with a high fever. After receiving priesthood blessings, they rested at the nearby home of the president of the New Zealand Temple. President Kimball asked his counselor, President N. Eldon Tanner, to preside at the cultural event and to excuse President and Sister Kimball.

10 Sister Nelson went with President and Sister Tanner and other leaders to the event, while President Kimball’s secretary, Brother D. Arthur Haycock, and I watched over our feverish friends.

11 While President Kimball was sleeping, I was quietly reading

e Luke 7:22.

f See Matt. 4:23; Matt. 8:1–3, 5–13, 16–17; Matt. 9:1–8, 32–35; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:14, 34–36; Matt. 15:29–31.

g See Mark 1:32–34, 40–45; Mark 2:1–12; Mark 6:53–56; Mark 7:31–37.

h See Luke 4:40–41; Luke 5:12–15, 17–26; Luke 7:1–10; Luke 11:14; Luke 22:50–51.

i See John 4:46–53.

j 3 Ne. 17:7.

k See Matt. 10:5–8; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17; 4 Ne. 1:5.

l See D&C 84:65–70.

in his room. Suddenly President Kimball was awakened. He asked, "Brother Nelson, what time was this evening's program to begin?"

12 "At seven o'clock, President Kimball."

"What time is it now?"

"It's almost seven," I replied.

President Kimball quickly said, "Tell Sister Kimball we are going!"

13 I checked President Kimball's temperature. It was normal! I took Sister Kimball's temperature. It was also normal!

14 They quickly dressed and got into an automobile. We were driven to the stadium of the Church College of New Zealand. As the car entered the arena, there was a very loud shout that erupted spontaneously. It was most unusual! After we took our seats, I asked Sister Nelson about that sudden sound. She said that when President Tanner began the meeting, he dutifully excused President and Sister Kimball because of illness. Then one of the young New Zealanders was called upon to pray.

15 With great faith, he gave what Sister Nelson described as a rather lengthy but powerful prayer. He so prayed: "We are 3,000 New Zealand youth. We are assembled here, having prepared for six months to sing and dance for Thy prophet. Wilt Thou heal

him and deliver him here!" After the "amen" was pronounced, the car carrying President and Sister Kimball entered the stadium. They were identified immediately, and instantly everyone shouted for joy!^m

16 I had witnessed the healing power of the Lord! I had also witnessed revelation as received and responded to by His living prophet!

17 I recognize that, on occasion, some of our most fervent prayers may seem to go unanswered. We wonder, "Why?" I know that feeling! I know the fears and tears of such moments. But I also know that our prayers are never ignored. Our faith is never unappreciated. I know that an all-wise Heavenly Father's perspective is much broader than is ours. While we know of our mortal problems and pain, He knows of our immortal progress and potential. If we pray to know His will and submit ourselves to it with patience and courage, heavenly healing can take place in His own way and time.

Steps toward Healing

18 Afflictions can come from spiritual as well as physical causes. Alma the Younger remembered that his sin was so painful that he wished to "become extinct both soul and body, that [he] might not be brought to stand in the presence of ... God, to be judged of [his] deeds."ⁿ

m See Spencer J. Condie, Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle (2003), 172-74.

n Alma 36:15.

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At such times, how can we be healed by Him?

19 We can more fully repent! We can become more fully converted! Then the “Son of Righteousness”^o can more fully bless us by His healing hand.

20 Early in His mortal ministry, Jesus announced that He had been sent “to heal the broken-hearted.”^p Wherever He taught them, His pattern was consistent. As I quote His words spoken at four different times and locations, note the pattern.

- To people of the Holy Land, the Lord said that His people “should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”^q
- To people of ancient America, the resurrected Lord extended this invitation: “Return unto me, ... repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you.”^r
- To leaders of His Church, He taught, “Continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent,

and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them.”^s

- Later, during the “restitution of all things,”^t the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith regarding the pioneers, “After their temptations, and much tribulation, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them.”^u

21 The sequence of His pattern is significant. Faith, repentance, baptism, a testimony, and enduring conversion lead to the healing power of the Lord. Baptism is a covenant act—a sign of a commitment and a promise. Testimony develops when the Holy Ghost gives conviction to the earnest seeker of the truth. True testimony fosters faith; it promotes repentance and obedience to God’s commandments. Testimony engenders enthusiasm to serve God and fellow human beings.^v Conversion means “to turn with.”^w Conversion is a turning from the ways of the world to, and staying with, the

o 3 Ne. 25:2; see also Mal. 4:2.

p Luke 4:18; see also Isa. 61:1.

q Matt. 13:15; see also Isa. 6:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:27.

r 3 Ne. 9:13.

s 3 Ne. 18:32.

t Acts 3:21.

u D&C 112:13; see also D&C 124:104.

v Thus keeping the two great commandments: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27).

w Conversion comes from two Latin roots: con, meaning “with,” and vertere, meaning “to turn.”

ways of the Lord. Conversion includes repentance and obedience. Conversion brings a mighty change of heart.^x Thus, a true convert is “born again,”^y walking with a newness of life.^z

22 As true converts, we are motivated to do what the Lord wants us to do^{aa} and to be who He wants us to be.^{ab} The remission of sins, which brings divine forgiveness, heals the spirit.

23 How do we know if we are truly converted? Self-examination tests are available in the scriptures. One measures the degree of conversion prerequisite to baptism.^{ac} Another measures our willingness to serve others. To His disciple Peter, the Lord said, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”^{ad} Willingness to serve and strengthen others stands as a symbol of one’s readiness to be healed.

Magnitude of His Healing

24 John the Baptist declared, “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!”^{ae} What power! Only the Master Healer could take away the sin of the world. Our debt to Him is incalculably great.

25 Well do I remember an experience while speaking to a group of missionaries. After I had invited questions, one elder stood. With tears in his eyes, he asked, “Why did Jesus have to suffer so much?” I asked the elder to open his book of hymns and recite words from “How Great Thou Art.” He read:

*26 And when I think that God, his Son
not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly
bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.^{af}*

27 Then I asked this elder to read from “Reverently and Meekly Now.” These words are particularly poignant because they are written as the Lord would express His own answer to the very question that had been asked:

*28 Think of me, thou ransomed one;
Think what I for thee have done.
With my blood that dripped like rain,
Sweat in agony of pain,
With my body on the tree
I have ransomed even thee. . . .
Oh, remember what was done
That the sinner might be won.
On the cross of Calvary
I have suffered death for thee.^{ag}*

x See Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12–14.

y See John 3:3–7; 1 Pet. 1:23; Mosiah 27:24–26; Alma 5:49; Alma 7:14; Moses 6:59; Joseph Smith Translation, Gen. 6:62.

z See Rom. 6:3–4.

aa See Mosiah 5:2–5.

ab See 3 Ne. 27:21, 27.

ac See D&C 20:37; Mosiah 18:10.

ad Luke 22:32.

ae Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:29.

af Hymns, no. 86; see also Ps. 8:3–9; Ps. 9:1–2; Mosiah 4:5–13.

ag Hymns, no. 185; see also D&C 19:16–19; D&C 45:3–5.

29 Jesus suffered deeply because He loves us deeply! He wants us to repent and be converted so that He can fully heal us.

30 When sore trials come upon us,^a it's time to deepen our faith in God, to work hard, and to serve others. Then He will heal our broken hearts. He will bestow upon us personal peace^b and comfort.^c Those great gifts will not be destroyed, even by death.

Resurrection —

the Consummate Act of Healing

31 The gift of resurrection is the Lord's consummate act of healing. Thanks to Him, each body will be restored to its proper and perfect frame.^d Thanks to Him, no condition is hopeless. Thanks to Him, brighter days are ahead, both here and hereafter. Real joy awaits each of us—on the other side of sorrow.

32 I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ—the Master Healer—in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 24

Nurturing Marriage - Delivered in the Saturday Afternoon Session of the April 2006 General Conference.

MY beloved brethren and sisters, thank you for your love of the Lord and His gospel. Wherever you live, your righteous

lives provide good examples in these days of decaying morals and disintegrating marriages.

2 As we Brethren travel about the world, sometimes we see worrisome scenes. On a recent flight, I sat behind a husband and wife. She obviously loved her husband. As she stroked the back of his neck I could see her wedding ring. She would nestle close to him and rest her head upon his shoulder, seeking his companionship.

3 In contrast, he seemed totally oblivious to her presence. He was focused solely upon an electronic game player. During the entire flight, his attention was riveted upon that device. Not once did he look at her, speak to her, or acknowledge her yearning for affection.

4 His inattention made me feel like shouting: "Open your eyes, man! Can't you see? Pay attention! Your wife loves you! She needs you!"

5 I don't know more about them. I haven't seen them since. Perhaps I was alarmed unduly. And very possibly, if this man knew of my concern for them, he might feel sorry for me in not knowing how to use such an exciting toy.

6 But these things I do know: I know "that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of

a See "Did You Think to Pray?" Hymns, no. 140, verse 3.

b See John 14:27.

c See Isa. 40:1; John 14:16–17, 26.

d See Alma 11:43; Alma 40:23.

God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children."^e I know that the earth was created and that the Lord's Church was restored so that families could be sealed and exalted as eternal entities.^f And I know that one of Satan's cunning methods of undermining the work of the Lord is to attack the sacred institutions of marriage and the family.

7 Marriage brings greater possibilities for happiness than does any other human relationship. Yet some married couples fall short of their full potential. They let their romance become rusty, take each other for granted, allow other interests or clouds of neglect to obscure the vision of what their marriage really could be. Marriages would be happier if nurtured more carefully.

8 I realize that many mature members of the Church are not married. Through no failing of their own, they deal with the trials of life alone. Be we all reminded that in the Lord's own way and time, no blessings will be withheld from His faithful Saints.^g For those who are now or will be married, I suggest two steps you can take to have a more joyful marriage.

I. Doctrinal Foundation

9 The first step is to comprehend the doctrinal foundation for marriage. The Lord declared that marriage is the legal wedding of one man and one woman: "Marriage is ordained of God unto man.

10 "Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation."^h

11 Worldly trends to define marriage in some other way would sadly serve to destroy the institution of marriage. Such schemes are contrary to the plan of God.

12 It was He who said: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh."ⁱ

13 Scripture further reaffirms that "the man [is not] without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord."^j

14 Marriage is the foundry for social order, the fountain of virtue, and the foundation for eternal exaltation. Marriage has been divinely designated as an eter-

^e "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102, paragraph 1.

^f Whenever scriptures warn that the "earth would be utterly wasted," the warning is connected to the need for priesthood authority to seal families together in holy temples (see D&C 2:3; D&C 138:48; JS—H 1:39).

^g See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:76.

^h D&C 49:15–16.

ⁱ Matt. 19:5; see also Mark 10:7–8.

^j 1 Cor. 11:11.

nal and everlasting covenant.^k Marriage is sanctified when it is cherished and honored in holiness. That union is not merely between husband and wife; it embraces a partnership with God.^l “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other.”^m Children born of that marital union are “an heritage of the Lord.”ⁿ

15 Marriage is but the beginning bud of family life; parenthood is its flower. And that bouquet becomes even more beautiful when graced with grandchildren. Families may become as eternal as the kingdom of God itself.^o

16 Marriage is both a commandment and an exalting principle of the gospel.^p Because it is ordained of God, the intimate physical expressions of married love are sacred. Yet all too commonly, these divine gifts are desecrated. If a couple allows lewd language or pornography to corrupt their intimacy, they offend their Creator while they degrade and diminish their own divine gifts. True happiness is predicated upon personal purity.^q Scripture commands: “Be ye clean.”^r Marriage should ever be a cove-

nant to lift husbands and wives to exaltation in celestial glory.

17 Marriage was intended by the Lord to endure beyond physical death. His plan offers eternal perpetuation of the family in the kingdom of God. His plan provides temples and opportunities to officiate therein for the living and the dead. A marriage sealed there launches a husband and wife into that grand order of unity so necessary to the perfection of God’s work.^s

18 Doctrines related to marriage include individual agency and accountability. All of us are accountable for our choices. Couples blessed with children are accountable to God for the care they give to their children.

19 As I meet with priesthood leaders, I often ask about the priorities of their various responsibilities. Usually they mention their important Church duties to which they have been called. Too few remember their responsibilities at home. Yet priesthood offices, keys, callings, and quorums are meant to exalt families.^t Priesthood authority has been restored so that families can be sealed eternally. So brethren, your foremost priesthood duty

k See D&C 132:19.

l See Matt. 19:6.

m “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” paragraph 6.

n Ps. 127:3.

o See D&C 132:19–20.

p See Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, 10th ed. (1953), 232–33.

q See Alma 41:10.

r D&C 38:42; see also Isa. 52:11; 3 Ne. 20:41; D&C 133:5.

s See D&C 128:15–18.

t See D&C 23:3.

is to nurture your marriage—to care for, respect, honor, and love your wife. Be a blessing to her and your children.

II. Strengthening Marriage

20 With these doctrinal underpinnings in mind, let us consider the second step—specific actions that would strengthen a marriage. I will offer sample suggestions and invite each couple privately to ponder them and adapt them as needed to their own particular circumstances.

21 My suggestions use three action verbs: to appreciate, to communicate, and to contemplate.

22 To appreciate—to say “I love you” and “thank you”—is not difficult. But these expressions of love and appreciation do more than acknowledge a kind thought or deed. They are signs of sweet civility. As grateful partners look for the good in each other and sincerely pay compliments to one another, wives and husbands will strive to become the persons described in those compliments.

23 Suggestion number two—to communicate well with your spouse—is also important. Good communication includes taking time to plan together. Couples need private time to observe, to talk, and really listen to each other. They need to cooperate—helping each other as equal partners. They need to nurture their spiritual as well as physical intimacy. They should strive to el-

evate and motivate each other. Marital unity is sustained when goals are mutually understood. Good communication is also enhanced by prayer. To pray with specific mention of a spouse’s good deed (or need) nurtures a marriage.

24 My third suggestion is to contemplate. This word has deep meaning. It comes from Latin roots: con, meaning “with,” and templum, meaning “a space or place to meditate.” It is the root from which the word temple comes. If couples contemplate often—with each other in the temple—sacred covenants will be better remembered and kept. Frequent participation in temple service and regular family scripture study nourish a marriage and strengthen faith within a family. Contemplation allows one to anticipate and to resonate (or be in tune) with each other and with the Lord. Contemplation will nurture both a marriage and God’s kingdom. The Master said, “Seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”^u

25 I invite each marital partner to consider these suggestions and then determine specific goals to nurture your own relationship. Begin with sincere desire. Identify those actions needed to bless your spiritual unity and purpose. Above all, do not be selfish! Generate a spirit of

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u Joseph Smith Translation, Matt. 6:38 (see Matt. 6:33, footnote a).

selflessness and generosity. Celebrate and commemorate each day together as a treasured gift from heaven.

26 President Harold B. Lee said “that the most important of the Lord’s work you and I will ever do will be within the walls of our own homes.”^a And President David O. McKay declared, “No other success can compensate for failure in the home.”^b

27 When you as husband and wife recognize the divine design in your union—when you feel deeply that God has brought you to each other—your vision will be expanded and your understanding enhanced. Such feelings are expressed in words of a song that has long been a favorite of mine:

*28 Because you come to me with
naught save love,
And hold my hand and lift mine
eyes above,
A wider world of hope and joy I
see,
Because you come to me.
Because you speak to me in ac-
cents sweet,
I find the roses waking round my
feet,
And I am led through tears and
joy to thee,
Because you speak to me.
Because God made thee mine, I’ll
cherish thee*

*Through light and darkness,
through all time to be,
And pray His love may make our
love divine,
Because God made thee mine.^c*

29 That each marriage may be so nurtured is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 25

*The Gathering of Scattered Israel -
Delivered in the Sunday Morning
Session of the October 2006 General
Conference.*

MY beloved brothers and sisters, thank you for your faith, your devotion, and your love. We share an enormous responsibility to be who the Lord wants us to be and to do what He wants us to do. We are part of a great movement—the gathering of scattered Israel. I speak of this doctrine today because of its unique importance in God’s eternal plan.

Abrahamic Covenant

2 Anciently, the Lord blessed Father Abraham with a promise to make his posterity a chosen people.^d References to this covenant occur throughout the scriptures. Included were promises that the Son of God would come through Abraham’s lineage, that certain lands would be inherited, that nations and kindreds of the

a Stand Ye in Holy Places (1974), 255.

b Quoted from J. E. McCulloch, Home: The Savior of Civilization (1924), 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116.

c “Because,” words by Edward Teschmacher (1902).

d See Genesis 12:1–2; D&C 132:29–32; Abraham 2:6–11.

apostles, prophets, seventies, teachers, and so forth.^m And the Master sent His disciples into the world to preach His gospel.ⁿ

7 After a time the Church as established by the Lord fell into spiritual decay. His teachings were altered; His ordinances were changed. The Great Apostasy came as had been foretold by Paul, who knew that the Lord would not come again “except there come a falling away first.”^o

8 This Great Apostasy followed the pattern that had ended each previous dispensation. The very first was in the time of Adam. Then came dispensations of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others. Each prophet had a divine commission to teach of the divinity and the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. In each age these teachings were meant to help the people. But their disobedience resulted in apostasy. Thus, all previous dispensations were limited in time and location. They were limited in time because each ended in apostasy. They were limited in location to a relatively small segment of planet earth.

The Restoration of All Things

9 Thus a complete restoration

was required. God the Father and Jesus Christ called upon the Prophet Joseph Smith to be the prophet of this dispensation. All divine powers of previous dispensations were to be restored through him.^p This dispensation of the fulness of times would not be limited in time or in location. It would not end in apostasy, and it would fill the world.^q

*The Gathering of Israel—
an Integral Part of the Restoration
of All Things*

10 As prophesied by Peter and Paul, all things were to be restored in this dispensation. Therefore, there must come, as part of that restoration, the long-awaited gathering of scattered Israel.^r It is a necessary prelude to the Second Coming of the Lord.^s

11 This doctrine of the gathering is one of the important teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Lord has declared: “I give unto you a sign ... that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion.”^t The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a sign to the entire world that the Lord has commenced to gather Israel

m See Luke 10:1, 17; Ephesians 4:11; Articles of Faith 1:6.

n See Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15.

o 2 Thessalonians 2:3. “Falling away” is translated from the Greek *apostasia*, meaning “apostasy.”

p See D&C 128:18; 132:45.

q See Isaiah 27:6.

r See 1 Nephi 15:18; see also Book of Mormon title page, paragraph 2.

s See D&C 133:17.

t 3 Nephi 21:1.

and fulfill covenants He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.^u We not only teach this doctrine, but we participate in it. We do so as we help to gather the elect of the Lord on both sides of the veil.

12 The Book of Mormon is central to this work. It declares the doctrine of the gathering.^v It causes people to learn about Jesus Christ, to believe His gospel, and to join His Church. In fact, if there were no Book of Mormon, the promised gathering of Israel would not occur.^w

13 To us the honored name of Abraham is important. It is mentioned in more verses of scriptures of the Restoration than in all verses of the Bible.^x Abraham is linked to all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.^y The Lord reaffirmed the Abrahamic covenant in our day through the Prophet Joseph Smith.^z In the temple we receive our ultimate blessings, as the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.^{aa}

The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times

14 This dispensation of the fulness of times was foreseen by God as the time to gather, both in heaven and on earth. Peter knew that after a period of apostasy, a restoration would come. He, who had been with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration, declared:

15 “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; ...

16 “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”^{ab}

17 In modern times the Apostles Peter, James, and John were sent by the Lord with “the keys of [His] kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the

u See Genesis 12:2–3; 26:3–4; 35:11–12; and chapter headings for 3 Nephi 21; 29.

v Doctrines relating to the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel are among the earliest lessons taught in the Book of Mormon: “After the house of Israel should be scattered they should be gathered together again; ... the natural branches of the olive-tree, or the remnants of the house of Israel, should be grafted in, or come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer” (1 Nephi 10:14).

w See Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (1985), 554.

x Abraham is mentioned in 506 verses of scripture: 216 are in the Bible; 290 are in the scriptures of the Restoration.

y The covenant may also be received by adoption (see Matthew 3:9; Luke 3:8; Galatians 3:26–29; 4:5–7; Abraham 2:9–10).

z See D&C 124:58; 132:31–32.

aa See D&C 84:33–40; 132:19; Abraham 2:11.

ab Acts 3:19, 21.

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last times; and for the fulness of times,” in which He would “gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.”^{ac}

18 In the year 1830 the Prophet Joseph Smith learned of a heavenly messenger named Elias, who possessed keys to bring to pass “the restoration of all things.”^{ad}

19 Six years later the Kirtland Temple was dedicated. After the Lord accepted that holy house, heavenly messengers came with priesthood keys. Moses appeared^{ae} “and committed ... the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.

20 “After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation

of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.”^{af}

21 Then Elijah the prophet came and proclaimed, “Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse.”^{ag}

22 These events occurred on April 3, 1836,^{ah} and thus fulfilled Malachi’s prophecy.^{ai} Sacred keys of this dispensation were restored.^{aj}

Gathering of Souls on the Other Side of the Veil

ac D&C 27:13. Paul also prophesied of our day “that in the dispensation of the fulness of times [the Lord] might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth” (Ephesians 1:10).

ad D&C 27:6.

ae It is appropriate that Moses, who first led God’s children to the land of their inheritance, would be the one to commit the keys of the gathering of Israel to the restored Church. Moses had come to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration and there had bestowed upon them the same priesthood keys in their day. At the conference of the Church in April 1840, the Prophet Joseph Smith appointed Orson Hyde to go to Jerusalem and there dedicate the land for the return of the Jews and scattered Israel.⁴⁴ On Sunday, October 24, 1841, Elder Hyde knelt on the Mount of Olives and dedicated that land for the gathering of the Jews and of Israel to their ancient inheritance.

af D&C 110:11–12.

ag D&C 110:14–15.

ah Significant is the fact that Moses, Elias, and Elijah came on Easter Sunday, at the beginning of Passover.

ai See Malachi 4:5–6.

aj See D&C 110:16.

27 This work of Almighty God is true. He lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church, restored to accomplish its divine destiny, including the promised gathering of Israel. President Gordon B. Hinckley is God's prophet today. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 26

Repentance and Conversion - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2007 General Conference.

LAST year while Elder David S. Baxter and I were driving to a stake conference, we stopped at a restaurant. Later when returning to our car, we were approached by a woman who called out to us. We were startled by her appearance. Her grooming (or lack of it) was what I might politely call "extreme." She asked if we were elders in the Church. We said yes. Almost unrestrained, she told the story of her tragic life, swamped in sin. Now, only 28 years old, she was miserable. She felt worthless, with nothing to live for. As she spoke, the

sweetness of her soul began to emerge. Pleading tearfully, she asked if there was any hope for her, any way up and out of her hopelessness.

2 "Yes," we responded, "there is hope. Hope is linked to repentance. You can change. You can 'come unto Christ, and be perfected in him.'"^a We urged her not to procrastinate.^b She sobbed humbly and thanked us sincerely.

3 As Elder Baxter and I continued our journey, we pondered that experience. We recalled the counsel given to a hopeless soul by Aaron, who said, "If thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, ... then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest."^c

4 Now, at this closing session of general conference, I too speak on repentance. I do so because the Lord has commanded His servants to cry repentance unto all people.^d The Master has restored His gospel to bring joy to His children, and repentance is

a Moroni 10:32.

b See Alma 13:27; 34:33. President Spencer W. Kimball described procrastination as "an unwillingness to accept personal responsibilities now" (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball [2006], 4).

c Alma 22:16. We also remember the sinful people under the care of their concerned leader, Mormon, who wrote, "I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities, but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them" (Mormon 5:2).

d Especially in these latter-days; see D&C 18:11–12, 14; 19:21; 34:5–6; 43:20; 133:16–17.

a crucial component of that gospel.^e

5 The doctrine of repentance is as old as the gospel itself. Biblical teachings from the books of Genesis^f to Revelation^g teach repentance. Lessons from Jesus Christ during His mortal ministry include these warnings: “The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel”^h and “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”ⁱ

6 References to repentance are even more frequent in the Book of Mormon.^j To the people of ancient America, the Lord gave this commandment: “Again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can

in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.”^k

7 With the Restoration of the gospel, our Savior has again stressed this doctrine. The word repent in any of its forms appears in 47 of the 138 sections of the Doctrine and Covenants!^l

Repent from Sin

8 What does it mean to repent? We begin with a dictionary’s definition that to repent is “to turn from sin ... to feel sorrow [and] regret.”^m To repent from sin is not easy. But the prize is worth the price. Repentance needs to be done one step at a time. Humble prayer will facilitate each essential step. As prerequisites to forgiveness, there must first be recognition, re-

e “The first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Articles of Faith 1:4). See also D&C 39:6; 84:27; 138:19.

f See Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 4:8.

g See Revelation 2:16.

h Mark 1:15; see also Matthew 4:17.

i Luke 13:3.

j The word repent (to teach the doctrine of repentance) in any of its forms (repent, repentance, repented, repenteth, and so on) appears 72 times in the King James Version of the Bible and 68 times in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. In the Book of Mormon, the word repent in any of its forms appears 360 times.

k 3 Nephi 11:38. Another example is “I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 12:19).

l See D&C 1; 3; 5–6; 10–11; 13–16; 18–20; 29; 33–36; 39; 42–45; 49–50; 53–56; 58; 63–64; 66; 68; 75; 84; 90; 93; 98; 104; 107; 109; 117; 124; 133; 136; 138.

m Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1987), “repent,” 999.

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morse, then confession.ⁿ “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.”^o

Confession is to be made to the person who has been wronged. Confession should be sincere and not merely an admission of guilt after proof is evident. If many persons have been offended, confession should be made to all offended parties. Acts that may affect one’s standing in the Church or the right to its privileges should be confessed promptly to the bishop, whom the Lord has called as a common judge in Israel.^p

9 The next step is restitution—to repair damage done—if possible. Then come steps to resolve to do better and refrain from relapse—to repent “with full purpose of heart.”^q Thanks to the ransom paid by the Atonement of Jesus Christ, full forgiveness is given to the sinner who repents and remains free from sin.^r To the repentant soul, Isaiah said, “Though your sins be as scarlet,

they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”^s

10 The Lord’s imperative emphasis on repentance is evident as we read from section 19 of the Doctrine and Covenants: “I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

11 “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

12 “But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I.”^t

13 While the Lord insists on our repentance, most people don’t feel such a compelling need.^u They include themselves among those who try to be good. They have no evil intent.^v Yet the Lord

n See 1 John 1:9; Mosiah 26:29; D&C 61:2; 64:7.

o D&C 58:43. If no other person has been offended, confession should be prayerfully offered to God. He who hears in secret may reward openly (see Matthew 6:4, 6, 18; 3 Nephi 13:4, 6, 18).

p See D&C 107:73–74.

q 2 Nephi 31:13; Jacob 6:5; Mosiah 7:33; 3 Nephi 10:6; 12:24; 18:32.

r See Mosiah 4:2–3.

s Isaiah 1:18.

t D&C 19:15–17.

u In the minds of some people, the word repent also conjures up terms like penalty and penalize, which connote punishment. If they are not guilty of punishable sin, they may reason that they have no need to repent.

v President Spencer W. Kimball said: “There is a prevalent, perhaps subconscious, feeling that the Lord designed repentance only for those who commit murder or adultery or theft or other heinous crimes. This is of course not so. If we are humble and desirous of living the gospel we will come to think of repentance as applying to everything we do in life, whether it be spiritual or temporal in nature. Repentance is for every soul who has not yet reached perfection” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball, 37). See also 1 John 1:8; Mosiah 4:29–30.

17 To repent fully is to convert completely to the Lord Jesus Christ and His holy work. Alma taught that concept when he posed these questions: “I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?”^{ag} That change comes when we are “born again,” converted and focused upon our journey to the kingdom of God.^{ah}

Fruits of Repentance

18 The fruits of repentance are sweet. Repentant converts find that the truths of the restored gospel govern their thoughts and deeds, shape their habits, and forge their character. They are more resilient and able to deny themselves of all ungodliness.^{ai} Moreover, uncontrolled appetite,^{aj} addiction to pornography or harmful drugs,^{ak} unbridled passion,^{al} carnal desire,^{am} and unrighteous pride^{an} are diminished with complete conversion to the Lord and a de-

termination to serve Him and to emulate His example.^{ao} Virtue garnishes their thoughts, and self-confidence grows.^{ap} Tithing is seen as a joyful and protective blessing, not as a duty or a sacrifice.^{aq} Truth becomes more attractive, and things praiseworthy become more engaging.^{ar}

19 Repentance is the Lord’s regimen for spiritual growth. King Benjamin explained that “the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.”^{as} Brothers and sisters, that means conversion! Repentance is conversion! A repentant soul is a converted soul, and a converted soul is a repentant soul.

ag Alma 5:14.

ah See John 3:3, 7; Mosiah 27:25; Alma 5:49; 7:14; Moses 6:59.

ai See Moroni 10:32.

aj See Galatians 6:7–8.

ak See Judges 13:7; Luke 1:15; D&C 89:5, 7–9.

al See Matthew 5:27–28; Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:27–28; D&C 42:23.

am See Romans 8:5–6.

an See Alma 38:11; D&C 121:37.

ao See John 13:15; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 2:21; 2 Nephi 31:16; 3 Nephi 18:16; Mormon 7:10.

ap See D&C 121:45.

aq See D&C 85:3.

ar See Philippians 4:8; Articles of Faith 1:13.

as Mosiah 3:19.

for the Lord's blessings to attend them in their new callings.

2 We extend heartfelt feelings of gratitude to each of you, brothers and sisters. Throughout the world, your examples of service and compassion are receiving a great deal of attention. At the same time, many people are wondering about this Church's history and doctrines. Among those questioners are some who choose to cast aspersions at the Book of Mormon.^f

3 Disregard for the Book of Mormon or for any other sacred scripture concerns me deeply. In addressing that concern, I have titled my remarks "Scriptural Witnesses."

Definitions

4 I will define the term scriptural as pertaining to the Bible and the scriptures of the Restoration.^g Members of the Church "believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God."^h Scriptures of the Restoration also include the Doctrine and Covenants as well as the Pearl of Great Price.

5 A dictionary defines the noun witness as an "attestation of a fact or event: [a] testimony."ⁱ The term witness bears special significance when applied to the word of God. In the Bible we read this important declaration: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."^j This assures God's children that divine doctrines are confirmed by more than one scriptural witness.

Scriptures Testify of Jesus Christ

6 The Bible and the Book of Mormon are both witnesses of Jesus Christ. They teach that He is the Son of God, that He lived an exemplary life, that He atoned for all mankind, that He died upon the cross and rose again as the resurrected Lord. They teach that He is the Savior of the world.

7 Scriptural witnesses authenticate each other. This concept was explained long ago when a prophet wrote that the Book of Mormon was "written for the intent that ye may believe [the Bible]; and if ye believe [the Bible] ye will believe [the Book of Mormon] also."^k Each book refers

f The full title is the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.

g The Restoration was foreseen by Peter (see Acts 3:19–21), John (see Revelation 14:6–8), and Paul (see Ephesians 1:10). The Prophet Joseph Smith was instructed that, in this last dispensation, there is to be a "restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" (D&C 27:6).

h Articles of Faith 1:8.

i Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (2003), "witness," 1439.

j 2 Corinthians 13:1. Similar statements appear in Matthew 18:16 and Ether 5:4.

k Mormon 7:9.

to the other. Each book stands as evidence that God lives and speaks to His children by revelation to His prophets.¹

8 Love for the Book of Mormon expands one’s love for the Bible and vice versa. Scriptures of the Restoration do not compete with the Bible; they complement the Bible. We are indebted to martyrs who gave their lives so that we could have the Bible. It establishes the everlasting nature of the gospel and of the plan of happiness. The Book of Mormon restores and underscores biblical doctrines such as tithing,^m the temple,ⁿ the Sabbath day,^o and the priesthood.^p

9 An angel proclaimed that the Book of Mormon^q shall establish the truth of the Bible.^r He also revealed that writings in the Bible available in our day are not as complete as they were when originally written by prophets and apostles.^s He declared that the Book of Mormon shall restore plain and precious things

taken away from the Bible.^t

10 A prophecy in the Book of Mormon warned that some people would object to the notion of additional scriptures. To those who think they “need no more Bible,”^u consider this God-given counsel:

11 “Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, ... created all men, ... and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?

12 “... Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And ... the testimony of the two nations shall run together also.”^v

13 The scriptural story of Jesus Christ is indeed a two-hemi-

1 To the prophet of this present dispensation, the Lord declared, “This generation shall have my word through you” (D&C 5:10).

m See Alma 13:15; 3 Nephi 24:8–10.

n See 2 Nephi 5:16; Jacob 1:17; 2:2, 11; Mosiah 2:5–7.

o See Mosiah 13:16–19; 18:23.

p See 2 Nephi 6:2; Mosiah 18:18; Alma 6:1; 13:1–3, 6–11; 3 Nephi 18:5; Moroni 3:1–4.

q The Book of Mormon is to “make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved” (1 Nephi 13:40).

r See 1 Nephi 13:40.

s See 1 Nephi 13:28–29.

t See 1 Nephi 13:40.

u 2 Nephi 29:6.

v 2 Nephi 29:7–8.

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sphere story.^w While Mary and Joseph in the East were making preparations for the holy child's birth in Bethlehem,^x Nephi in the West was being taught by the premortal Messiah. To Nephi the Lord said, "Be of good cheer; ... on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfil all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets."^y

14 To doubters of that second witness—the Book of Mormon—the Lord issued a warning: "Because you have treated lightly the things you have received ... [you] shall remain under ... condemnation until [you] repent and remember ... the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given ..., [the Bible, and] ... do according to that which I have written."^z

15 The Lord provided other scriptures of the Restoration^{aa} and declared that those words

will also be fulfilled.^{ab} With these scriptural witnesses, false doctrines will be confounded.^{ac} With these scriptural witnesses, doctrines of the Bible are not only reaffirmed but clarified.

Restoration Scriptures

Clarify the Bible

16 How do scriptures of the Restoration clarify the Bible? Many examples exist. I will cite but a few, beginning with the Old Testament.

17 Isaiah wrote, "Thou shalt ... speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust."^{ad} Could any words be more descriptive of the Book of Mormon, coming as it did "out of the ground" to "whisper out of the dust" to people of our day?^{ae}

18 But Isaiah was not the only

w Because He is Creator of "worlds without number" (Moses 1:33), additional scriptures from other locations are a distinct possibility.

x See Luke 2:4–6.

y 3 Nephi 1:13.

z D&C 84:54, 57.

aa See D&C 135:3.

ab See Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:31–35.

ac See 2 Nephi 3:12; Ezra Taft Benson, "A New Witness for Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 8.

ad Isaiah 29:4.

ae Isaiah foresaw that God would do "a marvellous work and a wonder" in the latter days (Isaiah 29:14). Those words of Isaiah echoed in the ears of inhabitants of ancient America: "The Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men" (2 Nephi 25:17). That marvelous work would include the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel. Isaiah was quoted frequently in the Book of Mormon. A study of those quotations may be tedious, but it is not repetitious. Of 433 verses of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, 234 differ from their biblical counterparts.

Old Testament prophet who foretold the Book of Mormon. Ezekiel wrote:

19 “Take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel ... : then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel ... :

20 “And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.”^{af}

21 Today, Saints living in many nations of the earth gratefully hold the Bible (the stick of Judah) and the Book of Mormon (the stick of Ephraim) bound as one in their hands.

22 What about the New Testament? The Book of Mormon also stands as a scriptural witness to its teachings. Examples include the miraculous birth of the babe in Bethlehem,^{ag} His Sermon on the Mount,^{ah} and the intense suffering of the Savior.^{ai} The doctrine of the Resurrection is mentioned more frequently in the Book of Mormon than in the Bible.^{aj}

23 The need for the Holy Ghost

was mentioned by Paul. He asked, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost ... ? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.”^{ak} That doctrine is clarified by another scriptural witness, conveyed through the Lord’s prophet of the Restoration. He taught us to “believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.”^{al} That precious and powerful gift is again available to children of God.

24 Paul referred to the three degrees of postmortal glory when he taught that “there is one glory of the sun, ... another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.”^{am} That glimpse into postmortal glory has been clarified by another scriptural witness. The Lord revealed that “the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one.

25 “And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one.

26 “And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one.”^{an}

af Ezekiel 37:16–17.

ag See 1 Nephi 11:13–20; Alma 7:10.

ah See 3 Nephi 12–14.

ai See Mosiah 3:7. A firsthand account of His suffering was given to His latter-day prophet (see D&C 19:16–19).

aj The word resurrection appears in 40 verses of the King James Version of the Bible; it appears in 56 verses in the Book of Mormon. See also Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (1997), 238–41.

ak Acts 19:2. See Acts 2:38 for the teaching of Peter regarding the need for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

al History of the Church, 5:499.

am 1 Corinthians 15:41.

an D&C 76:96–98; see also 131:1.

27 The highest of these kingdoms, the celestial, is reserved for those who obey the law of that kingdom:

28 “They who are not sanctified through the law ... of Christ, must inherit another kingdom, even that of a terrestrial kingdom, or that of a telestial kingdom.

29 “For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.”^{ao}

30 These three degrees of glory relate to postmortal life. They relate to the immortality of the human soul. That gift of immortality became a reality because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.^{ap} This important word—atonement—in any of its forms, is mentioned only once in the King James Version of the New Testament!^{aq} In the Book of Mormon, it appears 39 times!^{ar}

31 John, writing in the New Testament’s book of Revelation, foresaw “another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”^{as} One specific angel held keys of responsibility for the Book of Mormon.^{at} That was the angel Moroni! These examples are but a few of many biblical doctrines that are clarified by scriptures of the Restoration.^{au}

The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ

32 Willingly we share scriptures of the Restoration with people across the world. The Book of Mormon records the personal ministry of the resurrected Lord to people of ancient America. Ponder these everlasting truths that He proclaimed:

33 “Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things

ao D&C 88:21–22.

ap See Mosiah 16:10; Alma 42:23; Mormon 6:21.

aq See Romans 5:11.

ar Atonement: 28 times; atone or atoning: 8 times; atoneth: 3 times. In several verses, the word atonement appears more than once (see 2 Nephi 9:7; Alma 34:9; 42:23).

as Revelation 14:6.

at See D&C 27:5; 128:20.

au The New Testament refers to “other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16). That doctrine is clarified in the Book of Mormon. It bears record of the resurrected Lord speaking to people of ancient America. There the Lord said, “Ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (3 Nephi 15:21). A limited account of Paul’s knowledge of baptism for the dead appears in the New Testament (see 1 Corinthians 15:29). Only in scriptures of the Restoration is that divine doctrine clarified (see D&C 124:29–30, 41; 128:1, 11–12, 16–18; 138:47–48).

that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. ...

34 "... The scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled. ...

35 "I am the light and the life of the world."

36 The Savior continued:

37 "Whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost. ...

38 "... I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.

39 "Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. ... I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ... and be saved."^a

40 Those declarations of the Lord summarize who He really is and who He really wants us to be. He wants us to come unto Him and, in due course, be embraced gloriously in His loving arms.

41 I express my profound gratitude for scriptural witnesses. I have seen the mighty change that comes to people who apply the Lord's teachings in their lives. Such transformation leads to the blessing of eternal life.^b

42 I know that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His gospel has been restored in these latter days. President Gordon B. Hinckley is His prophet at this time. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 28

Faith in Jesus Christ - Published in the March 2008 Ensign Magazine.

MY long road to become a doctor of medicine was only the beginning. After that came years of hospital work, research, specialty training, and certifying examinations. Then followed many years of teaching, service, and the challenges of the newly emerging field of open-heart surgery, all of which brought me to a profound reverence for the structure and function of the human body. I was convinced that its creation was divine.

The Remarkable Human Body

2 Think of the genesis of a human body. It begins with the union of two reproductive cells—one from the mother and one from the father. Together, these cells contain all of the new individual's hereditary information, stored in a space so small it cannot be seen by the naked eye. Twenty-three chromosomes from each parent unite in one new cell. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes which determine the physical characteristics of the unborn person. Approximately 22 days af-

a 3 Nephi 9:15–16, 18, 20–22.
 b See 3 Nephi 9:14; D&C 30:8.

ter these cells unite, a tiny heart begins to beat. At 26 days, blood begins to circulate. Cells multiply and divide. Some become eyes that see; others become ears that hear or fingers that feel the wondrous things about us.

3 Each organ is an amazing creation. The eye has a self-focusing lens. Nerves and muscles allow two eyes to make a single three-dimensional image. The ear converts sound waves into audible tones perceived in the brain.

4 The heart has four delicate valves that control the direction of blood flow. They open and close more than 100,000 times a day—36 million times a year. Unless altered by disease, they are able to withstand this stress almost indefinitely. No man-made material can be flexed so frequently and so long without breaking. Each day, the adult heart pumps enough fluid to fill a 2,000-gallon (7,570-L) tank. At the crest of the heart is a source of electricity that transmits energy down special lines, causing myriads of muscle fibers to work together.

5 Think of the body's backup systems. Each paired organ has instant backup available from the other of the pair. Single organs, such as the brain, the heart, and the liver, are nourished by two routes of blood supply. This

protects the organ if blood flow should be impeded through one of those routes.

6 Think of the body's capacity to defend itself. To protect it from harm, the body perceives pain. In response to infection, it generates antibodies. They not only help to combat an immediate problem, but they persist to bolster resistance to any future infection.

7 Think how the body repairs itself. Broken bones mend and become strong again. Skin lacerations heal themselves. A leak in the circulation can seal itself. The body renews its own outdated cells.

8 The body regulates its own vital ingredients. Levels of essential elements and constituents are adjusted continuously. And regardless of wide fluctuations in temperature of the environment, the temperature of the body is carefully controlled within narrow bounds.

9 Through years of experience, I have learned that healing occurs only when all of the laws relevant to that blessing are obeyed.^c The structure and function of the body are governed by law. A verse of scripture so states: "Unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions."^d

^c That very concept was established by the Lord when He said, "When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:21).

^d D&C 88:38.

10 Scientists in many disciplines observe similar manifestations of law and order, whether in the predictability of the tides, the phases of the moon, or the location of stars in the sky. Such law and order undergird all creation. Those laws can be discovered and defined. Their consequences can be measured. Such order bears witness of a Supreme Creator.^e

11 The matter of faith, on the other hand, cannot be measured. But the correlation of faith in God with the law and order of the universe is revealed in scripture:

12 “[God] hath given a law unto all things, by which they move in their times and their seasons;

13 “And their courses are fixed, even the courses of the heavens and the earth, which comprehend the earth and all the planets. ...

14 “Behold, all these are kingdoms, and any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power.”^f

Divinity of the Creation

15 Scriptures declare that heaven, earth, and all things upon

the earth are divinely created.^g Scriptures also help us to know more about the partnership of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, in the Creation. The first words in the Bible state, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,”^h and, “God created man in his own image, ... male and female created he them.”ⁱ The book of Abraham teaches that “the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.”^j

16 Scripture records the feelings of Heavenly Father for His Beloved Son and for each human being: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”^k

17 The book of John begins with this declaration:

18 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

19 “The same was in the beginning with God.

20 “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”^l

e See Alma 30:44.
f D&C 88:42–43, 47.
g See Colossians 1:16; Mosiah 4:2, 9; 5:15; Alma 18:28; 22:10; Moses 3:5.
h Genesis 1:1.
i Genesis 1:27.
j Abraham 4:27.
k John 3:16.
l John 1:1–3.

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21 This scripture denotes that the Word^m of God is Jesus Christ—God’s personal minister in the government of this universe and Creator of all life.

22 This fact was affirmed to Moses by our Heavenly Father, who said:

23 “And by the word of my power, have I created them [the earth and the individuals on it], which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.

24 “And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.”ⁿ

25 Many other scriptures confirm that, under direction of the Father, Jesus Christ is the Creator.^o One of the most compelling is His own personal testimony: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning.”^p

Dynamics of Faith in Jesus Christ

26 For one to accept that concept requires dynamic faith. Faith is the foundation of personal testi-

mony. The first principles of the gospel begin with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.^q Paul said that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”^r He pled “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend ... and to know the love of Christ.”^s Paul entreated us to “come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.”^t

27 From the Book of Mormon we learn that “we are made alive in Christ because of our faith. ... And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.”^u

28 Blessings that flow from faith in Him are also revealed in the Book of Mormon. There we read: “Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father:

- m In Greek, Logos (meaning “word”) is another name for Christ.
n Moses 1:32–33; emphasis added.
o See Ephesians 3:9; Mosiah 3:8–11; Helaman 14:12; Mormon 9:8–14.
p 3 Nephi 9:15. The Lord further declared, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who created the heavens and the earth, a light which cannot be hid in darkness” (D&C 14:9).
q See Articles of Faith 1:4.
r Hebrews 11:1.
s Ephesians 3:17–19.
t Ephesians 4:11–13; see also Galatians 3:26–29.
u 2 Nephi 25:25–26.

the Father,^a Deliverer,^b and Jehovah of the Old Testament.^c He is the promised Immanuel,^d the anointed Messiah,^e and our great Exemplar.^f One day He will return to rule and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.^g Eventually, we will each stand before Him at judgment day.^h I pray for each of us that our individual faith in Him will be acceptable.

CHAPTER 29

Salvation and Exhaltation - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the April 2008 General Conference.

GRATEFULLY we welcome Elder D. Todd Christofferson to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Wholeheartedly we sustain this wonderful First Presidency and all who have been called.

2 Brethren and sisters, when we received the news that President Gordon B. Hinckley had passed away, each of us immediately felt a deep sense of loss. Knowing that his destiny was in the hands of the Lord, however, we have felt our mood shift from grief to gratitude. We are very grateful

for what we have learned from this great prophet of God.

3 Today, at this solemn assembly, we have complied with the will of the Lord, who said that “it shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by ... one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church.”ⁱ This law of common consent^j has been invoked, and the Church will move forward on its prescribed course.

4 Members throughout the world sustain President Thomas S. Monson and his able counselors. We are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

5 “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”^k

6 The Lord revealed why “he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets.” It is “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of

a See D&C 29:5; 110:4.

b See 2 Samuel 22:2; D&C 138:23.

c See D&C 110:3.

d See Isaiah 7:14.

e See 2 Nephi 25:14–19.

f See John 13:15; 3 Nephi 27:21.

g See Revelation 17:14; 19:16.

h See Revelation 20:12; 1 Nephi 15:33; 2 Nephi 9:22, 44; 28:23; Alma 5:15; 3 Nephi 27:14; Mormon 3:20; 9:8–14.

i D&C 42:11; emphasis added.

j See D&C 26:2; 28:13.

k Ephesians 2:19–20.

fostered in the family, which is “central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”^q The home is to be God’s laboratory of love and service. There a husband is to love his wife, a wife is to love her husband, and parents and children are to love one another.

16 Throughout the world, the family is increasingly under attack. If families fail, many of our political, economic, and social systems will also fail. And if families fail, their glorious eternal potential cannot be realized.

17 Our Heavenly Father wants husbands and wives to be faithful to each other and to esteem and treat their children as an heritage from the Lord.^r In such a family we study the scriptures and pray together. And we fix our focus on the temple. There we receive the highest blessings that God has in store for His faithful children.

18 Thanks to God’s great plan of happiness,^s families can be together forever—as exalted beings. Our Heavenly Father declared, “This is my work and

my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”^t Both of His objectives were enabled by the Atonement of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. His Atonement made resurrection a reality and eternal life a possibility for all who would ever live.

19 Resurrection, or immortality, comes to every man and every woman as an unconditional gift.

20 Eternal life, or celestial glory or exaltation, is a conditional gift. Conditions of this gift have been established by the Lord, who said, “If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.”^u Those qualifying conditions include faith in the Lord, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and remaining faithful to the ordinances and covenants of the temple.

21 No man in this Church can obtain the highest degree of celestial glory without a worthy woman who is sealed to him.^v This temple ordinance enables

q “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.

r See Psalm 127:3.

s See Alma 42:8.

t Moses 1:39.

u D&C 14:7; see also 3 Nephi 15:9. The Book of Mormon further explains the conditional nature of this great gift. It states that “ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20; emphasis added).

v See D&C 131:1–3.

eventual exaltation for both of them.

22 In Church callings we are subject to release. But we cannot be released as parents. From the first days of human history, the Lord has commanded parents to teach the gospel to their children.^w Moses wrote, “Thou shalt teach ... diligently ... thy children, and shalt talk of [God’s words] when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”^x

23 In our day the Lord has added, “Bring up your children in light and truth.”^y The Church is to assist and not to replace parents in their responsibilities to teach their children.

24 In this day of rampant immorality and addictive pornography, parents have a sacred responsibility to teach their chil-

dren the importance of God in their lives.^z Those evils, so highly destructive of divine potential, are to be strictly shunned by children of God.

25 We are also to teach our children to honor their parents. The fifth commandment states, “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”^{aa}

26 How can we best teach our children? The Lord has given us specific instruction:

27 “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

28 “By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

w See Moses 6:57–58. Also note the teaching of King Benjamin: “Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin. ... But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another” (Mosiah 4:14–15).

x Deuteronomy 6:7.

y D&C 93:40. The Lord also said, “Teach [your] children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” (D&C 68:28).

z So taught Paul to Timothy: “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. ... From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14–15).

aa Exodus 20:12. Remember that parental proverb: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

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29 “Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy.”^{ab}

30 When a child needs correction, you might ask yourself, “What can I say or do that would persuade him or her to choose a better way?” When giving necessary correction, do it quietly, privately, lovingly, and not publicly. If a rebuke is required, show an increase of love promptly so that seeds of resentment may not remain. To be persuasive, your love must be sincere and your teachings based on divine doctrine and correct principles.

31 Do not try to control your children. Instead, listen to them, help them to learn the gospel, inspire them, and lead them toward eternal life. You are God’s agents in the care of children He has entrusted to you. Let His divine influence remain in your hearts as you teach and persuade.

Ancestors

32 Any discussion of family responsibilities to prepare for exaltation would be incomplete if we included only mother, father,

and children. What about grandparents and other ancestors? The Lord has revealed that we cannot become perfect without them; neither can they without us be made perfect.^{ac} Sealing ordinances are essential to exaltation. A wife needs to be sealed to her husband; children need to be sealed to their parents; and we all need to be connected with our ancestors.^{ad}

33 What about those who are not able to marry in this life or those who cannot be sealed to their parents in this life? We know that the Lord will judge each of us according to the desires of our hearts, as well as our works,^{ae} and that the blessings of exaltation will be given to all who are worthy.^{af}

34 We as children of the covenant are highly favored. In our hearts have been planted the promises made to Fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord has said:

35 “Ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God. ...

36 “Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savior

ab D&C 121:41–43.

ac See D&C 128:15.

ad See D&C 128:18.

ae See D&C 137:9.

af See D&C 130:20–21; see also Rudger Clawson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 29; Joseph F. Smith, in *Deseret News*, May 1, 1878, 2; Richard G. Scott, “The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 75.

unto my people Israel.”^a

37 This life is the time to prepare for salvation and exaltation.^{2b}In God’s eternal plan, salvation is an individual matter; exaltation is a family matter.

38 As children of the covenant, we have met in this morning’s solemn assembly. Attention has been focused upon the sacred titles of prophets and apostles. But the final responsibility to prepare for salvation and exaltation rests upon each person, accountable for individual agency, acting in one’s own family, bearing another sacred title of mother, father, daughter, son, grandmother, or grandfather.

39 In those responsible roles, may we go forward in faith, led by Jesus Christ, whose Church this is, and by His prophet, through whom He speaks, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 30

Power and Protection Provided by Worthy Music - Delivered as a Devotional address at BYU Provo on May 4, 2008.

It is a joy for my wife, Wendy, and me to be with you, my dear brothers and sisters. From the BYU Marriott Center in Utah, we are broadcasting to many congregations throughout the world. Thanks to each of you for being with us.

2 We extend a special welcome to those who will soon be finishing high school and are attending a CES fireside broadcast for the first time. As you enroll in institutions of higher learning and continue your education, I hope you will participate in institute classes so that you may have this strong spiritual resource to balance your secular learning. You will also have opportunities to attend future CES firesides such as this. Take advantage of those occasions. They will enlighten and encourage you.

3 The title of my message tonight is “Power and Protection Provided by Worthy Music.” This topic is especially applicable to young adults. As you know, people of your age have made many significant contributions as writers, composers, and connoisseurs of worthy music.

Power

4 The power of worthy music was felt tonight as we sang these words in our opening hymn:

*5 Come, ye children of the Lord,
Let us sing with one accord.
Let us raise a joyful strain
To our Lord who soon will reign.^c*

6 Through music we raised our voices in powerful praise and prayer.

7 Such a hymn provides a pattern of worship that is pleasing to God. His prophet taught us to

a D&C 86:9, 11.
b See Alma 12:24.
c “Come, Ye Children of the Lord,” Hymns, 1985, no. 58.

“praise the Lord with singing, with music, . . . and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving”.^d

8 I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Ogden Institute of Religion choir. Thank you, Brother Ritchie, Brother Simon, and members of the choir, for your magnificent music. It has not only honored the Lord, but it has also touched our hearts deeply.

9 As the choir sang “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” I was deeply moved. The message focuses on the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Written by the English poet Isaac Watts, those words bear repetition:

*10 When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord! that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.*

*. . .
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.^e*

11 Indeed, Isaac Watts did demand much from himself. In his lifetime he wrote approximately 600 hymns. Two of his most productive years were between his graduation from school at age 20 and his taking a job teaching when he was 22. At that young age many great hymns flowed from him. Lyrics by Isaac Watts in our book of hymns include, among others, “Joy to the World,” “Sweet Is the Work,” and “He Died! The Great Redeemer Died.”

12 Even as a small boy, Isaac Watts had poetic potential.

13 Once, during family prayers, he began to laugh. His father asked him why. [Isaac] replied that he had heard a sound and opened his eyes to see a mouse climbing a rope in a corner, and had immediately thought, A little mouse for want of stairs ran up a rope to say its prayers. His father thought this irreverent, and proceeded to administer [physical] punishment, in the midst of which Isaac called out, Father, father, mercy take, and I will no more verses make.^f

14 I would like to comment on another song in our hymnbook. The text of “How Great Thou Art” was first written by a young minister in Sweden. His name was Carl Gustav Boberg. He was only 25 years old. Af-

d D&C 136:28

e B. B. McKinney, ed., *The Broadman Hymnal* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1940), no. 191.

f “Isaac Watts, Hymn-Writer”; <http://elvis.rowan.edu/~killoroy/jek/11/25c.html>.

and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord".^k

24 From the New Testament we also learn that the Lord and His Apostles concluded the Last Supper with a hymn before leaving for the Mount of Olives.^l That tradition continues in our day. Each time members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles meet in the temple, we begin with a hymn. It sets a sweet, spiritual tone for our deliberations.

25 The Book of Mormon teaches that one's desire to sing praises to the Lord comes with one's complete conversion to Him. Alma asked this penetrating question:

26 I say unto you, my brethren, if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?"^m

27 Ammon later exclaimed:

*Blessed be the name of our God; let us sing to his praise, yea, let us give thanks to his holy name, for he doth work righteousness forever."*ⁿ

28 Complete conversion is the key to our experiencing God's greatest blessings. In the Doctrine and Covenants, we read

this expression from the Lord:

29 For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads. [D&C 25:12]

30 In the preface to our book of hymns, the First Presidency has provided this statement:

31 Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord.

Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end.

We hope to see an increase of hymn singing in our congregations. We encourage all members, whether musically inclined or not, to join with us in singing the hymns. We hope leaders, teachers, and members who are called upon to speak will turn often to the hymnbook to find sermons presented powerfully and beautifully in verse. . . .

. . . Latter-day Saints should fill

k Colossians 3:16
l see Matthew 26:30
m Alma 5:26
n Alma 26:8

their homes with the sound of worthy music. . . .

Hymns can also help us withstand the temptations of the adversary. We encourage you to memorize your favorite hymns and study the scriptures that relate to them. Then, if unworthy thoughts enter your mind, sing a hymn to yourself, crowding out the evil with the good.^o

32 Worthy music also has the power to persuade. We learn this lesson from the writings of John Jaques. He was born in England in 1827, a son of Wesleyan Methodist parents. In his youth John earnestly sought the true religion. He studied intensively with Latter-day Saint missionaries and, at the age of 18, became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

33 *John's austere father, upset upon hearing this news, wrote: "I wished you . . . to attend the Wesleyan Chapel. They [the Mormons] do not teach you . . . [to] honor and obey your parents. I . . . hope you will give up the idea of belonging to such a party. . . . It is fiction."*

John's reply, written March 14, 1847, when he was but twenty years of age, included these words: "Dear Father: I would pray . . . that I may understand the things of the Kingdom of

God and carry my ideas to you. . . . Since I [joined the Church] my eyes have been opened, and I have been able to understand the truth. I can bear testimony to the truth . . . of the doctrines . . . in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."^p

34 Three years later, at age 23, John Jaques wrote the words to this hymn that we know and love:

35 *Oh say, what is truth? 'Tis the fairest gem
That the riches of worlds can produce,
And priceless the value of truth will be when
The proud monarch's costliest diadem
Is counted but dross and refuse.
Yes, say, what is truth? 'Tis the brightest prize
To which mortals or Gods can aspire.
Go search in the depths where it glittering lies,
Or ascend in pursuit to the loftiest skies:
'Tis an aim for the noblest desire.
The sceptre may fall from the despot's grasp
When with winds of stern justice he copes.
But the pillar of truth will endure to the last,
And its firm-rooted bulwarks outstand the rude blast
And the wreck of the fell tyrant's hopes.*

o "First Presidency Preface," Hymns, 1985, ix-x.
p Russell M. Nelson, *The Power Within Us* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 90-91; see Stella Jaques Bell, *Life History and Writings of John Jaques* (Rexburg, Idaho: Ricks College Press, 1978), 19-21.

*Then say, what is truth? 'Tis the
last and the first,
For the limits of time it steps o'er.
Tho the heavens depart and the
earth's fountains burst,
Truth, the sum of existence, will
weather the worst,
Eternal, unchanged, evermore.^q*

36 John stood firm in his conviction of the truth. He remained true and faithful and ultimately served as assistant to the Church historian from 1889 until his death on June 1, 1900.

37 Music has a sweet power to promote unity and love in the family. Not only is it an important component of family home evenings, but it can exert a continuing influence for good well beyond times when children are small. For my gift to the family last Christmas, I prepared a compact-disc recording of musical memories. I sat at the piano and recorded a variety of music that I had sung or played to the children through the years. They liked it. Some of the grandchildren told me that the CD was “cool.”

38 To illustrate the enduring benefits of worthy music in the home, I have asked our available daughters to sing for you tonight. Since their childhood, they have enjoyed singing together.

39 Daughters, I'm going to introduce you. Perhaps each of you

can wave to the congregation as I mention your name: Marsha Workman, Wendy Maxfield, Gloria Irion, Brenda Miles, Sylvia Webster, Julie Wittwer, Laurie Marsh, Rosalie Ringwood, and Marjorie Helsten.

40 Our son's wife, Britney, would like to have been here, but she is excused. She had a baby 11 days ago. Two other voices are missing—our deceased daughter, Emily, and her angel mother, Dantzel. Perhaps they are looking in from their windows in heaven. Our son, Russell, and I also enjoy singing with them, but we will not impose that upon you tonight.

41 To illustrate the multigenerational merits of worthy music in the home, our daughters will be accompanied by two of their daughters: Katie Irion Owens on the piano and Rachel Miles on the flute. They will sing and play for you “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee.” After their music, I will resume my message.^r

42 Thank you so much, daughters and granddaughters. Wendy and I love you dearly, as do your husbands and your families.

43 Many of you folks will be able to influence music that is selected in Church services in the future. A few thoughts may be helpful to you. Remember, mu-

q “Oh Say, What Is Truth?” Hymns, 1985, no. 272.

r Elder Nelson's daughters and granddaughters sang and played “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee.”

sic has power to provide spiritual nourishment.^s It has healing power.^t It has power to facilitate worship; it allows us to contemplate the Atonement and the Restoration of the gospel with its saving principles and exalting ordinances. Music provides power for us to express prayerful thoughts and bear testimony of sacred truths.

44 Music has power to overcome language barriers. In my experience, some of the most moving congregational singing has been rendered in languages that are foreign to me. Yet it spoke strongly to my soul.

45 The purpose of music in our Church services is not for performance but for worship. Prayerfully selected compositions and excellent performances are appropriate in our worship services when and if members feel a spirit of worship and of revelation. Church music should be supportive of the Lord and His work and not attract attention to itself.

Protection

46 Worthy music not only has power, but it can also provide protection. For many years President Boyd K. Packer has taught this concept. He has often quot-

ed another statement issued by the First Presidency many years ago:

47 Music can be used to exalt and inspire or to carry messages of degradation and destruction. It is therefore important that as Latter-day Saints we at all times apply the principles of the gospel and seek the guidance of the Spirit in selecting the music with which we surround ourselves."

48 Brethren and sisters, wherever we are, we should carefully choose what we see and hear. Some of you would not knowingly tolerate pornography in your homes, yet you would allow music into your lives that can be just as devastating.

49 Many youth listen to music that can be described as loud and fast, becoming louder and faster. It aims to agitate, not to pacify; to excite more than to calm. Beware of that kind of music.

50 As you know, continued exposure to loud sounds will, in time, damage delicate organs of hearing. In like manner, if you overindulge in loud music, you will more likely become spiritually deaf. You may not be able to hear the still, small voice. A scripture states:

s See Jay E. Jensen, in CR, April 2007, 9–11; or "The Nourishing Power of Hymns," Ensign, May 2007, 11–13.

t See "The Healing Power of Hymns," Ensign, April 2008, 66–69.

u Priesthood Bulletin, August 1973; quoted in Boyd K. Packer, in CR, October 1973, 21; or "Inspiring Music—Worthy Thoughts," Ensign, January 1974, 25.

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51 *The Lord your God . . . hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past feeling, that ye could not feel his words.^v*

52 Do not degrade yourself with the numbing shabbiness and irreverence of music that is not worthy of you. Delete the rubbish from your minds and your iPods. Protect your own personal standards! Be selective! Be wise!

53 Do not allow unworthy, raucous music to enter your life. It is not harmless. It can weaken your defense and allow unworthy thoughts into your mind and pave the way to unworthy acts. Please remember:

54 *That which [does] not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light.^w*

55 Dear brothers and sisters, please fill your minds with worthy sights and sounds. Cultivate your precious gift of the Holy Ghost. Protect it as the priceless gift that it is. Carefully listen for its quiet communication. You will be spiritually stronger if you do. You know the proverb “As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he”.^x As you control your thoughts, you control your actions. Indeed, worthy music can provide power and protection for your soul.

56 For the closing hymn for our fireside tonight, the Ogden LDS Institute of Religion choir will sing “Our Prayer to Thee.”^y I wrote the words to that song as my prayerful feelings for our Father in Heaven. Please receive this prayer as part of my testimony that God is our Father and that we are His children. I know that He lives. Jesus is the Christ and the Head of this Church that bears His holy name. Joseph Smith is the Prophet of this dispensation. President Thomas S. Monson is the Lord’s prophet on the earth at this time. I so testify and express my love and blessing for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

57 *Our Prayer to Thee*

*We pray to Thee, our Heav’nly Father,
With grateful hearts and fond emotion.
We thank Thee for our great Exemplar—
Thy beloved and atoning Son—
Who gave Himself as sacred ransom,
That we could live again with Thee!
Our joy is full, our song so glad-some;
Renew our faith and hope in Thee.
We pray to Thee, our Heav’nly Father,
With thankful hearts and adora-*

v 1 Nephi 17:45

w D&C 50:23–24

x Proverbs 23:7

y In Russell M. Nelson, CR, April 2003, 7; or “Sweet Power of Prayer,” Ensign, May 2003, 9; both words and music are found inside back cover, Ensign, May 2003

tion.
 We thank Thee for our loving Savior,
 Who redeemed us from death and sin;
 He gave to us His truth to brighten
 Our path, to help us walk His way,
 To love and serve, to lift and lighten
 The lives of all who will obey.
 We pray to Thee, our Heav'nly Father,
 With gratitude and deep devotion
 For loving faith and endless splendor—
 Eternal glory—bound as one!
 We pray for mercy and forgiveness
 And hope to know Thy holy will.
 We yearn for Thee, we plead in meekness,
 Thy trust in us may we fulfill.

CHAPTER 31

Abortion: An Assault on the Defenseless - Published in the October 2008 Ensign Magazine.

AS I begin, let me apologize to readers for the use of terms that are not pleasant. The nature of the war to which I'm referring requires such clarity of communication.

2 As sons and daughters of God, we cherish life as a gift from Him. His eternal plan provides opportunities for His children to obtain physical bodies, to gain earthly experiences, and to realize their divine destinies as heirs of eternal life.^a

Death Rates from Wars

3 With that understanding and reverence for life, we deplore the loss of life associated with warfare. The data are appalling. In World War I, more than 8 million military fatalities occurred. In World War II, more than 22 million servicemen and women died.^b Together, these two wars, covering portions of 14 years, cost the lives of at least 30 million soldiers worldwide. That figure does not include the millions of civilian casualties.

4 These data, however, are dwarfed by the toll of another war that claims more casualties annually than did World War I and World War II combined. Worldwide reports indicate that more than 40 million abortions are performed per year.^c

5 This war called abortion is a war on the defenseless and the voiceless. It is a war on the un-

a See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.

b See The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed. (1998), "World Wars, The."

c See Maria Cheng, "Abortion Just as Common in Nations Where It's Illegal," Salt Lake Tribune, Oct. 12, 2007, p. A7. In the United States the number of live births per year is in the range of three to four million. The number of abortions during that same period of time exceeds one million. Thus, in that country, one of every three to four pregnancies ends in abortion.

born. This war is being waged globally. Ironically, civilized societies that have generally placed safeguards on human life have now passed laws that sanction this practice.

Divine Doctrine

6 This matters greatly to us because the Lord has repeatedly declared this divine imperative: "Thou shalt not kill."^d Then He added, "Nor do anything like unto it."^e Even before the fullness of the gospel was restored, enlightened individuals understood the sanctity of human life. John Calvin, a sixteenth-century reformer, wrote, "If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, ... it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a foetus in the womb before it has come to light."^f

7 Man-made rules have now legalized that which has been forbidden by God from the dawn of time! Human reasoning has twisted and transformed absolute truth into sound-bite slogans that promote a practice that is consummately wrong.

Special Concerns

8 Concern for the health of the mother is a vital one. But circumstances in which the termination of pregnancy is necessary to save the life of the mother are

very rare, particularly where modern medical care is available. Another concern applies to pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. This tragedy is compounded because an innocent woman's freedom of choice was denied. In these circumstances, abortion is sometimes considered advisable to preserve the physical and mental health of the mother. Abortions for these reasons are also rare.

9 Some argue for abortion because of fear that a child may have a congenital malformation. Surely the harmful effects of certain infectious or toxic agents in the first trimester of pregnancy are real, but caution is needed in considering the termination of a pregnancy. Life has great value for all, including those born with disabilities. Furthermore, the outcome may not be as serious as postulated.

10 I remember well a couple who endured such an experience. The woman was only 21 years old at the time—a beautiful and devoted wife. In her first trimester, she contracted German measles. Abortion was advised because the developing baby would almost surely be damaged. Some members of her family, out of loving concern, applied additional pressure for an abortion. Devotedly, the couple consulted

d See Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17; Matthew 5:21; Romans 13:9; Mosiah 13:21; 3 Nephi 12:21; D&C 42:18–19.

e D&C 59:6.

f John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, trans. Charles William Bingham, 22 vols. (1979), 3:42.

their bishop. He referred them to their stake president, who, after listening to their concern, counseled them not to terminate the life of this baby, even though the child would likely have a problem. He quoted this scripture:

11 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

12 "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."^g

13 They chose to follow that counsel and allowed their child to be born—a beautiful little girl, normal in every respect, except for total hearing loss. After their daughter’s evaluation at a school for the deaf, the parents were advised that this child had the intellect of a genius. She attended a major university on a scholarship. Now some 40 years later, she enjoys a wonderful life.

14 To deny life to an individual because of a possible handicap is a very serious matter. Policy consistent with that logic would dictate that those already living with such deficiencies should likewise be terminated. One more step in that tragic train of thought would lead to the conclusion that those who are either infirm or inconvenient should also be eliminated. Such irreverence for life would be totally unthinkable!

Abortion on Demand

15 Relatively few abortions are performed for the special circumstances to which I have referred.^h Most abortions are performed on demand to deal with unwanted pregnancies. These abortions are simply a form of birth control.

16 Elective abortion has been legalized in many countries on the premise that a woman is free to choose what she does with her own body. To an extent this is true for each of us, male or female. We are free to think. We are free to plan. And we are free to do. But once an action has been taken, we are never free from its consequences.

17 To understand this concept more clearly, we can learn from the astronaut. Anytime during selection or preparation, he or she is free to withdraw from the program. But once the spacecraft has lifted off, the astronaut is bound to the consequences of the previous choice to make the journey.

18 So it is with people who choose to embark on a journey that leads to parenthood. They have freedom of choice—to begin or not to begin that course. When conception does occur, that choice has already been made.

19 Yes, a woman is free to choose

^g Proverbs 3:5–6.

^h See statement of Dr. Irvin M. Cushner, speaking to the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Constitutional Amendments Relating to Abortion, S.J. 17–19, 110, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981, 158.

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what she will do with her body. Whether her choice leads to an astronaut's mission or to a baby, her choice to begin the journey binds her to the consequences of that choice. She cannot "un-choose."

20 When the controversies about abortion are debated, "individual right of choice" is invoked as though it were the one supreme virtue. That could only be true if but one person were involved. The rights of any one individual do not allow the rights of another individual to be abused. In or out of marriage, abortion is not solely an individual matter. Terminating the life of a developing baby involves two individuals with separate bodies, brains, and hearts. A woman's choice for her own body does not include the right to deprive her baby of life—and a lifetime of choices that her child would make.

21 As Latter-day Saints, we should stand up for choice—the right choice—not simply for choice as a method.ⁱ

22 Nearly all legislation pertaining to abortion considers the duration of gestation. The human mind has presumed to determine when "meaningful life" begins. In the course of my stud-

ies as a medical doctor, I learned that a new life begins when two special cells unite to become one cell, bringing together 23 chromosomes from the father and 23 from the mother. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes. In a marvelous process involving a combination of genetic coding by which all the basic human characteristics of the unborn person are established, a new DNA complex is formed. A continuum of growth results in a new human being. Approximately 22 days after the two cells have united, a little heart begins to beat. At 26 days the circulation of blood begins.^j To legislate when a developing life is considered "meaningful" is presumptive and quite arbitrary, in my opinion.

23 Abortion has been legalized by governing entities without regard for God and His commandments. Scriptures state repeatedly that people will prosper only if they obey the commandments of God.^k Individuals will prosper only when they walk in faith and obedience to God, who said:

24 "I, the Lord, ... built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

25 "And it is my purpose to provide. ...

i See Dallin H. Oaks, "Weightier Matters," *Liahona*, Mar. 2000, 17–19; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 13–15.

j See J. Willis Hurst and others, eds., *The Heart*, 4th ed. (1978), 7.

k See Leviticus 26:3–13; Joshua 1:7–8; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 18:5–7; 2 Chronicles 24:20; 26:5; 31:21; Job 36:11–12; 1 Nephi 2:20–21; 4:14; 2 Nephi 1:9, 20, 31; 4:4; 5:10–11; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7; 2:22, 31; Alma 9:13; 36:1, 30; 37:13; 38:1; 45:6–8; 48:15, 25; 50:20; Helaman 3:20; 3 Nephi 5:22; D&C 9:13.

26 "But it must needs be done in mine own way. ...

27 "For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare."^l

28 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has consistently opposed the practice of abortion. More than a century ago, the First Presidency wrote, "We again take this opportunity of warning the Latter-day Saints against those ... practices of foeticide and infanticide."^m

29 Early in his presidency President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said: "We have repeatedly affirmed the position of the Church in unalterably opposing all abortions, except in two rare instances: When conception is the result of forcible rape and when competent medical counsel indicates that a mother's health would otherwise be seriously jeopardized."ⁿ Current policy now includes two other exceptions—incest and if the baby cannot survive beyond birth, as determined by competent medical counsel. Even these exceptions do not justify abortion automatically. It "should be considered only after the persons responsible have consulted

with their bishops and received divine confirmation through prayer."^o

Adoption

30 Why destroy a life that could bring great joy to others? There are better ways of dealing with an unwanted pregnancy. When a life is created by sinful behavior, the best way to begin personal repentance is to preserve the life of that child. To add another serious sin to a serious sin already committed only compounds the grief. Adoption is a wonderful alternative to abortion. Both the baby and the adoptive parents can be greatly blessed by the adoption of that baby into a home where the child will be lovingly nurtured and where the blessings of the gospel will be available.

Repentance Is Possible

31 Is there any hope for the person who has participated in the act of abortion? Is there any hope for those who have so sinned and who now suffer heartbreak? The answer is yes! "As far as has been revealed, a person may repent and be forgiven for the sin of abortion."^p We know the Lord will help all who are truly repentant.^q

l D&C 104:14–17.

m John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, "Epistle of the First Presidency," Apr. 4, 1885; in James R. Clark, comp., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (1965–75), 3:11.

n Spencer W. Kimball, "A Report and a Challenge," Ensign, Nov. 1976, 6; see also "The Time to Labor Is Now," Ensign, Nov. 1975, 6.

o Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics (2006), 185.

p Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1, 185.

q See Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17; D&C 58:42.

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32 Life is precious! No one can cuddle an innocent infant, look into those beautiful eyes, feel the little fingers, and kiss that baby's cheek without a deepening reverence for life and for our Creator. Life comes from life. It is no accident. It is a gift from God. Innocent life is not sent by Him to be destroyed. It is given by Him and is naturally to be taken by Him alone.^a I testify that life is eternal as He is eternal.

CHAPTER 32

Celestial Marriage - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 2008 General Conference.

MY beloved brethren and sisters, I am deeply grateful for each of you. Together we feel a profound sense of gratitude for the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this world abounding with misery, we are truly thankful for God's "great plan of happiness."^b His plan declares that men and women are "that they might have joy."^c That joy comes when we choose to live in harmony with God's eternal plan.

2 The importance of choice may be illustrated by a homespun concept that came to mind one day when I was shopping in a large retail store. I call it "patterns of the shopper." As shop-

ping is part of our daily life, these patterns may be familiar.

3 Wise shoppers study their options thoroughly before they make a selection. They focus primarily on the quality and durability of a desired product. They want the very best. In contrast, some shoppers look for bargains, and others may splurge, only to learn later—much to their dismay—that their choice did not endure well. And sadly, there are those rare individuals who cast aside their personal integrity and steal what they want. We call them shoplifters.

4 The patterns of the shopper may be applied to the topic of marriage. A couple in love can choose a marriage of the highest quality or a lesser type that will not endure. Or they can choose neither and brazenly steal what they want as "marital shoplifters."

5 The subject of marriage is debated across the world, where various arrangements exist for conjugal living. My purpose in speaking out on this topic is to declare, as an Apostle of the Lord,^d that marriage between a man and a woman is sacred—it is ordained of God.^e I also assert the virtue of a temple marriage. It is the highest and most enduring type of marriage that our

a See Deuteronomy 30:20; Acts 17:28; D&C 88:13; Moses 6:32.
 b Alma 42:8. It is also known as the "plan of ... God" (see 2 Nephi 9:13; Alma 34:9), the "plan of redemption" (see Jacob 6:8; Alma 12:26, 30, 32–33; 29:2; 42:13), the "plan of salvation" (see Alma 24:14; 42:5), and the "plan of mercy" (see Alma 42:15, 31).
 c 2 Nephi 2:25.
 d See D&C 107:35.
 e See D&C 49:15–17.

Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. [Heavenly Father's great] plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally."^p

13 That proclamation on the family helps us realize that celestial marriage brings greater possibilities for happiness than does any other relationship.^q The earth was created and this Church was restored so that families could be formed, sealed, and exalted eternally.^r

14 Scriptures declare that "it is lawful that [a man] should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the

earth might answer the end of its creation."^s Another affirms that "the man [is not] without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord."^t Thus, marriage is not only an exalting principle of the gospel; it is a divine commandment.

15 Our Heavenly Father declared, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."^u The Atonement of His Beloved Son enabled both of these objectives to be realized. Because of the Atonement, immortality—or resurrection from the dead—became a reality for all.^v And because of the Atonement, eternal life—which is living forever in God's presence, the "greatest of all the gifts of God"^w—became a possibility. To qualify for eternal life, we must make an eternal and everlasting covenant with our Heavenly Father.^x This means that a temple marriage is not only between husband and wife; it embraces a partnership with God.^y

p Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.

q Previously I have stated that "marriage is the foundry for social order, the fountain of virtue, and the foundation for eternal exaltation" ("Nurturing Marriage," Liahona and Ensign, May 2006, 36).

r Whenever scriptures warn that the "earth would be utterly wasted," the warning is connected to the need for priesthood authority to seal families together in holy temples (see D&C 2:1–3; 138:48; Joseph Smith—History 1:38–39).

s D&C 49:16; see also Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7–9; D&C 42:22; Moses 3:24; Abraham 5:18.

t 1 Corinthians 11:11.

u Moses 1:39.

v See 2 Nephi 9:22; Alma 12:8; 33:22; Helaman 14:17; Mormon 9:13; Moses 7:62; Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 7:69.

w D&C 14:7.

x See D&C 132:19.

y See Matthew 19:6.

ing to heartfelt desire as well as deed.^{ah}

22 Meanwhile, mortal misunderstandings can make mischief in a marriage. In fact, each marriage starts with two built-in handicaps. It involves two imperfect people. Happiness can come to them only through their earnest effort. Just as harmony comes from an orchestra only when its members make a concerted effort, so harmony in marriage also requires a concerted effort. That effort will succeed if each partner will minimize personal demands and maximize actions of loving selflessness.

23 President Thomas S. Monson has said: “To find real happiness, we must seek for it in a focus outside ourselves. No one has learned the meaning of living until he has surrendered his ego to the service of his fellow man. Service to others is akin to duty—the fulfillment of which brings true joy.”^{ai}

24 Harmony in marriage comes only when one esteems the wel-

fare of his or her spouse among the highest of priorities. When that really happens, a celestial marriage becomes a reality, bringing great joy in this life and in the life to come.

25 God’s plan of happiness allows us to choose for ourselves. As with the patterns of the shopper, we may choose celestial marriage or lesser alternatives.^{aj} Some marital options are cheap, some are costly, and some are cunningly crafted by the adversary. Beware of his options; they always breed misery!^{ak}

26 The best choice is a celestial marriage. Thankfully, if a lesser choice has previously been made, a choice can now be made to upgrade it to the best choice. That requires a mighty change of heart^{al} and a permanent personal upgrade.^{am} Blessings so derived are worth all efforts made.^{an}

27 The full realization of the blessings of a temple marriage is almost beyond our mortal comprehension. Such a marriage will

ah See Alma 41:3; D&C 137:9.

ai “Messages of Inspiration from President Monson,” Church News, July 5, 2008, 2.

aj See 2 Nephi 2:27; Jacob 6:8.

ak Satan wants us to be miserable, as he is (see Revelation 12:9; 2 Nephi 2:18; D&C 10:22–27; Moses 4:6).

al See Alma 5:12–14. Such a mighty change includes repentance, forgiveness, and a renewed determination to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32).

am “The first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Articles of Faith 1:4). Repentance requires a complete change for the better—a total personal upgrade.

an See D&C 93:1.

Smith Translation of the Bible,^h where clarification is provided by these two phrases:

1. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,"ⁱ and
2. "Suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil."^j

6 The clarification on forgiveness is supported by other statements of the Master. He said to His servants, "Inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you."^k In other words, if one is to be forgiven, one must first forgive.^l The clarification on temptation is helpful, for surely we would not be led into temptation by Deity. The Lord said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."^m

7 Though the four versions of the Lord's Prayer are not identical, they all open with a salutation to "Our Father," signifying a close relationship between God and His children. The phrase "hallowed be thy name" reflects the respect and worshipful attitude

that we should feel as we pray. "Thy will be done" expresses a concept that we will discuss later.

8 His request for "daily bread" includes a need for spiritual nourishment as well. Jesus, who called Himself "the bread of life," gave a promise: "He that cometh to me shall never hunger."ⁿ And as we partake of sacramental emblems worthily, we are further promised that we may always have His Spirit to be with us.^o That is spiritual sustenance that cannot be obtained in any other way.

9 As the Lord closes His prayer, He acknowledges God's great power and glory, ending with "Amen." Our prayers also close with amen. Though it is pronounced differently in various languages, its meaning is the same. It means "truly" or "verily."^p Adding amen solemnly affirms a sermon or a prayer.^q Those who concur should each add an audible amen^r to signify "that is my solemn declaration too."^s

h See Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:9–15.

i Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:13.

j Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:14.

k D&C 82:1.

l See Matthew 18:23–35; D&C 64:10.

m Matthew 26:41.

n John 6:35; see also John 6:48, 51.

o See Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79.

p In the Hebrew and Greek languages, amen means "truly," "surely," "verily," or "so be it."

q See Revelation 1:18; 22:20–21. It is also used in confirming agreements (see 1 Kings 1:36).

r See 1 Corinthians 14:16.

s See Psalm 106:48; Revelation 5:13–14; 19:4; D&C 88:135.

fectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."^{ac}

Lessons from Other Prayers

19 Other lessons about prayer were taught by the Lord. He told His disciples that "ye must always pray unto the Father in my name."^{ad} The Savior further emphasized, "Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name."^{ae} Obediently, we apply that lesson when we pray to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ.^{af}

20 Another of the Lord's prayers teaches a lesson repeated in three consecutive verses:

21 "Father, I thank thee that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen. ...

22 "Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words.

23 "Father, thou hast given them the Holy Ghost because they believe in me."^{ag}

24 If companionship of the Holy Ghost is that important, we

should pray for it too. We should likewise help all converts and our children cultivate the gift of the Holy Ghost. As we so pray, the Holy Ghost can become a vital force for good in our lives.^{ah}

Enhancing Our Prayers

25 The Lord has taught ways by which our prayers can be enhanced. For example, He said that "the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads."^{ai}

26 Prayer can also be enhanced by fasting.^{aj} The Lord said, "I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth."^{ak} A plea for wisdom in fasting was offered by President Joseph F. Smith, who cautioned that "there is such a thing as overdoing. A man may fast and pray till he kills himself; and there isn't any necessity for it; nor wisdom in it. ... The Lord can hear a simple prayer, offered in faith, in half a dozen words, and he will recognize fasting that may not continue more than twenty-four hours, just as readily and as effectually as He will

ac James 5:16.

ad 3 Nephi 18:19.

ae 3 Nephi 18:21.

af See 2 Nephi 32:9; 33:12; 3 Nephi 18:23, 30; 19:6-7; 20:31; 28:30.

ag 3 Nephi 19:20-22.

ah See John 10:27-28 (compare D&C 84:43-47); 2 Nephi 31:17-20; Alma 5:38. And we may invite the companionship of the Spirit, who will intercede and help us know what to pray about (see Romans 8:26).

ai D&C 25:12.

aj See Acts 14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5; Omni 1:26; Alma 5:46; 6:6; 17:3; 17:9; 28:6; 45:1; 3 Nephi 27:1; 4 Nephi 1:12; Moroni 6:5.

ak D&C 88:76.

answer a prayer of a thousand words and fasting for a month. ... The Lord will accept that which is enough, with a good deal more pleasure and satisfaction than that which is too much and unnecessary."^{al}

27 The concept of "too much and unnecessary" could also apply to the length of our prayers. A closing prayer in a Church meeting need not include a summary of each message and should not become an unscheduled sermon. Private prayers can be as long as we want, but public prayers ought to be short supplications for the Spirit of the Lord to be with us or brief declarations of gratitude for what has transpired.

28 Our prayers can be enhanced in other ways. We can use "right words"^{am}—special pronouns—in reference to Deity. While worldly manners of daily dress and speech are becoming more casual, we have been asked to protect the formal, proper language of prayer. In our prayers we use the respectful pronouns Thee, Thou,

Thy, and Thine instead of You, Your, and Yours.^{an} Doing so helps us to be humble. That can also enhance our prayers. Scripture so declares, "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers."^{ao}

29 Prayer begins with individual initiative. "Behold," saith the Lord, "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."^{ap} That door is opened when we pray to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ.^{aq}

30 When should we pray? Whenever we desire! Alma taught, "Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, ... and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day."^{ar} Jesus reminded His disciples "that they should not cease to pray in their hearts."^{as}

al Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1912, 133–34.

am Joseph Smith Translation, Psalm 17:1.

an See Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 201; Stephen L. Richards, in Conference Report, Oct. 1951, 175; Bruce R. McConkie, "Why the Lord Ordained Prayer," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 12; L. Tom Perry, "Our Father Which Art in Heaven," *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 13; and Dallin H. Oaks, "The Language of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 1993, 15–18. Details of that language are explained by Don E. Norton Jr., "The Language of Formal Prayer," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 44–47.

ao D&C 112:10; see also Psalm 24:3–4; Matthew 6:12; Helaman 3:35; D&C 64:8–10.

ap Revelation 3:20.

aq See 3 Nephi 18:20; D&C 88:64.

ar Alma 37:37; see also Philippians 4:6; Alma 34:18–27; D&C 10:5; 93:49.

as 3 Nephi 20:1.

31 The practice of Church members is to kneel in family prayer each morning and evening, plus having daily personal prayers and blessings on our food.^a President Monson said, “As we offer unto the Lord our family and our personal prayers, let us do so with faith and trust in Him.”^b And so, in praying for temporal and spiritual blessings, we should all plead, as did Jesus in the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy will be done.”^c

32 Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world—He who ransomed us with His blood—is our Redeemer and our Exemplar.^d At the close of His mortal mission, He prayed that His will—as the Beloved Son—might be swallowed up in the will of the Father.^e In that crucial hour the Savior cried, “Father, ... not as I will, but as thou wilt.”^f So we should pray to God, “Thy will be done.”

33 And let us ever pray “that [the Lord’s] kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants ... may ... be prepared for the days ... [when] the Son of Man shall come down ... in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth.”^g

34 In our daily lives and in our

own crucial hours, may we fervently apply these precious lessons from the Lord, I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 34

Neither Trust in the Arm of Flesh - Delivered as a commencement address at BYU Provo on April 23, 2009.

THANK you, President Samuelson. Thank you for your excellent service and exemplary leadership. We admire you and Sister Samuelson greatly. We also express our gratitude to the faculty and staff for their help to these choice students at Brigham Young University. Wendy and I are grateful to be here with you today.

2 We are very pleased that President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has been awarded an honorary doctorate. We congratulate him. When we think of all he has accomplished—from his childhood days as a refugee in Europe’s cold, cruel cauldron of war to his position now in the First Presidency of the Church—we stand in awe. Through those years he has become a great man of faith and a devoted disciple of the Lord. Wendy and I have deep af-

a See Ensign, Jan. 1976, 11.

b Thomas S. Monson, “A Royal Priesthood,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 61.

c See Matthew 26:42; Jacob 7:14; Ether 12:29; D&C 109:44; Moses 4:2.

d See 3 Nephi 27:13–15, 21–22.

e See Mosiah 15:7.

f Matthew 26:39; see also Moses 4:2, which indicates the humble attitude of our Savior from the beginning.

g D&C 65:5.

fection for him, for his dear wife, Harriet, and for their family.

3 Now to each individual graduate we extend our heartfelt congratulations. We commend you for completing the course. You are winners. To your families and loved ones who have encouraged you, prayed for you, and sacrificed for you, we also express our gratitude and love.

4 Some of you graduates will continue your educational studies. Keep up the good work! We're proud of you! Most of you will not pursue more formal education but will embark on your chosen career. We're grateful for you and wish you well.

5 Brothers and sisters, regardless of your choices for the future, you will continue to learn. As long as you live, you will learn. It is part of God's plan for us. You will grow intellectually and spiritually. Just as Jesus the Christ "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man,"^h so may you.

6 To increase your wisdom and stature, you will exercise your agency. You will choose your teachers and your role models. Choose them wisely. Heed this counsel of Alma: "Trust no one to be your teacher . . . , except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments."ⁱ

7 If you enter the job market now, you will do so at a time of economic distress. Job opportunities throughout the world are diminishing and becoming more competitive. You will need to work hard and perform well to hold a job in the difficult days that lie ahead.

8 Challenges are not limited to your age group. The decline of our economy is affecting many others. Senior citizens who have retired from their work are strained because the value of their nest egg has now been substantially eroded.

9 Such economic woes are not new. Verses recorded long ago in the Book of Mormon apply today. From the book of Helaman we read:

10 The time cometh that . . . your riches . . . become slippery, that ye cannot hold them; and in the days of your poverty ye cannot retain them. . . .

11 . . . Yea, in that day ye shall say: O that we had remembered the Lord our God in the day that he gave us our riches, and then they would not have become slippery that we should lose them; for behold, our riches are gone from us.^j

12 Throughout history economic conditions have been cyclic in nature. So you will live to see more ups and downs in the

h Luke 2:52.
i Mosiah 23:14.
j Helaman 13:31, 33.

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economy, just as surely as you will see the seasons change.

13 With the cycles of man and nature all about us, we need to remember that truth never changes. God lives. He is our Father. He loves us. He wants us to be happy. Because He loves us, He wants us to prepare well now for our eventual return to Him. Can you imagine anything more joyful than that homecoming? It truly will be glorious for those who have qualified for the blessings of eternal life.^k

14 To assist us in that quest, we have been given help through the teachings of God's prophets and the scriptures. Here is one example: "Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm."^l To rephrase that in today's terms, if you trust only in your 401(k)s or IRAs, your retirement plans may be disappointing. But your investments in tithing will continue to pay rich dividends—here and hereafter. Indeed, the nest egg of tithing will never be eroded.

15 We learn more about the limitations of the arm of flesh from the Doctrine and Covenants. In its preface we read that "the weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm

of flesh."^m Or, to rephrase that warning, even though you may be learned in the ways of the world, don't forget the power of God.

16 More than 30 years ago my medical school classmates and I learned that lesson in an unforgettable way. We will never forget it. Our experience took place in the little town of Manzanillo on Mexico's western coast. The year was 1978. We were attending a meeting with our medical school graduating class and their wives.

17 One evening after the scientific sessions had been completed, one of the doctors suddenly became seriously ill. Without warning, he began to lose massive amounts of blood from his stomach. Totally stunned, we surrounded him, watching life's precious blood flow out from him. There we were, medical specialists skilled in various disciplines—including surgeons, anesthesiologists, and internists—with wisdom gained through more than 30 years of experience. What could we do? The nearest hospital was in Guadalajara, more than 100 mountainous miles away. It was night. No planes could fly. Blood transfusions were out of the question because of lack of equipment. All of our combined knowledge could not be mobilized to stop

k It will also be dear to our heavenly parents. The Psalmist wrote, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

l 2 Nephi 28:31.

m D&C 1:19.

his hemorrhage. We were totally without the facilities or equipment needed to save the life of our beloved friend.

18 Our stricken colleague, a faithful Latter-day Saint, was well aware of his plight. Ashen and pale, he whispered a request for the administration of a priesthood blessing. Several of us held the Melchizedek Priesthood. We responded to his request immediately. I was asked to seal the anointing. The Spirit dictated that he be blessed to the end that the bleeding would stop and that he would continue to live and return to his home. That blessing was administered in the name of the Lord.

19 The next morning, his condition had improved. Miraculously, the bleeding had stopped. His blood pressure had returned to normal. In a couple of days he was able to return to his home. Unitedly, we thanked the Lord for this most remarkable blessing.

20 The lesson we learned was simple: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."ⁿ We experienced this firsthand. This doctrine, taught repeatedly in the scriptures,^o had now become our sure and certain knowledge.

21 Please do not misunderstand me, brothers and sisters. Of

course we need to prepare for worthy work to do. Yes, we do need to do our work well, whatever we choose to do in life. We need to be able to render significant service. And before we can achieve that competence, we must have an education. With us, education is a religious responsibility. "The glory of God [really] is intelligence."^p

22 But the learning of man has its limitations. And sometimes, as in our circumstance in rural Mexico, the combined learning of many experts cannot be applied when we need it most. We have to place our trust in the Lord.

23 That experience in Mexico taught us another important lesson. It pertains to our ultimate priorities and highest destinies as mortal beings. We learned that a doctor's ultimate destination is not in the hospital. For a lawyer, it is not in the courtroom. For a jet pilot, it is not in the cockpit of a Boeing 747. Each person's chosen occupation is only a means to an end; it is not an end in itself.

24 The end for which each of you should strive is to be the person that you can become—the person that God wants you to be. The day will come when your professional career will end, as it has already for President Uchtdorf and Elder Nelson. The ca-

n Proverbs 3:5.
o ee, for example, Proverbs 11:28; Jeremiah 17:5; Romans 8:1; 2 Nephi 4:34–35; 2 Nephi 28:31; D&C 1:19–23.
p D&C 93:36.

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reer that you will have labored so hard to achieve—the work that will have supported you and your family—will one day be behind you.

25 Then you will have learned this great lesson: Much more important than what you have done for a living is what kind of a person you have become. On your final graduation day—when you leave this frail existence—what you have become will matter most. Attributes such as “faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence”^a will all be weighed in the Lord’s balance.

26 Keep learning and keep preparing for your ultimate graduation day.^b From time to time ask yourself these questions:

- Am I ready to meet my Maker?
- Am I worthy of all the blessings He has in store for His faithful children?
- Have I received my endowment and sealing ordinances of the temple?
- Have I remained faithful to my covenants?
- Have I qualified for the greatest of all God’s blessings—the blessing of eternal life?^c

27 Long ago, Moses and the chil-

dren of Israel sang this song together: “The Lord is my strength . . . and he is . . . my salvation: he is my God.”^d I hope that graduates from Brigham Young University can sing that song with equal conviction.

28 Those who cherish their faith in God—those who trust in Him—have been given this great scriptural promise:

29 Let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God. . . .

30 These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever.^e

31 That this may be the ultimate destiny for each of us is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 35

Ask, Seek, Knock - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the October 2009 General Conference.

MY beloved brethren and sisters, I am very grateful for each of you. I am thankful too for the miracle of modern communication that allows this conference to reach millions of people throughout the world.

2 Today’s technology also allows us to use wireless telephones to exchange information rapidly.

a D&C 4:6.
 b See Alma 34:33.
 c See D&C 14:7.
 d Exodus 15:2; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Exodus 15:2.
 e D&C 76:61–62.

Recently Wendy and I were on assignment on another continent when we learned that a new baby had arrived in our family. We received the good news minutes after that birth had occurred half a world away.

3 Even more amazing than modern technology is our opportunity to access information directly from heaven, without hardware, software, or monthly service fees. It is one of the most marvelous gifts the Lord has offered to mortals. It is His generous invitation to “ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”^f

4 This timeless offer to provide personal revelation is extended to all of His children. It almost sounds too good to be true. But it is true! I have received and responded to that heavenly help. And I have learned that I always need to be ready to receive it.

5 Years ago, while immersed in the task of preparing a talk for general conference, I was aroused from a sound sleep with an idea impressed strongly upon my mind. Immediately I reached for pencil and paper near my bed and wrote as rapidly as I could. I went back to sleep, knowing I had captured that great impression. The next morning I looked at that piece of paper and found, much to my dismay, that my

writing was totally illegible! I still keep pencil and paper at my bedside, but I write more carefully now.

6 To access information from heaven, one must first have a firm faith and a deep desire. One needs to “ask with a sincere heart [and] real intent, having faith in [Jesus] Christ.”^g “Real intent” means that one really intends to follow the divine direction given.

7 The next requirement is to study the matter diligently. This concept was taught to leaders of this restored Church when they were first learning how to gain personal revelation. The Lord instructed them, “I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.”^h

8 Part of being prepared is to know and obey the relevant teachings of the Lord. Some of His timeless truths are applicable generally, such as the commandments not to steal, not to kill, and not to bear false witness. Other teachings or commandments are also general, such as those regarding the Sabbath, the sacrament, baptism, and confirmation.

9 Some revelations have been

f Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9; emphasis added; see also 3 Nephi 14:7; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:12, in Bible appendix.

g Moroni 10:4.

h D&C 9:8.

given for unique circumstances, such as Noah's building of the ark or the necessity for prophets like Moses, Lehi, and Brigham to lead their followers in arduous travel. God's long-established pattern of teaching His children through prophets assures us that He will bless each prophet and that He will bless those who heed prophetic counsel.

10 A desire to follow the prophet requires much effort because the natural man knows very little of God and even less of His prophet. Paul wrote that "the natural man [receives] not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."ⁱ The change from being a natural man to a devoted disciple is a mighty one.^j

11 Another prophet taught that "the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father."^k

12 Recently I observed such a

mighty change in a man whom I first met about 10 years ago. He had come to a stake conference at which his son was sustained as a member of the new stake presidency. This father was not a member of the Church. After his son had been set apart, I put my arms around this father and praised him for having such a wonderful son. Then I boldly declared: "The day will come when you will want to have this son sealed to you and your wife in a holy temple. And when that day comes, I would be honored to perform that sealing for you."

13 During the subsequent decade, I did not see this man. Six weeks ago he and his wife came to my office. He greeted me warmly and recounted how startled he was with my earlier invitation. He didn't do much about it until later, when his hearing began to fail. Then he awakened to the realization that his body was changing and that his time on earth was indeed limited. In due course he ultimately lost his hearing. At the same time, he became converted and joined the Church.

14 During our visit he summarized his total transformation: "I had to lose my hearing before I could heed the great importance of your message. Then I realized how much I wanted my loved ones to be sealed to me. I am now worthy and prepared. Will you

i 1 Corinthians 2:14.

j See Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12-14.

k Mosiah 3:19.

please perform that sealing?"^l
This I did with a deep sense of gratitude to God.

15 After such a conversion takes place, even further spiritual refinement can come. Personal revelation can be honed to become spiritual discernment. To discern means to sift, to separate, or to distinguish.^m The gift of spiritual discernment is a supernatural gift.ⁿ It allows members of the Church to see things not visible and to feel things not tangible.

16 Bishops are entitled to that gift as they face the task of seeking out the poor and caring for the needy. With that gift, sisters may view trends in the world and detect those that, however popular, are shallow or even dangerous. Members can discern between schemes that are flashy and fleeting and those re-

finements that are uplifting and enduring.

17 Discernment was implicit in important instructions President John Taylor gave long ago.^o He taught stake presidents, bishops, and others: "It is the right of those holding [these positions] to obtain the word of God with regard to the duties of their presidencies that they may more effectually carry out His holy purposes. None of the callings or positions in the priesthood are intended for the personal benefits, emoluments and fame of those who hold them, but are expressly given to fulfil the purposes of our Heavenly Father and build up the Kingdom of God upon the earth. ... We ... seek to understand the will of God, and then carry it out; and see that it is carried out by those over whom we have the charge."^p

^l Such conversions are complete. John Newton (1725–1807), for example, changed his life from that of a slave trader to a devoted disciple of the Lord, summarizing his conversion when he wrote: "Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound!) / That sav'd a wretch like me! / I once was lost, but now am found; / Was blind, but now I see" ("Amazing Grace," Olney Hymns [1779], no. 41).

^m Discern comes from the Latin *discernere*, meaning "to separate [or] distinguish between." The Latin prefix *dis* means "apart," and the suffix *cernere* means "to sift." See Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (2003), "discern."

ⁿ See D&C 46:23, 26–27.

^o After the death of President Brigham Young in 1877, the affairs of the Church were directed by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The apostolic interregnum continued until 1880, when the First Presidency was reorganized. John Taylor was President of the Quorum of the Twelve when this counsel was given on February 23, 1878.

^p In James R. Clark, comp., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (1965–75), 2:307.

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18 For each of you to receive revelation unique to your own needs and responsibilities, certain guidelines prevail. The Lord asks you to develop “faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God.” Then with your firm “faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence,” you may ask, and you will receive; you may knock, and it will be opened unto you.^q

19 Revelation from God is always compatible with His eternal law. It never contradicts His doctrine. It is facilitated by proper reverence for Deity. The Master gave this instruction:

20 “I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

21 “Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

22 “... To them will I reveal all mysteries [and] my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.”^r

23 Revelation need not all come at once. It may be incremental.

“Saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more.”^s Patience and perseverance are part of our eternal progression.

24 Prophets have described what they felt while receiving revelation. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery reported that “the veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.”^t President Joseph F. Smith wrote, “As I pondered over these things which are written, the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me.”^u

25 Every Latter-day Saint may merit personal revelation. The invitation to ask, seek, and knock for divine direction exists because God lives and Jesus is the living Christ. It exists because this is His living Church.^v And we are blessed today because President Thomas S. Monson is His living prophet. That we may hearken to and heed his prophetic counsel is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

q D&C 4:5–6; emphasis added; see also verse 7.

r D&C 76:5–7.

s 2 Nephi 28:30.

t D&C 110:1.

u D&C 138:11. Then followed the revelation about the preaching of the gospel to those who had died without an opportunity to hear the gospel in mortality (see verses 29–37).

v See D&C 1:30.

our classes and precious additions to our personal libraries. In 2012 we will resume the study of the teachings of our great Presidents.

How Will This Affect Me?

5 The Gospel Principles manual will be used as the course of study for second- and third-Sunday Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society classes. It will also be used as the manual for the Gospel Principles Sunday School class for new members, investigators, and members returning to activity. Because of this, some of you may wonder if there won't be some redundancy. Of course there will! Isn't it wonderful that we can gain the added benefit of repetition. Even the Savior taught the same doctrines multiple times to reinforce concepts. Consider how often He teaches us through the scriptures to believe and be baptized!^a

6 Knowing that we need to learn principles line upon line, precept upon precept, the Lord repeats many concepts so that we do not miss them.^b Such instruction, handled by caring teachers who take an interest in the welfare of their class members, will help increase faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

7 In practice, however, there will be less overlap than one might think. The Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society classes typically will use the manual two weeks a month, on the

second and third Sundays, just as the Teachings manuals have been used. Lessons will follow a sequential order in which we will finish the Gospel Principles manual in two years. Meanwhile, teachers preparing for the Gospel Principles Sunday School class will tailor their lessons each week to the needs of their class participants. Generally speaking, new members, investigators, and members returning to activity will participate in the Gospel Principles class for a period of time determined by them and their bishop or branch president, after which time they will attend the Gospel Doctrine Sunday School class.

8 As with the Teachings manuals, there will be no cost to individuals receiving these new manuals. Each ward or branch will provide the necessary manuals for its members.

9 In some parts of the world, the Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society classes have been using the books Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood and The Latter-day Saint Woman instead of Teachings. Published in 45 languages, the new edition of Gospel Principles will be available in some of these units during the years 2010 and 2011. Where the new manual is not available, however, the older edition of the Gospel Principles manual will still be used.

a see, for example, 3 Nephi 11:23–38

b see Isaiah 28:10, 13; 2 Nephi 28:30; D&C 98:12; 128:21

CHAPTER 2

Education: A Religious Responsibility - Delivered as a Devotional at BYU-Idaho in January 2010.

THANK you, President Clark. Sister Wendy Nelson and I are grateful for the privilege of participating with you today at this devotional assembly. President Thomas S. Monson and his counselors, as well as my associates in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, extend our love and greetings to each of you. We and all members of the Board of Trustees express our gratitude to members of the faculty and the staff of this institution. You are dedicated and devoted leaders. And to the students, we express our deep affection and best wishes. We love you! The youth of this Church are part of a chosen generation. You have been foreordained to be leaders in the Church of God. We are honored to be with you.

2 Tonight Wendy will speak at the Women’s Meeting and I will get to listen to her message. The assignment for me to speak to you this afternoon has come from the First Presidency. If I had my preference, I would hear from each of you. I would like to get to know every one of you. I would like to learn of your faith, of your goals in life, and of your challenges. Not knowing how I could make that happen, I had

better be obedient to my leaders and do as they have asked. Please accept my virtual handshake as a sign of my love for each of you.

3 I am still thinking about your opening hymn. Thank you for your meaningful musical prayer: “As I Searched the Holy Scriptures, loving Father of mankind, may my heart be blessed with wisdom, and may knowledge fill my mind.”^a

4 From my heart and mind to yours, I address you on this occasion. Please be true to yourself. Honor--yes, even demand--highest expectations from yourself. Pursue your education as a priority of the highest order. Gain all the education you can. With us as Latter-day Saints, education is a religious responsibility. “The glory of God is intelligence”.^b

5 Your personal intelligence--your personal identity--is everlasting and divine^c. I believe that Thomas Jefferson must have felt that dignity and divine nature of the human spirit when he wrote, “I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.”^d

Seek Education

6 Your mind is precious! It is sacred. Therefore, the educa-

a “As I Search the Holy Scriptures,” Hymns, no. 277.

b D&C 93:36

c see D&C 93:29

d Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, September 23, 1800, in Elbert D. Thomas, Thomas Jefferson, World Citizen, 1942), 251.

tion of one's mind is also sacred. Indeed, education is a religious responsibility. Of course, our opportunities and abilities will vary a great deal. But, in the pursuit of one's education, individual desire is more important than is the institution you choose; personal drive is more significant than is the faculty.

7 Our Creator expects His children everywhere to gain an education as a personal endeavor. He issued this commandment: "Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith"^e. When you leave this frail existence, your material possessions will remain here, but the Lord has declared that the knowledge you acquire here will rise with you in the resurrection.^f In light of this celestial perspective, if you impulsively drop out or otherwise cut short your education, you would not only disregard a divine decree but also abbreviate your own eternal potential.

8 Each one of you may have had or will yet have your own day of personal commitment--your own scholastic Sacred Grove equivalent. I still remember my moment of resolution. Many years ago, as an untrained teenager, I secured temporary employment at Christmastime. The work was dull, repetitive, and monotonous. Each hour of the day passed slowly. I resolved

then and there that I would obtain an education that would qualify me for more meaningful work in my life. I determined that I would become a doctor of medicine.

9 Many years later, when I was serving both as a medical doctor and a stake president, I chatted with many young people about their personal educational pursuits. Some asked me how long it took to become a doctor of medicine. I replied, "The general pattern would be four years at a university, followed by four years in medical school. And, should you choose to specialize, that could add another five years or more.

10 My words would often evoke a response like, "You mean . . . ? Why, that adds up to 13 years--and maybe more? That's too long for me!"

11 "That all depends," I would respond. "Preparation for your career is not too long if you know what you want to do with your life. How old will you be 13 years from now if you don't pursue your education? Just as old, whether or not you become what you want to be!"

12 So my counsel then--and now--is to continue your education, wherever you are, whatever your interest and opportunity may be. Determine how you can best serve your family and society and prepare well.

e D&C 88:118; emphasis added
f see D&C 130:18-19

13 Regardless of your personal choice of career, your education is the key. In the process, try to gain wisdom too. Long ago, an important question was asked by Job: "Where shall wisdom be found?"^g Just for a moment, let us focus on his profound question.

14 Education is a vital component of wisdom. Not long after the pioneers began the construction of their magnificent temple in Illinois, they established the University of the City of Nauvoo. The First Presidency then proclaimed that this university "will enable us to teach our children wisdom, to instruct them in all the knowledge and learning, in the arts, sciences, and learned professions."^h

15 They listed wisdom as a priority and ranked it even before knowledge and learning. Less than three years after the pioneers entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake, they inaugurated the University of the State of Deseret on February 28, 1850.ⁱ Later, several academies of learning were established with the hope that wisdom could be instilled among their youth.

Beware of Unbalance

16 While you search for education and wisdom, I need to offer a serious word of caution. Choose carefully what you will

learn, whose teachings you will follow, and whose purposes you will serve. And don't place all of your intellectual eggs in the solitary basket of secular learning. Remember this warning from the Book of Mormon:

17 "O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. "But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God".^j

18 That scriptural counsel was not heeded by a rich friend of mine who once proudly boasted that his climb toward wealth had come from tireless work and lessons learned in the "school of hard knocks." But his financial fortune had come at the expense of his spiritual development. Only when it was too late did he discover, to his regret, that his ladder of success had been leaning against the wrong wall. He had never heeded the following instruction from his Maker:

19 "Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath

g Job 28:12

h History of the Church, 4:269.

i See Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 28 Feb. 1850, 1-2.

j 2 Nephi 9:28-29

eternal life is rich".^k

20 In retrospect, I can now see that mankind's general and pervasive lack of knowledge of the scriptures has handicapped great numbers of people for long periods of time. The suffering that has resulted from such ignorance is truly tragic. I will illustrate that point with excerpts from history that pertain to the spread of infection from one person to another.^l

21 Back in the 19th century, very little was known about the transmission of infectious disease. Health officials and others ascribed infection simply to "air pollution." They were not concerned about pollution of the air by the visible, smoggy, hydrocarbons of today, but by what they called an invisible miasma. That miasma was blamed for almost every infection. In 1867, for example, the famous surgeon, Lord Joseph Lister, indicted bad air as the chief cause of infection. Because of that notion, in 1869, Dr. J. Y. Simpson of Edinburgh urged a policy that hospitals be taken down and rebuilt every

few years.^m Such a costly practice was also advocated by other experts.ⁿ

22 Even Florence Nightingale, a living legend following her heroic efforts in the Crimean War, was unaware of the transmission of infection from one patient to another--this despite her careful notations that wound infection accounted for 40 percent of postoperative mortality.^o Many others missed the connection, too. For centuries, innumerable mothers and babies died from "childbirth fever"--serious infections unknowingly transmitted among innocent people by the unwashed hands of attendants.^p

23 It was only in the latter part of the 19th Century that the great health heroes Robert Koch, Louis Pasteur, and others proved that infection could be caused by bacteria. Infectious organisms in contaminated body fluids were transmitted from one individual to another by attendants who had not washed their hands.

24 With these painful recollections of history in mind, may I

k D&C 6:7; see also 11:7

l See J. Lister, "On a New Method of Treating Compound Fracture, Abscess, Etc., with Observations on the Conditions of Suppuration," *Lancet*, 1 (1867):326.

m See J. Y. Simpson, "Our Existing System of Hospitalism and Its Effects," *Edinburgh Med. Journal*, 14 (1869):817.

n See L. A. Stimson, "Bacteria and Their Influence upon the Origin and Development of Septic Complications of Wounds," *New York Med. Journal*, 22 (1875):144.

o See Edward Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, 2 vols. (1913), 1:352-438.

p See Ignaz Philipp Semmelweiss, *Die Aetiologie, der Begriff und die Prophylaxis des Kindbettfiebers*, reprinted from 1861 ed. (1966), 102-13.

quote the word of the Lord, as recorded long ago in the Old Testament's book of Leviticus, chapter 15:

25 *"The Lord spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When any man hath a running issue [or as we would say, pus draining] out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean.*

"And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue

"Every bed, whereon he lieth that hath the issue, is unclean: and every thing, whereon he sitteth, shall be unclean.

"And whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water

"And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water".^q

Several verses follow that reemphasize those important instructions. Then we read this conclusion:

"And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue; then he shall . . . wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean" (v. 13).

26 Thus, our loving Heavenly Father clearly revealed, and His prophet faithfully recorded, the principles of clean technique in the handling of infected patients more than 3,000 years ago!

27 These scriptures are in complete harmony with modern medical guidelines.^r But during those many millennia, how many mothers needlessly perished? How many children suffered because man's quest for knowledge had failed to incorporate the word of the Lord in that quest?

Contemporary Challenges

28 In our day, many challenges face us. Some are new, some are old--simply clothed in modern attire. The epistles of Paul include prophecies pertaining to our day. Do these descriptions sound familiar?

29 *"In the last days perilous times shall come.*

"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, [and the list of insidious qualities goes on] . . .

"Without natural affection, . . .

"Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; . . .

"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth".^s

30 Paul's warnings describe these and other dangers of our day. You and I know that many of these threats to happiness are wrong because they are contrary to God's will. Yet they are championed by persuasive people possessing more ability than morality, more knowledge than wisdom. Their convenient ra-

q *Leviticus 15:1-7; emphasis added*

r See Isolation Techniques for use in Hospitals (National Communicable Disease Center, 1970), 9.

s 2 Timothy 3:1-7

tionalization provides self-consoling justification. But the Bible warns us that “the way of a fool is right in his own eyes”.^t Indeed, individuals with ignorance of doctrine, or people with malignity of purpose, often wear the mask of honesty. So we must constantly be on guard.

31 Presently, many influential people attribute problems of our day to overpopulation. That concept of overpopulation has become broadly believed, and efforts have been made to control birthrates--with regrettable results. For any society to survive, its birth rate must average at least 2.16 births per woman. In the past 50 years, the birth-rate has dropped in nearly every nation of the world. In the nations of Europe, the birthrate has dropped from the replacement rate of 2.16 children per woman to the present rate of 1.45.^u Data from the United States show similar worrisome trends. In 1960, minor children constituted half of the population; now they are only 30 percent.^v Predictions are that by the year 2025, single-person households in the United States will outnumber families with children.^w

32 Meanwhile, the Lord’s command to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,

and subdue it”^x has never been rescinded.

33 Now, let me ask you a question. Is the world truly overpopulated? Consider the facts. The latest data indicate that the world’s population is 6.8 billion people. If every one of those 6.8 billion people were allocated one quarter of an acre (for example, under that formula a family with a father and a mother with two children would be given one acre), I repeat, if a quarter of an acre were allocated to each man, woman, and child now living on the earth today, they would all fit in the country of Brazil, with 20 percent of Brazil still left unoccupied!

34 So the real question is, do we have faith in the word of the Lord? He said, “For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare”.^y God’s work and His glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, and He has provided this earthly opportunity for us to prepare for that glorious goal.

35 My young brothers and sisters, to build a house straight and strong, you do not choose crooked boards. So to build your eternal destiny, you cannot--you must not--limit your lessons only to those lessons that

t Proverbs 12:15

u See United Nations World Population Prospects: 2006 revision--Table II.1,p.9.

v See David P. Goldman, “Demographics & Depression,” First Things (May 2009), 24.

w Ibid.

x see Genesis 1:28; 9:1; Moses 2:28; Abraham 4:28

y D&C 104:17

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are warped by the world to exclude the truth from God. The Book of Mormon underlines this note of caution and hope:

36 "Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works".^z

37 Avoidable deaths and mounting financial burdens are also being incurred worldwide because of indifference to or ignorance of God's declaration that tobacco "is not good for man".^{aa} Many other societal problems could be listed, such as alcohol and drug abuse, gambling, pornography, immorality, infidelity, and erosion of family stability. We may know much, and still remain unwise. Where is the knowledge we have lost in obtaining information? And where is the wisdom we have lost in gaining knowledge?^{ab}

Wisdom Found

38 Wisdom is to be found in pure intelligence--in that divine light of the gospel which can guide people in all countries, all climes, and all continents. The Lord has promised that "a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel".^{ac}

Then the Lord lamented:

39 "But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men. . .

"And there shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land.

"But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die.

"And there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations; yet men will harden their hearts against me".^{ad}

40 In contrast to the darkness of such bitter chaos, the bright light of the gospel of Jesus Christ beams as the hope of the world. Missionaries and members courageously proclaim its brilliance. Wise students throughout the world heed its light and enrich their education by adding the curriculum of Church seminaries and institutes. The Lord hides His wisdom from no one. His disciple, James, wrote, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally".^{ae}

41 Again we consider the ques-

z Jacob 4:10

aa D&C 89:8

ab See T. S. Eliot, "Choruses from 'The Rock,'" The Complete Poems and Plays (1971), 96.

ac D&C 45:28

ad D&C45:29-33; see also 87:6

ae James 1:5

tion once asked by Job: "Where shall wisdom be found?"^a The answer: it emanates from the Lord. He declared, "I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more".^b

42 Divine light and wisdom continue to increase when love for Deity grows: "That which is of God is light, and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day".^c

43 Here is the Lord's promise to you and to me: "He that keepeth [God's] commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things"^d.

44 Where is wisdom? It pulses and surges in the Lord's light of truth! With that light, He lifts us toward His glorious goal of eternal life, when we may dwell with Him forever.

45 Be we again reminded that in our opening hymn we prayed for wisdom and knowledge. Each of us sang, "As I Searched the Holy Scriptures, loving Father of mankind, may my heart be blessed with wisdom, and

may knowledge fill my mind." These blessings granted will provide undergirding and everlasting hope in our hearts.

46 I know that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. We are His disciples. I leave my testimony, love and blessing with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 3

Generations Linked in Love - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2010 General Conference.

CORRESPONDENCE we receive at Easter or Christmastime provides refreshing memories of dear friends and relatives. Some of those messages are enriched with precious family photographs. Here is one that really caught my attention.

2 This is one of our great-granddaughters. I'll call her "Dear Ruby." This picture reminded me of her mother when she was about the same age. From my files I retrieved this photo of "Dear Ruby's" mother—one of our granddaughters.

3 I took this picture of "Dear Ruby's" mother some 29 years ago. Her eyes are still just as blue.

4 Fond memories surfaced from half a century ago, when "Dear

a Job 28:12
b 2 Nephi 28:30
c D&C 50:24; see also 88:67
d D&C 93:28

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Ruby's" grandmother—one of our daughters—was then the newest member of our family. This is one of her baby pictures. Now she is a loving grandmother, and I am "Dear Ruby's" great-grandfather. (I won't show you my picture as a baby. That would not help.) These photographs suggest the love that links our four generations together.

5 When I think of the love I feel for each member of our family, I sense, to a slight degree, the love that our Heavenly Father bears for His children. While the family is under attack throughout the world, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims, promotes, and protects the truth that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" and our vast family history efforts are but two evidences of how this Church brings hope and help to the sacred institution of the family.

6 We teach that God's love for His children is infinite. Regardless of race, nationality, or gender, He loves all of them.^e He has done so from the beginning and will continue to do so. He invites all to gain eternal exaltation for their family. His work and His glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life—the exaltation—of His children.^f

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."^g

7 The Atonement of His Beloved Son enabled both of the Father's objectives to be fulfilled. Without the Atonement, there would be no immortality. Without the Atonement, there would be no return to the presence of the Father and no continuation of the family beyond the grave.

8 Because of the Atonement, these consummate blessings can be realized by each of God's children who obey His eternal laws. Through the ages, many of His children have had access to the blessings of the gospel, but many more have not. Before the foundation of the world, our Heavenly Father instituted the ordinance of baptism for those who die without a knowledge of the gospel.^h He loves those children too.

9 He also provided a way for them to be part of an eternal family. Every human being who comes to this earth is the product of generations of parents. We have a natural yearning to connect with our ancestors. This desire dwells in our hearts, regardless of age.

10 Consider the spiritual connections that are formed when a

e See 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; 2 Nephi 26:33.

f See Moses 1:39.

g John 3:16.

h See Doctrine and Covenants 124:33.

young woman helps her grandmother enter family information into a computer or when a young man sees the name of his great-grandfather on a census record. When our hearts turn to our ancestors, something changes inside us. We feel part of something greater than ourselves. Our inborn yearnings for family connections are fulfilled when we are linked to our ancestors through sacred ordinances of the temple.

11 Because of the importance of this work, the Church has built temples closer to the people,ⁱ and family history research is being facilitated as never before. Methods to find and prepare names for temple ordinances are also improving. At the October 2005 conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced an exciting step forward in family history and temple work. He said: "One of the most troublesome aspects of our temple activity is that as we get more and more temples ... across the earth there is duplication of effort in proxy work. ... We, therefore, have been engaged for some time in a very difficult undertaking. ... The solution lies in complex computer technology."^j

12 Since then, not only has duplication been reduced, but procedures have been simplified so that virtually every member of the Church can participate in temple and family history work. Gone are the days when this sacred work was done only by specialists. No matter your situation, you can make family history a part of your life right now. Primary children can draw a family tree. Youth can participate in proxy baptisms. They can also help the older generation work with computers. Parents can relate stories of their lives to their posterity. Worthy adult members can hold a temple recommend and perform temple ordinances for their own kin.

13 The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead."^k New technology makes it easier than ever to fulfill that responsibility. Temple and family history work is now facilitated by a system known as the "new FamilySearch."^l This Internet-based system helps members identify their ancestors, determine what ordinance work needs to be done for them, and prepare their names for the

i President Thomas S. Monson said recently that 83 percent of Church members throughout the world now live within 200 miles (320 km) of a temple (see "Welcome to Conference," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 4).

j Gordon B. Hinckley, "Opening Remarks," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 5–6.

k *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 475.

l Presently available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and German. Will be available in Japanese, Chinese, and Korean later this year.

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temple. It can be accessed from home, a family history center,^m or wherever the Internet is available. The steps are easy to follow.ⁿ

14 You first identify individuals for whom you desire to do temple work.

15 Then you print out a Family Ordinance Request. This document provides the information needed at the temple and eliminates the need to take computer discs with you.

16 From the Family Ordinance Request, ordinance cards are printed at the temple. After an ordinance is performed, it is recorded and entered into new FamilySearch on that very day.

17 Now what about those of you who have no access to a computer or prefer not to use this technology? Don't worry! Take one step at a time. Start at home. Begin with an empty cardboard box, as suggested by President Boyd K. Packer.^o Put in that box important information about you and your family.

Add data gathered from others of your family. Then avail yourself of assistance from your ward or branch family history consultant. The new FamilySearch system enables a consultant to perform all needed computer functions for you, including preparing names for the temple. About 60,000 consultants serve throughout the world. One in your ward or branch can be very helpful to you.

18 The new FamilySearch system changes the dynamics of family history work by facilitating the creation of one common pedigree. In the past, a person worked separately, keeping his or her own family records. One often worked without knowing what other family members were doing. Now each person can contribute information while coordinating with others in developing their family tree.

19 While the new FamilySearch is a giant step forward, it is still just a step. There is more work ahead. Because the system facilitates access to information submitted to the Church over many

^m We have more than 4,000 family history centers throughout the world.

ⁿ If you have access to a computer, go to new.familysearch.org. To register for the first time, you will need your membership number and your birth date. You can obtain this information from your ward or branch clerk. Once logged into the system, you can verify that your ancestors' information is in the system and what temple ordinances are needed. You can identify ancestors who are not now known to you and add them to your family tree. Print out a Family Ordinance Request form to take to the temple and thus open the way for needed ordinances to be performed.

^o See Boyd K. Packer, "Your Family History: Getting Started," *Liahona and Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 12-17.

decades from many sources, new FamilySearch may expose duplicate entries or errors that had not previously been recognized. This feature is especially useful for those with early pioneer ancestry. Duplications and errors need correction, and no one can do it better than each individual for his or her own family.

20 You may be frustrated as you work through these challenges. Please be assured that your concerns are well understood. The Church, under the inspired leadership of President Thomas S. Monson, is working diligently to assist you in solving these problems. Together we are striving to organize the family tree for all of God’s children. This is an enormous endeavor with enormous rewards.

21 This is joyful work. Look at this photograph of new converts doing temple work for their own kin. These dear Saints are from the San Salvador El Salvador Ilopango Stake and are attending the Guatemala City Temple for the first time. They are holding their temple cards, each with the name of a deceased relative for whom they have performed a vi-

carious baptism.

22 In order for the Church’s family history efforts to succeed, priesthood direction and leadership are essential. Leaders teach and testify of the doctrine undergirding this sacred work.^p They issue callings and see that instruction is available.^q They view temple and family history activity as a way to elevate the spirit of their ward, strengthen the spiritual roots of new converts, and bless the lives of all members.

23 While temple and family history work has the power to bless those beyond the veil, it has an equal power to bless the living. It has a refining influence on those who are engaged in it. They are literally helping to exalt their families.

24 We are exalted when we can dwell together with our extended families in the presence of Almighty God. The Prophet Joseph Smith foresaw our duty: “The great day of the Lord is at hand ..., ” he said. “Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righ-

p Under the direction of the stake presidency, one or more assigned high councilors oversee temple and family history work in the stake. On the ward or branch level, the high priests group leader or elders quorum president leads the way. Many resources, printed and online, are available to help family history consultants and priesthood leaders fulfill their duties.

q Helpful new resources include Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work (item no. 36795) and Instructor’s Guide (item no. 35804) and accompanying DVD. These guides can be downloaded or viewed online at lds.org or ordered through Distribution Services.

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teousness; and let us present in his holy temple ... a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance."^a

25 The preparation of that record is our individual and collective responsibility. As we work together, we can make it worthy of all acceptance by the Lord. That record enables ordinances to be performed for and accepted by our deceased ancestors, as they may choose. Those ordinances can bring liberty to captives on the other side of the veil.^b

26 Our children, grandchildren, "Dear Ruby," and all our great-grandchildren are linked in love. They are also linked in love to ancestors. Those links, welded through sacred ordinances, lead to the exaltation of our families.^c That this sacred goal may be realized for each of us is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 4

Be Thou an Example of the Believers - Delivered in the Priesthood session of the October 2010 General Conference.

MY beloved brethren, this evening we are assembled in many locations throughout the world. Wonderful full-time missionaries are among us. I would like to

invite all full-time missionaries to stand. Wherever you are, elders and mission presidencies, please stand. We are grateful for each one of you! We thank you! We love you! You may be seated.

2 From time to time we need to remind ourselves why we have missionaries. It is because of a commandment from the Lord, who said:

3 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

4 "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."^d

5 This commandment is one of many that have been renewed because the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fulness. Missionaries serve now just as they did in New Testament times. The book of Acts describes early missionary labors of the Apostles and other disciples following the Lord's mortal ministry. There we read of the remarkable conversion and baptism of Saul of Tarsus,^e who had previously been "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord"^f and persecuting members of the fledgling Church.

a Doctrine and Covenants 128:24.
b See Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18; Doctrine and Covenants 138:18, 31, 42.
c See Doctrine and Covenants 128:18.
d Matthew 28:19–20.
e See Acts 9:3–18.
f Acts 9:1.

my family, I have observed the blessings that come to each missionary. Thus far, the number of our children, grandchildren, and their spouses called to serve as full-time missionaries is 49, and that number will continue to increase. In each instance, I have seen the growth in wisdom, maturity in judgment, and flowering of faith that developed in each missionary. They, just as many generations before them, embarked in the service of God to “serve him with all [their] heart, might, mind and strength.”¹ Missionary service has helped to shape their divine destiny.

Member Missionaries

12 Paul’s counsel, “Be thou an example of the believers,” applies equally to members. Most have not been and may never be full-time missionaries. But all can be member missionaries. That statement reminds me of a report of a humorous event. On a large playing field at a missionary training center, a sign was posted. It read, “Missionaries only!” People who also wanted to play on that field posted a new sign of their own. Their sign read, “Every Member a Missionary!”

13 Each member can be an example of the believers. Brethren, as followers of Jesus Christ, each

of you can live in accord with His teachings. You can have “a pure heart and clean hands”; you can have “the image of God engraven upon your [countenance].”^m Your good works will be evident to others.ⁿ The light of the Lord can beam from your eyes.^o With that radiance, you had better prepare for questions. The Apostle Peter so counseled, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.”^p

14 Let your response be warm and joyful. And let your response be relevant to that individual. Remember, he or she is also a child of God, that very God who dearly wants that person to qualify for eternal life and return to Him one day. You may be the very one to open the door to his or her salvation and understanding of the doctrine of Christ.^q

15 After your initial response, be ready to take the next step. You may invite your friend to attend church with you. Many of our friends do not know they are welcome in our Church buildings. “Come and see” was the Savior’s invitation to those who desired to learn more about Him.^r An invitation to attend a Sunday meeting with you or to participate in a Church social or

l Doctrine and Covenants 4:2.

m Alma 5:19.

n See Matthew 5:16; Alma 7:24.

o See Doctrine and Covenants 88:11.

p 1 Peter 3:15.

q See 2 Nephi 31:2, 21.

r John 1:39. For this pattern, see also Revelation 6:1, 3, 5, 7.

service activity will help to dispel mistaken myths and make visitors feel more comfortable among us.

16 As a member of the Church, reach out to those you do not know and greet them warmly. Each Sunday extend a hand of fellowship to at least one person you did not know before. Each day of your life, strive to enlarge your own circle of friendship.

17 You can invite a friend to read the Book of Mormon. Explain that it is not a novel or a history book. It is another testament of Jesus Christ. Its very purpose is “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.”^s There is a power in this book that can touch the hearts and lift the lives of honest seekers of truth. Invite your friend to read the book prayerfully.

18 The Prophet Joseph Smith said “that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”^t The Book of Mormon teaches of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and is the instrument by which God will fulfill His ancient promise to gather scattered Israel in these latter days.^u

19 Many years ago two colleagues of mine—a nurse and her doctor husband—asked me why I lived the way I did. I answered, “Because I know the Book of Mormon is true.” I let them borrow my copy of the book, inviting them to read it. A week later they returned my book with a polite “thanks a lot.”

20 I responded, “What do you mean, thanks a lot? That’s a totally inappropriate response for one who has read this book. You didn’t read it, did you! Please take it back and read it; then I would like my book back.”

21 Admitting that they had only turned its pages, they accepted my invitation. When they returned, they said tearfully, “We have read the Book of Mormon. We know it is true! We want to know more.” They learned more, and it was my privilege to baptize both of them.

22 Another way that you can share the gospel is to invite friends to meet with full-time missionaries in your home. Those missionaries are called and prepared to teach the gospel. Your friends, in the comfort of your home and with your constant reassurance, can begin their journey toward salvation and exaltation. The Lord said, “Ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and

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s Title page of the Book of Mormon.
t Introduction to the Book of Mormon.
u See 3 Nephi 21:1–7. Note that these seven verses comprise one sentence.

harden not their hearts.”^v

23 Scripture tells us that “there are many yet on the earth ... who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.”^w Isn’t that your opportunity? You can become their own disciple of discovery!

24 Now in this day of the Internet, there are new and exciting ways you can do missionary work. You can invite friends and neighbors to visit the new mormon.org Web site. If you have blogs and online social networks, you could link your sites to mormon.org. And there you can create your own personal profile. Each profile includes an expression of belief, an experience, and a testimony. Because this is a new feature, most of these profiles are available in English. Profiles in other languages will follow.

25 These profiles can have a profound influence for good. Two months ago a young man named Zac—a freshman in college—saw an ad for mormon.org on television in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He connected with the Web site and was intrigued by the profiles of Church members. At our Web site he found the link that informed him

where he could attend church. The next Sunday, dressed in a white shirt and tie, he attended church, was introduced to members of the ward, and enjoyed all three hours of meetings. He was invited to a member’s home for dinner, followed by his first missionary lesson. In less than two weeks, he was baptized and confirmed as a member of the Church.^x Welcome, Zac! (He is listening.)

26 Each exemplary follower of Jesus Christ can become an effective member missionary. Members and full-time missionaries may walk arm in arm in bringing the blessings of the gospel to cherished friends and neighbors. Many of them are of Israel, now being gathered as promised. This is all part of the preparation for the Second Coming of the Lord.^y He wants each of us truly to be an example of the believers.

27 I know that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. The Book of Mormon is true. Joseph Smith is its translator and the prophet of this last dispensation. President Thomas S. Monson is God’s prophet today. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

v Doctrine and Covenants 29:7.

w Doctrine and Covenants 123:12.

x Personal communication from William G. Woods, president of the Louisiana Baton Rouge Mission.

y See Malachi 4:5; 3 Nephi 25:5; Doctrine and Covenants 2:1; 110:14–16; 128:17; 138:46; Joseph Smith—History 1:38.

the Holy Ghost. Believe in your capacity to be strengthened and sustained by them even through your darkest hours of despair. Listen to these words of the Lord, as recorded in Section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

7 Verily I say unto you my friends, fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks;

8 Waiting patiently on the Lord, for your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord . . . , and are recorded with this seal and testament the Lord hath sworn and decreed that they shall be granted.

9 Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; . . . all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord.^a

10 Ponder that incredible promise! The Lord chose the strongest words to certify his intent. Your prayers are recorded with a seal and testament sworn and decreed with an immutable covenant that your afflictions will accrue to your good, and be certified by His holy name.

11 Later in that same section, this promise of the Lord is extended to the posterity of His faithful children. Listen to this remark-

able promise: I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children’s battles, and their children’s children’s,...to the third and fourth generation.^b Brothers and sisters, that promise can also be yours, through your faithfulness!

12 I testify that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored. President Thomas S. Monson is His presiding Apostle today. As you follow the Lord and His leaders in His Church and in this University, you will be blessed now and forever more. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 6

Face the Future with Faith - Delivered in the Saturday Afternoon session of the April 2011 General Conference.

MY beloved brethren and sisters, thank you for your sustaining influence, not only by your uplifted hand but also by your uplifting service at home, in the Church, and in your communities. We love to be with you and see you among your families and friends. Wherever you live, we observe your efforts to make this world a better place. We sustain you! We love you! As you pray for us, so we pray for you!

2 We envision your families gathered around the television or online to watch the proceedings of general conference at home. An

a Doctrine and Covenants 98:1-3
b Doctrine and Covenants 98:37

alert mother and father sent me a copy of a picture they took at conference time. They observed the reaction of their then-18-month-old son, who recognized the features and voice of the speaker. The child started to throw kisses toward the TV. He wanted to come closer. So his thoughtful older sister quickly hoisted her little brother on her shoulders and brought him closer. Here is that photograph.

3 Yes, the image on the TV is mine, and those children are our grandchildren. In a few years this boy will be an elder endowed in the temple and ready for his mission. Later he will be sealed to an eternal companion of his choice. Can you see him one day as a husband and father, with children of his own? And one day he will say farewell to his grandfathers, with a sure knowledge that death is part of life.

4 It is true. We live to die, and we die to live again. From an eternal perspective, the only death that is truly premature is the death of one who is not prepared to meet God.

5 As apostles and prophets, we are concerned not only for our children and grandchildren but for yours as well—and for each of God’s children. All that the future holds in store for each sacred child of God will be shaped by his or her parents, family,

friends, and teachers. Thus, our faith now becomes part of our posterity’s faith later.

6 Each individual will make his or her way in a constantly changing world—a world of competing ideologies. The forces of evil will ever be in opposition to the forces of good. Satan constantly strives to influence us to follow his ways and make us miserable, even as he is.^c And the normal risks of life, such as illness, injury, and accident, will ever be present.

7 We live in a time of turmoil. Earthquakes and tsunamis wreak devastation, governments collapse, economic stresses are severe, the family is under attack, and divorce rates are rising. We have great cause for concern. But we do not need to let our fears displace our faith. We can combat those fears by strengthening our faith.

8 Start with your children. You parents bear the primary responsibility to strengthen their faith. Let them feel your faith, even when sore trials come upon you. Let your faith be focused on our loving Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Teach that faith with deep conviction. Teach each precious boy or girl that he or she is a child of God, created in His image, with a sacred purpose and potential. Each is born with challenges to overcome and faith to be developed.^d

c See 2 Nephi 2:27.

d Peter taught this concept when he expressed the hope that “ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world” (2 Peter 1:4).

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9 Teach of faith in God's plan of salvation. Teach that our sojourn in mortality is a period of probation, a time of trial and testing to see if we will do whatever the Lord commands us to do.^e

10 Teach of faith to keep all the commandments of God, knowing that they are given to bless His children and bring them joy.^f Warn them that they will encounter people who pick which commandments they will keep and ignore others that they choose to break. I call this the cafeteria approach to obedience. This practice of picking and choosing will not work. It will lead to misery. To prepare to meet God, one keeps all of His commandments. It takes faith to obey them, and keeping His commandments will strengthen that faith.

11 Obedience allows God's blessings to flow without constraint. He will bless His obedient children with freedom from bondage and misery. And He will bless them with more light. For example, one keeps the Word of Wisdom knowing that obedience will not only bring freedom from addiction, but it will also add blessings of wisdom and treasures of knowledge.^g

12 Teach of faith to know that obedience to the commandments of God will provide physical and spiritual protection. And remember, God's holy angels are ever on call to help us. The Lord so declared: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up."^h What a promise! When we are faithful, He and His angels will help us.

13 Unfailing faith is fortified through prayer. Your heartfelt pleadings are important to Him. Think of the intense and impassioned prayers of the Prophet Joseph Smith during his dreadful days of incarceration in Liberty Jail. The Lord responded by changing the Prophet's perspective. He said, "Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good."ⁱ

14 If we pray with an eternal perspective, we need not wonder if our most tearful and heartfelt pleadings are heard. This promise from the Lord is recorded in section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

15 "Your prayers have entered

e See Abraham 3:25.

f See 2 Nephi 2:25.

g See Doctrine and Covenants 89:19; see also Isaiah 45:3.

h Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.

i Doctrine and Covenants 122:7. Another example of change of perspective is recorded in Psalms: "Preserve my soul; ... my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. ... I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore" (Psalm 86:2-3, 12).

holy Melchizedek Priesthood. These blessings can change the circumstances of your lives, in matters such as health, companionship of the Holy Ghost, personal relationships, and opportunities for the future. The power and authority of this priesthood holds the keys to all spiritual blessings of the Church.^a And most remarkably, the Lord has declared that He will sustain those blessings, according to His will.^b

22 The greatest of all the blessings of the priesthood are bestowed in holy temples of the Lord. Fidelity to covenants made there will qualify you and your family for the blessings of eternal life.^c

23 Your rewards come not only hereafter. Many blessings will be yours in this life, among your children and grandchildren. You faithful Saints do not have to fight life's battles alone. Think of that! The Lord declared, "I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."^d Later came this promise to His faithful people: "I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children's battles, and their children's children's, ... to the third and fourth generation."^e

24 Our beloved President Thom-

as S. Monson has given us his prophetic witness. He said: "I testify to you that our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments."

25 President Monson continued: "My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith."^f

26 To President Monson's powerful declaration I add my own. I testify that God is our Father. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored to the earth. His truth, covenants, and ordinances enable us to overcome fear and face the future with faith! I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 7

Visions Past, Present, and Future - Delivered as a commencement address at BYU-Hawaii on April 9, 2011.

SISTER Wendy Nelson and I extend our sincere congratulations to you graduates and your fam-

a See Doctrine and Covenants 107:18.

b See Doctrine and Covenants 132:47, 59.

c See Abraham 2:11.

d Isaiah 49:25; see also Doctrine and Covenants 105:14.

e Doctrine and Covenants 98:37.

f Thomas S. Monson, "Be of Good Cheer," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 92.

it might be for your profit and learning.^h

Visions For The Future

7 With these blessings of prophetic visions of the past and present, you logically ask, "What about our future?" May I offer my vision of you and your future. There is good news and bad news. I won't try to separate them because both may come at you at the same time. You enter a world caught in a steep slippery slide of diminishing moral values. Against that backdrop, your character and integrity will let you stand out and shine like a lighthouse. If you are true and faithful, you will stand out in stark contrast to the surrounding masses mired in mediocrity. You will be anchored to eternal truth. You, your families, and your homes will be become beacons of hope in a darkened world. You will be seen as citadels of stability wherever you live. Your faith and optimism will make you leaders in your communities, in your countries, and in the kingdom of God on earth.

8 It will be your privilege to proclaim the gospel to the world, teaching people of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatever God has commanded you.ⁱ

9 You will place a high priority on those two great commandments: to love God with all your heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself.^j You will continue to learn and build in yourselves an ever-increasing capacity to serve others. As you do so, you will find that your own lives have been enlarged and enriched.^k

10 When you serve your fellow men and women, you serve God and help to establish His Church in those lands where you live. You will be the Relief Society leaders and the Priesthood leaders of the future. And most importantly, you will nurture the next generation who one day will bear leadership responsibilities in their world of tomorrow.

11 You will be examples to all with whom you associate: examples of forbearance, of integrity, of controlling your tempers, appetites, and emotions, as you honor the priesthood and your sacred covenants. You will cherish your righteous and youthful years. I plead as did Paul, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."^l

12 As you adhere to the standards of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you will be in great demand. And

h See 1 Nephi 19:23.
i See Matthew 28:19-20.
j See Matthew 22:37-39.
k See Matthew 10:39
l 1 Timothy 4:12.

ostolic blessing upon you, my beloved brothers and sisters. I bless you with a deep desire to be devoted disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you will feast upon His words and apply them in your daily lives. I bless you with continuing success in your occupational and educational endeavors, that you will be able to provide for your needs and be able to share your bounty with the poor and the needy. I bless you with health and strength to fulfill the measure of your creation.

19 I so bless you and leave my testimony with you that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. President Thomas S. Monson is His prophet today, whom we love and sustain. This blessing and testimony I leave with you, with my expression of love and gratitude for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 8

What the Book of Mormon Teaches about the Love of God - Published in the October 2011 Ensign magazine.

MOST Christians are familiar with the attributes of Jesus Christ as reported in the Bible. They marvel at the love He demonstrated for the poor, the sick, and the downtrodden. Those who consider themselves His disciples also strive to emulate His example and follow His beloved

Apostle’s exhortation: “Let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ... For God is love”.^a

2 This concept is clarified by the Book of Mormon. It describes how one is born of God and how one gains the power to love as He does. It identifies three core principles that bring the power of God’s love into our lives.

3 First, the Book of Mormon teaches that exercising faith in Christ and entering into a covenant with Him to keep His commandments is the key to being reborn spiritually. To Book of Mormon people who had made such a covenant, King Benjamin remarked, “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters”.^b

4 Second, the Savior Himself teaches that the power to become more like Him comes through receiving the ordinances of the gospel: “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

a 1 John 4:7–8
 b Mosiah 5:7

had given His disciples in the Old World. He healed their sick. He knelt and prayed to the Father in words so powerful and sacred they could not be recorded. So powerful was His prayer that those who heard Him were overcome with joy. Overcome by His love for them and by their faith in Him, Jesus Himself wept. He prophesied of God's work in the centuries leading up to the promised advent of His Second Coming.^a

14 Then He asked them to bring their children to Him.

15 "And he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

16 "And when he had done this he wept again;

17 "And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

18 "And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, ... and the angels did minister unto them".^b

19 Such is the purity and power of God's love, as revealed in the Book of Mormon.

20 In these latter days we who are privileged to have the Book of Mormon, to be members of the Lord's Church, to have His gospel, and to keep His commandments know something of God's infinite love. We know how to make His love our own. As we become His true disciples, we gain the power to love as He does. As we keep His commandments, we become more like Him. We broaden our personal circle of love in reaching out to people of every nation, kindred, and tongue.

21 With profound gratitude for His exemplary life, we can make this scripture our standard: "Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons [and daughters] of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is".^c

CHAPTER 9

Covenants - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon session of the October 2011 General Conference.

ONE week after a recent assignment to create the first stake in Moscow, Russia,^d I attended a district conference in St. Petersburg. While speaking about my gratitude for early missionaries

a See 3 Nephi 11–14; 18–20.

b 3 Nephi 17:21–24

c Compare 1 John 3:1–3. Moroni 7:48

d The Moscow Russia Stake was created on Sunday, June 5, 2011.

and local leaders who brought strength to the Church in Russia, I mentioned the name of Vyacheslav Efimov. He was the first Russian convert to become a mission president. He and his wife did wonderfully well in that assignment. Not long after they had completed their mission, and much to our sorrow, President Efimov suddenly passed away.^e He was only 52 years of age.

2 While speaking of this pioneering couple, I felt impressed to ask the congregation if Sister Efimov might be present. Far in the rear of the room, a woman stood. I invited her to come to the microphone. Yes, it was Sister Galina Efimov. She spoke with conviction and bore a powerful testimony of the Lord, of His gospel, and of His restored Church. She and her husband had been sealed in the holy temple. She said they were united forever. They were still missionary companions, she on this side of the veil and he on the other side.^f With tears of joy, she thanked God for sacred temple covenants. I wept too, with full realization that the everlasting unity exemplified by this faith-

ful couple was the righteous result of making, keeping, and honoring sacred covenants.

3 One of the most important concepts of revealed religion is that of a sacred covenant. In legal language, a covenant generally denotes an agreement between two or more parties. But in a religious context, a covenant is much more significant. It is a sacred promise with God. He fixes the terms. Each person may choose to accept those terms. If one accepts the terms of the covenant and obeys God's law, he or she receives the blessings associated with the covenant. We know that "when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."^g

4 Through the ages, God has made covenants with His children.^h His covenants occur throughout the entire plan of salvation and are therefore part of the fulness of His gospel.ⁱ For example, God promised to send a Savior for His children,^j asking in turn for their obedience to His law.^k

5 In the Bible we read of men and women in the Old World

e Vyacheslav Efimov was president of the Russia Yekaterinburg Mission from 1995 to 1998. He died on February 25, 2000.

f See Doctrine and Covenants 138:57.

g Doctrine and Covenants 130:21.

h For example, after the great Flood, He stated that "the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant, which I have made between me and you ... ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Genesis 9:14–15, footnote 15b; from Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 9:20).

i See Doctrine and Covenants 66:2; 133:57.

j See John 3:16.

k See Abraham 3:25.

who were identified as children of the covenant. What covenant? “The covenant which God made with [their] fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”^l

6 In the Book of Mormon we read of people in the New World who were also identified as children of the covenant.^m The resurrected Lord so informed them: “Behold, ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”ⁿ

7 The Savior explained the importance of their identity as children of the covenant. He said, “The Father having raised me up unto you first, ... sent me to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities; and this because ye are the children of the covenant.”^o

8 The covenant God made with Abraham^p and later reaffirmed with Isaac^q and Jacob^r is of transcendent significance. It contained several promises, including:

9 Jesus the Christ would be born through Abraham’s lineage.

10 Abraham’s posterity would be numerous, entitled to an eternal increase, and also entitled to bear the priesthood.

11 Abraham would become a father of many nations.

12 Certain lands would be inherited by his posterity.

13 All nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed.^s

14 And that covenant would be everlasting—even through “a thousand generations.”^t

15 Some of these promises have been fulfilled; others are still pending. I quote from an early Book of Mormon prophecy: “Our father [Lehi] hath not spoken of our seed alone, but also of all the house of Israel, pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days; which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham.”^u Isn’t that amazing? Some 600 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, prophets knew that the Abrahamic covenant would be finally fulfilled only in the latter days.

l Acts 3:25.

m See 3 Nephi 20:26.

n 3 Nephi 20:25.

o 3 Nephi 20:26.

p See Genesis 17:1–10, 19; Leviticus 26:42; Acts 3:25; Bible Dictionary, “Abraham, Covenant of.”

q See Genesis 26:1–5, 24.

r See Genesis 28:1–4, 10–14; 35:9–13; 48:3–4.

s See references listed above in endnotes 13–15.

t Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Chronicles 16:15; Psalm 105:8.

u 1 Nephi 15:18; emphasis added.

16 To facilitate that promise, the Lord appeared in these latter days to renew that Abrahamic covenant. To the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Master declared:

17 “Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins—from whose loins ye are, ... my servant Joseph. ...

18 “This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham.”^v

19 With this renewal, we have received, as did they of old, the holy priesthood and the everlasting gospel. We have the right to receive the fulness of the gospel, enjoy the blessings of the priesthood, and qualify for God’s greatest blessing—that of eternal life.^w

20 Some of us are the literal seed of Abraham; others are gathered into his family by adoption. The Lord makes no distinction.^x To-

gether we receive these promised blessings—if we seek the Lord and obey His commandments.^y But if we don’t, we lose the blessings of the covenant.^z

To assist us, His Church provides patriarchal blessings to give each recipient a vision for his or her future as well as a connection with the past, even a declaration of lineage back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.^{aa}

21 Brethren of the covenant have the right to qualify for the oath and covenant of the priesthood.^{ab}

If you are “faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods ... and the magnifying [of your] calling, [you] are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of [your] bodies.”^{ac} That is not all. Men who worthily receive the priesthood receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who receive the Lord receive God the Father.^{ad} And those who receive the Father receive all that He

v Doctrine and Covenants 132:30–31. The Lord also told the Prophet Joseph Smith, “As I said unto Abraham concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph: In thee and in thy seed shall the kindred of the earth be blessed” (Doctrine and Covenants 124:58).

w See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

x See Acts 10:34–35.

y See Exodus 19:5.

z Scripture declares that “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (Doctrine and Covenants 82:10).

aa On September 21, 1823, this covenantal concept was first revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The angel Moroni declared that Elijah the prophet would come as a messenger from heaven to plant in the hearts of the children a knowledge of promises once made to the fathers of the house of Israel (see Doctrine and Covenants 2:1–3).

ab See Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–34, 39–40.

ac Doctrine and Covenants 84:33.

ad See Doctrine and Covenants 84:35, 37.

has.^{ae} Incredible blessings flow from this oath and covenant to worthy men, women, and children in all the world.

22 Ours is the responsibility to help fulfill the Abrahamic covenant. Ours is the seed foreordained and prepared to bless all people of the world.^{af} That is why priesthood duty includes missionary work. After some 4,000 years of anticipation and preparation, this is the appointed day when the gospel is to be taken to the kindreds of the earth. This is the time of the promised gathering of Israel. And we get to participate! Isn't that exciting? The Lord is counting on us and our sons—and He is profoundly grateful for our daughters—who worthily serve as missionaries in this great time of the gathering of Israel.

23 The Book of Mormon is a tangible sign that the Lord has commenced to gather His children of covenant Israel.^{ag} This book, written for our day, states as one of its purposes that “ye may know that the covenant which the Father hath made with the children of Israel ... is already beginning to be fulfilled. ... For behold, the Lord will remember his covenant which he hath made unto his

people of the house of Israel.”^{ah}

24 Indeed, the Lord has not forgotten! He has blessed us and others throughout the world with the Book of Mormon. One of its purposes is for “the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.”^{ai} It helps us to make covenants with God. It invites us to remember Him and to know His Beloved Son. It is another testament of Jesus Christ.

25 Children of the covenant have the right to receive His doctrine and to know the plan of salvation. They claim it by making covenants of sacred significance. Brigham Young said: “All Latter-day Saints enter the new and everlasting covenant when they enter this Church. ... They enter the new and everlasting covenant to sustain the Kingdom of God.”^{aj} They keep the covenant by obedience to His commandments.

26 At baptism we covenant to serve the Lord and keep His commandments.^{ak} When we partake of the sacrament, we renew that covenant and declare our willingness to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. Thereby we are adopted as His sons and daughters and are

ae See Doctrine and Covenants 84:38.

af See Alma 13:1–9.

ag See 3 Nephi 29.

ah 3 Nephi 29:1, 3.

ai Title page of the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.

aj Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young (1997), 62.

ak See Doctrine and Covenants 20:37.

known as brothers and sisters. He is the father of our new life.^a Ultimately, in the holy temple, we may become joint heirs to the blessings of an eternal family, as once promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their posterity.^b Thus, celestial marriage is the covenant of exaltation.

27 When we realize that we are children of the covenant, we know who we are and what God expects of us.^c His law is written in our hearts.^d He is our God and we are His people.^e Committed children of the covenant remain steadfast, even in the midst of adversity. When that doctrine is deeply implanted in our hearts, even the sting of death is soothed and our spiritual stamina is strengthened.

28 The greatest compliment that can be earned here in this life is to be known as a covenant keeper. The rewards for a covenant keeper will be realized both here

and hereafter. Scripture declares that “ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, ... and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven ... [and] dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness.”^f

29 God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored to bless all people. President Thomas S. Monson is His prophet today. And we, as faithful children of the covenant, will be blessed now and forever. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 10

Focus on Values - From an address given to youth in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2011. Published in the February 2013 New Era Magazine.

I would like to talk about some of the values you ought to be fo-

a “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, ... that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).

b See Galatians 3:29; Doctrine and Covenants 86:8–11.

c This concept pertains to us: “Many generations after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed—and at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord; and then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers by him; wherefore, they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved” (1 Nephi 15:13–14).

d See Isaiah 55:3; Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 2:15; 2 Corinthians 3:2–3; Hebrews 10:16.

e See Psalm 95:7; 100:3; Jeremiah 24:7; 31:33; 32:38; Ezekiel 11:20; 37:23, 27; Zechariah 8:8; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 8:10.

f Mosiah 2:41.

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cused on in your daily lives. You young women will recognize them. And you young men, they are not exclusively for the young women. These valves are just as worthy of your attention as they are for the young women.

Faith

2 The first Young Women value is faith. In fact, faith is the first principle of the gospel. Your faith should be focused on our loving Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. You should also continually strengthen your faith in God’s plan of salvation.

3 It is important to develop faith to keep all of the commandments of God, knowing that they are given to bless you and bring you joy. You will encounter people who pick which commandments they will keep and which they will ignore. This practice of picking and choosing will not work. It will lead to misery. To prepare to meet God, you need to keep all of His commandments. It takes faith to obey them, and keeping His commandments will strengthen that faith.

Divine Nature

4 The second Young Women value is divine nature. That’s a grown-up way of saying, “I am a child of God.” You have divinity within you. Our Heavenly Father created you.

5 Have you ever thought to be thankful for your heart? Look at the job it’s doing. It’s pumping enough fluid every day to fill a railroad tank car, about 2,000

gallons (7,570 liters). Inside the heart are four sets of valves that open and close 100,000 times a day, more than 36 million times a year, and they don’t break. No man-made material—paper, plastic, metal, or steel—can open and close that many times, with that frequency, without breaking. Every organ in the body is so well designed and so marvelous in its function.

6 You know if you try to swim underwater without taking a breath, you can go only so long. What is it that drives you up to take a breath? Carbon dioxide is being measured by two small meters in the neck, and they send word up to your brain as if to say, “Your carbon dioxide level is too high. Get rid of it.” So you swim up to the surface and exhale, getting rid of the carbon dioxide.

7 What incredible abilities your body possesses! Take good care of your body. Don’t do anything that would defile the natural beauty of this marvelous, God-given creation.

Individual Worth

8 The next Young Women value is individual worth. A faithful disciple of Jesus Christ will become a devoted son or daughter of God—more concerned with being righteous than with being selfish, more anxious to exercise compassion than to exercise dominion, more committed to integrity than to popularity.

9 You know of your infinite worth. Indeed, each faithful

young woman in the Church proclaims that individual worth is one of her most cherished values. She declares, "I am of infinite worth with my own divine mission, which I will strive to fulfill".^g The same applies to young men. Each son and daughter of God is of infinite worth because of his or her divine mission.

10 Individual worth also includes the development of your faith as an individual. No one else can develop your faith for you. You can wish you had the faith of President Thomas S. Monson or some other hero, but you must develop it yourself. When you make a mistake, as an individual you repent of these past problems. When you were baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, it was done as an individual. So, as an individual, you make covenants. These ordinances of salvation are all an individual matter.

11 The greatest ordinances and blessings of membership in the Church come in the temple. There we have the ordinances of the endowment and the sealings to parents, spouses, and ancestors. All ordinances of exaltation are a family matter. Do you see that difference? The ordinances of salvation are individual; the ordinances of exaltation involve more than one person.

Knowledge

12 The next Young Women value is knowledge. In the Church,

obtaining an education and getting knowledge are a religious responsibility. We educate our minds so that one day we can render service of worth to somebody else. Being educated is the difference between wishing you could do some good and being able to do some good.

13 Often people ask me what it's like to be a doctor. They ask, "How long were you in school?" Well, it was a long time. From the time I got my medical degree until the time I sent my first bill for professional services rendered was 12½ years. It was a long time, but how old would I have been 12½ years later if I weren't doing that? Exactly the same. So you might as well strive to become all that you can become.

14 My medical education is what allowed me to perform a heart operation on President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) in 1972. So don't discount knowledge. The glory of God really is intelligence.^h

Choice and Accountability

15 The next Young Women value is choice and accountability. This is another way of saying "moral agency." Moral agency is part of life because Heavenly Father wanted each one of us to act for ourselves and to become what we want to be.

16 Choice and accountability tells you that for every choice

g Young Women Personal Progress [booklet, 2009], 29
h see D&C 93:36

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you make, you are accountable for the consequences of that choice. So we need to make responsible decisions. It probably doesn't matter much whether you wear a blue tie or a red tie or a purple dress or a green dress, but what does matter is whether your choice draws you closer to or away from the Lord and His way of life. And why do we counsel and plead with you to follow the way of the Lord? It's simply because that is the way to happiness.

Good Works

17 Next comes the Young Women value of good works. This value is patterned after the life of Jesus Christ, who loved people. To show His love for people, He served them. When we love somebody, we show it by doing something nice. So learn to serve: find a need and fulfill a need. Surprise people with a good deed they hadn't planned on. We have that opportunity at home, at school, and at church.

18 I remember the first time I went to Africa as a General Authority. My traveling partner was Elder Russell C. Taylor. Each morning when I woke up, I found that he had shined my shoes. He didn't need to shine my shoes, but that was his way of saying, "I love you."

Integrity

19 The next Young Women value is integrity. The word integrity comes from the word integer,

meaning "whole" or "intact." In medicine we talk about the structural integrity of the heart. So when something goes wrong—for example, a wound to the heart—we say it has lost its integrity; it no longer does what it's supposed to do. Applied to the human being, integrity means you're dependable—you can be counted on.

20 In the scriptures we read that the Prophet Joseph Smith's brother Hyrum was loved by the Lord because of the "integrity of his heart".ⁱ The Lord was not talking about the anatomy of the heart; He was talking about the integrity of Hyrum's spirit.

Virtue

21 The newest Young Women value is virtue. Virtue is a wonderful word. What does it mean to you? Virtue means "purity." But there's also another meaning. Do you remember in the New Testament when the woman who had the issue of blood touched the hem of the Savior's garment? The Savior said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me".^j In that case, virtue has a different meaning. In the Greek language it's the word *dunamis*, which is the root from which we get the words *dynamo* and *dynamite*. It means "power." We want both kinds of virtue for you precious young men and young women.

i D&C 124:15
j Luke 8:46

Become All You Can Be

22 Knowledge brings power; purity brings power; love brings power. We want you to have the power to become all that the Lord wants you to become. You're growing, you're changing, and you are in charge of what you will end up being.

23 I don't think it makes any difference whether you are a furniture salesman, a surgeon, a lawyer, or an architect. Any worthy occupation, whatever suits you, is wonderful. But what really matters is what you are becoming.

24 Ask yourself these questions: Do I have integrity? Do I have purity? Do I have love? Do I have compassion? All of these attributes are beyond measure. And as you think about and live by the attributes of the Young Women values, they will help you become all that you can be.

CHAPTER 11

Thanks Be To God - Delivered in the Sunday Morning session of the April 2012 General Conference.

DEAR brothers and sisters, we thank you for your sustaining support and your devotion. We express our gratitude and love to each of you.

2 Recently, Sister Nelson and I enjoyed the beauty of tropical fish in a small private aquarium. Fish with vivid colors and of a variety of shapes and sizes darted back and forth. I asked the attendant nearby, "Who provides food for these beautiful fish?"

3 She responded, "I do."

4 Then I asked, "Have they ever thanked you?"

5 She replied, "Not yet!"

6 I thought of some people I know who are just as oblivious to their Creator and their true "bread of life."^a They live from day to day without an awareness of God and His goodness unto them.

7 How much better it would be if all could be more aware of God's providence and love and express that gratitude to Him. Ammon taught, "Let us give thanks to [God], for he doth work righteousness forever."^b Our degree of gratitude is a measure of our love for Him.

8 God is the Father of our spirits.^c He has a glorified, perfected body of flesh and bone.^d We lived with Him in heaven before we were born.^e And when He created us physically, we were created in the image of God, each with a personal body.^f

a John 6:35, 48; see also verse 51.
b Alma 26:8; see also Alma 7:23.
c See Acts 17:27-29.
d See Doctrine and Covenants 130:22.
e See Jeremiah 1:4-5; Romans 8:16; Hebrews 12:9; Moses 6:51.
f See Genesis 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:44; Moses 3:7.

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9 Think of our physical sustenance. It is truly heaven-sent. The necessities of air, food, and water all come to us as gifts from a loving Heavenly Father. The earth was created to support our brief sojourn in mortality.^g 10 We were born with a capacity to grow, love, marry, and form families.

11 Marriage and family are ordained of God. The family is the most important social unit in time and in eternity. Under God's great plan of happiness, families can be sealed in temples and be prepared to return to dwell in His holy presence forever. That is eternal life! It fulfills the deepest longings of the human soul—the natural yearning for endless association with beloved members of one's family.

12 We are part of His divine purpose: "My work and my glory," He said, is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."^h In order to achieve those objectives, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."ⁱ That act was a supernal manifestation of God's love. "For [He]

sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."^j

13 Central to God's eternal plan is the mission of His Son, Jesus Christ.^k He came to redeem God's children.^l Because of the Lord's Atonement, resurrection (or immortality) became a reality.^m Because of the Atonement, eternal life became a possibility for all who would qualify. Jesus so explained:

14 "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

15 "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."ⁿ

16 For the Atonement of the Lord and His gift of resurrection—for this sublime message of Easter—thanks be to God!

Physical Gifts

17 Our Heavenly Father loves His children.^o He has blessed each with physical and spiritual gifts. Let me speak of each type. When you sing "I Am a Child of God," think of His gift to you of your own physical body. The

g See 1 Nephi 17:36.

h Moses 1:39.

i John 3:16.

j John 3:17.

k His purposes are succinctly summarized in 3 Nephi 27:13–22.

l See Alma 11:40.

m See 2 Nephi 9:6–7, 20–22.

n John 11:25–26.

o See 1 John 4:10; 1 Nephi 17:40.

many amazing attributes of your body attest to your own “divine nature.”^p

18 Each organ of your body is a wondrous gift from God. Each eye has an autofocusing lens. Nerves and muscles control two eyes to make a single three-dimensional image. The eyes are connected to the brain, which records the sights seen.

19 Your heart is an incredible pump.^q It has four delicate valves that control the direction of blood flow. These valves open and close more than 100,000 times a day—36 million times a year. Yet, unless altered by disease, they are able to withstand such stress almost indefinitely.

20 Think of the body’s defense system. To protect it from harm, it perceives pain. In response to infection, it generates antibodies. The skin provides protection. It warns against injury that excessive heat or cold might cause.

21 The body renews its own outdated cells and regulates the levels of its own vital ingredients. The body heals its cuts, bruises, and broken bones. Its capacity for reproduction is another sacred gift from God.

22 Be we reminded that a perfect body is not required to achieve one’s divine destiny. In fact,

some of the sweetest spirits are housed in frail or imperfect bodies. Great spiritual strength is often developed by people with physical challenges, precisely because they are so challenged.

23 Anyone who studies the workings of the human body has surely “seen God moving in his majesty and power.”^r Because the body is governed by divine law, any healing comes by obedience to the law upon which that blessing is predicated.^s

24 Yet some people erroneously think that these marvelous physical attributes happened by chance or resulted from a big bang somewhere. Ask yourself, “Could an explosion in a printing shop produce a dictionary?” The likelihood is most remote. But if so, it could never heal its own torn pages or reproduce its own newer editions!

25 If the body’s capacity for normal function, defense, repair, regulation, and regeneration were to prevail without limit, life here would continue in perpetuity. Yes, we would be stranded here on earth! Mercifully for us, our Creator provided for aging and other processes that would ultimately result in our physical death. Death, like birth, is part of life. Scripture teaches that “it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this

p 2 Peter 1:4.
q The heart pumps about 2,000 gallons (7,570 L) per day.
r Doctrine and Covenants 88:47.
s See Doctrine and Covenants 130:21. Indeed, that divine law is incontrovertible.

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temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness."^t To return to God through the gateway we call death is a joy for those who love Him and are prepared to meet Him.^u Eventually the time will come when each "spirit and ... body shall be reunited again in ... perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame,"^v never to be separated again. For these physical gifts, thanks be to God!

Spiritual Gifts

26 Important as is the body, it serves as a tabernacle for one's eternal spirit. Our spirits existed in the premortal realm^w and will continue to live after the body dies.^x The spirit provides the body with animation and personality.^y In this life and in the next, spirit and body, when joined together, become a living

soul of supernal worth.

27 Because one's spirit is so important, its development is of eternal consequence. It is strengthened as we communicate in humble prayer with our loving Heavenly Father.^z

28 The attributes by which we shall be judged one day are all spiritual.^{aa} These include love, virtue, integrity, compassion, and service to others.^{ab} Your spirit, coupled with and housed in your body, is able to develop and manifest these attributes in ways that are vital to your eternal progression.^{ac} Spiritual progress is attained through the steps of faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end, including the endowment and sealing ordinances of the holy temple.^{ad}

29 Just as the body requires daily

t Alma 42:8.

u The Psalmist expressed the viewpoint of Deity: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15); see also Ecclesiastes 12:7.

v Alma 11:43; see also Ecclesiastes 12:7; Alma 40:23; Doctrine and Covenants 138:17.

w See Doctrine and Covenants 93:38.

x See Alma 40:11; Abraham 3:18.

y The spirit is in the likeness of the person (see Doctrine and Covenants 77:2).

z See 3 Nephi 14:9–11.

aa The spirit, not the body, is the active, responsible component of the soul. Without the spirit, the body is dead (see James 2:26). It is the spirit, therefore, that chooses good or evil and will be held accountable for both the positive and negative attributes it possesses at the Final Judgment (see Alma 41:3–7).

ab Spiritual attributes also include "faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence" (Doctrine and Covenants 4:6).

ac See 2 Nephi 2:11–16, 21–26; Moroni 10:33–34.

ad This is the doctrine of Christ (see 2 Nephi 31:11–21).

CHAPTER 12

Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You! - Delivered in the Saturday Morning session of the October 2012 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers, sisters, and friends, we extend our love and greetings to each of you. We are thrilled with President Thomas S. Monson's announcement this morning, which adjusts the minimum age for missionary service to 18 for young men and 19 for young women. Through this option, more of our youth may enjoy the blessings of a mission.

2 Two years ago and powerfully reaffirmed again this morning, President Monson declared "that every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission. Missionary service is a priesthood duty—an obligation the Lord expects of us who have been given so very much."^a Again he explained that for young sisters, a mission is a welcome option but not a responsibility. And again he invited many more mature couples to serve.

3 Preparation for a mission is important. A mission is a voluntary act of service to God and humankind. Missionaries support that privilege with their personal savings. Parents, families, friends, and donors to the General Missionary Fund may also assist. All missionaries, younger and older, serve with the sole

hope of making life better for other people.

4 The decision to serve a mission will shape the spiritual destiny of the missionary, his or her spouse, and their posterity for generations to come. A desire to serve is a natural outcome of one's conversion, worthiness, and preparation.

5 In this great worldwide audience, many of you are not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and know very little about us and our missionaries. You are here or tuned in because you want to know more about the Mormons and what our missionaries teach. As you learn more about us, you will find that we share many of the same values. We encourage you to keep all that is good and true and then see if we can add more. In this world filled with challenges, we do need help from time to time. Religion, eternal truth, and our missionaries are vital parts of that help.

6 Our young missionaries set aside their education, occupation, dating, and whatever else young adults would typically be doing at this stage of life. For 18 to 24 months they put it all on hold because of their deep desire to serve the Lord.^b And some of our missionaries serve in their more mature years of life. I know their families are blessed. In our own family, eight are currently

a Thomas S. Monson, "As We Meet Together Again," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 5–6.

b See Doctrine and Covenants 4:3.

...serving as full-time missionaries—three daughters, their husbands, one granddaughter, and one grandson.

7 Some of you may wonder about the name Mormon. It is a nickname for us. It is not our real name, though we are widely known as Mormons. The term is derived from a book of sacred scripture known as the Book of Mormon.

8 The true name of the Church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the re-established original Church of Jesus Christ. When He walked upon the earth, He organized His Church. He called Apostles, Seventies, and other leaders to whom He gave priesthood authority to act in His name.^c After Christ and His Apostles passed away, men changed the ordinances and doctrine. The original Church and the priesthood were lost. After the Dark Ages, and under the direction of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ brought back His Church. Now it lives again, restored and functioning under His divine direction.^d

9 We follow the Lord Jesus Christ and teach of Him. We know that after His glorious triumph over death, the resurrected Lord appeared to His disciples on numerous occasions. He ate with them. He walked with them.

Before His final Ascension, He commissioned them to “go ... and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”^e The Apostles heeded that instruction. They also called upon others to help them fulfill the Lord’s command.

10 Today, under the direction of modern apostles and prophets, that same charge has been extended to missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These missionaries serve in more than 150 nations. As representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, they strive to fulfill that divine command—renewed in our day by the Lord Himself—to take the fulness of the gospel abroad and bless the lives of people everywhere.^f

11 Missionaries in their late teens or early 20s are young in ways of the world. But they are blessed with gifts—such as the power of the Holy Spirit, the love of God, and testimonies of the truth—that make them powerful ambassadors of the Lord. They share the good news of the gospel that will bring true joy and everlasting happiness to all who heed their message. And in many instances they do so in a country and a language foreign to them.

12 Missionaries strive to follow Jesus Christ in both word and

c See Matthew 10:1; Luke 6:13; 10:1; Ephesians 4:11–12.

d See Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.

e Matthew 28:19.

f See Doctrine and Covenants 68:8; 84:62; 112:28.

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deed. They preach of Jesus Christ and of His Atonement.⁸ They teach of the literal Restoration of Christ's ancient Church through the Lord's first latter-day prophet, Joseph Smith.

13 You may have previously encountered, or even ignored, our missionaries. My hope is that you will not fear them but learn from them. They can be a heaven-sent resource to you.

14 That happened to Jerry, a Protestant gentleman in his mid-60s who lives in Mesa, Arizona. Jerry's father was a Baptist minister; his mother, a Methodist minister. One day Jerry's close friend Pricilla shared with him the pain she felt from the death of her child during childbirth and a bitter divorce that occurred shortly thereafter. Struggling as a single mother, Pricilla has four children—three daughters and a son. As she opened her heart to Jerry, she confessed that she was thinking of taking her own life. With all the strength and love Jerry could muster, he tried to help her understand that her life had value. He invited her to attend his church, but Pricilla explained that she had given up on God.

15 Jerry did not know what to do. Later, while watering trees in his yard, this man of faith prayed to God for guidance. As he prayed, he heard a voice in his mind saying, "Stop the boys on the bikes." Jerry, a little bewildered,

wondered what this meant. As he reflected on this impression, he gazed up the street and saw two young men in white shirts and ties riding bicycles toward his home. Stunned by this "coincidence," he watched them ride by. Then, realizing that the situation required him to act, he shouted out, "Hey, you, please stop! I need to talk to you!"

16 With a puzzled but excited look, the young men stopped. As they approached, Jerry noticed that they wore name tags identifying them as missionaries in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Jerry looked at them and said, "This may sound a little weird, but I was praying and was told to 'stop the boys on the bikes.' I looked up the street, and here you are. Can you help me?"

17 The missionaries smiled, and one said, "Yes, I am sure we can."

18 Jerry explained the worrisome plight of Pricilla. Soon the missionaries were meeting with Pricilla, her children, and Jerry. They discussed the purpose of life and God's eternal plan for them. Jerry, Pricilla, and her children grew in faith through sincere prayer, their study of the Book of Mormon, and the loving fellowship with members of the Church. Jerry's already strong faith in Jesus Christ grew even stronger. Pricilla's doubts and thoughts of suicide turned to hope and happiness. They were

g See 1 Corinthians 2:2; 2 Nephi 25:26.

baptized and became members of Christ’s restored Church.^h

19 Yes, missionaries can help in many ways. For example, some of you might want to know more about your ancestors. You may know the names of your parents and your four grandparents, but what about your eight great-grandparents? Do you know their names? Would you like to know more about them? Ask the missionaries! They can help you!ⁱ They have ready access to the vast family history records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

20 Some of you are members but not presently participating. You love the Lord and often think of returning to His fold. But you don’t know how to start. I suggest that you ask the missionaries!^j They can help you! They can also help by teaching your loved ones. We and the missionaries love you and desire to bring joy and the light of the gospel back into your lives.

21 Some of you may want to know how to conquer an addiction or live longer and enjoy better health. Ask the missionaries! They can help you! Independent studies have shown that, as a group, members of The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are a healthy lot. Their death rates are among the lowest and their longevity greater than any yet reported in any well-defined group studied over a lengthy period of time in the United States.^k

22 Some of you may feel that life is busy and frenetic, yet down deep in your heart you feel a gnawing emptiness, without direction or purpose. Ask the missionaries! They can help you! They can help you to learn more about the true purpose of life—why you are here on earth and where you are going after death. You can learn how the restored gospel of Jesus Christ will bless your life beyond anything you can presently even imagine.

23 If you have concerns about your family, ask the missionaries! They can help you! Strengthening marriages and families is of utmost importance to Latter-day Saints. Families can be together forever. Ask the missionaries to teach you how this is possible for your family.

24 Missionaries can also help you with your desire for greater knowledge. The human spirit yearns for enlightenment.

h Personal communication from W. Tracy Watson, former president of the Arizona Mesa Mission.

i Where I have phrased the invitation to “ask the missionaries,” you could also ask a friend who is a member of the Church for assistance.

j Actively participating relatives, friends, and Church leaders would also be pleased to assist.

k See James E. Enstrom and Lester Breslow, “Lifestyle and Reduced Mortality among Active California Mormons, 1980–2004,” *Preventive Medicine*, vol. 46 (2008), 135.

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Whether truth comes from a scientific laboratory or by revelation from God, we seek it! The glory of God indeed is intelligence.^a

25 Increase in learning includes spiritual as well as temporal knowledge. We stress the importance of understanding sacred scriptures. An independent study recently found that Latter-day Saints were the most knowledgeable about Christianity and the Bible.^b If you want to understand the Bible better, to understand the Book of Mormon better, and gain a broader comprehension of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, ask the missionaries! They can help you!

26 Many of you have a deep desire to help people in need. Because we follow Jesus Christ, Latter-day Saints are also compelled by that insatiable urge.^c Anyone may join with us to help the needy and provide relief to victims of disaster anywhere in the world. If you want to participate, ask the missionaries! They can help you!

27 And if you want to know more about life after death, about heaven, about God's plan for you; if you want to know more about the Lord Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and the Restoration of His Church as it was originally established, ask the missionaries! They can help you!

28 I know that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored. Fervently I pray that God may bless each of you and each of our precious missionaries. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 13

Catch the Wave - Delivered in the Saturday Afternoon session of the April 2013 General Conference.

DEAR brothers and sisters, I add my voice to that of President Thomas S. Monson and others in praising those who have responded to a prophet's call for more worthy missionaries. Now an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm for missionary work is sweeping the entire earth. Since President Monson's historic an-

a See Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.

b See U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Sept. 28, 2010), 7.

c See Ram Cnaan, Van Evans, and Daniel W. Curtis, Called to Serve: The Prosocial Behavior of Active Latter-day Saints (University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice, 2012); "Mormon Volunteerism Highlighted in New Study" (Mar. 16, 2012), <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormon-volunteerism-report>; Mormons in America: Certain in Their Beliefs, Uncertain of Their Place in Society (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Jan. 12, 2012), 43; Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us (2010), 444–54.

nouncement last October, thousands of elders, sisters, and couples have been called, and many more are preparing.^d Now we get questions like “What are you going to do with all these missionaries?” The answer is simple. They will do what missionaries have always done. They will preach the gospel! They will bless the children of Almighty God!

2 More of you young men and women will catch this wave as you strive to be worthy of mission calls. You see this as a wave of truth and righteousness. You see your opportunity to be on the crest of that wave.

3 You teenagers, embrace your new curriculum and teach one another the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Now is your time to prepare to teach others about the goodness of God.

4 Young men and women, your education is ever important—to us, to you, and to God. Where feasible, if you wish to attend a college or university after your mission, we encourage you to apply to your institution of choice before beginning your mission. Many institutions of higher learning will grant an 18- to 30-month deferral to prospective missionaries. This will enable you elders and sisters to serve without worrying about

where you will begin your advanced education. We are very grateful to leaders of educational institutions who are making such planning possible!

5 You parents, teachers, and others, catch the wave as you prepare our rising generation to be worthy of missionary service. Meanwhile, your exemplary lives will attract the interest of your friends and neighbors. Be ready to give an answer to those who ask why you live as you do. Be ready to give a reason for the hope and joy that they see in you.^e When such questions come, you might respond by saying, “Let’s ask the missionaries! They can help us! And if you desire, I will be at your side as the missionaries respond and teach you.”

6 You adults, catch the wave with help for the spiritual, physical, and financial preparation of future missionaries. Pinching pennies for piggy banks becomes part of your practice. You senior couples, you plan for the day when you can go on your mission. We will be most grateful for your service. Until then, perhaps some of you could send your dollars on missions by contributing to the General Missionary Fund, as suggested by President Monson again this morning.^f

d See Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2012, 4–5.

e See 1 Peter 3:15.

f See Thomas S. Monson, “It’s Conference Once Again,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2011, 6.

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7 Increasing numbers of selected men and their dear companions catch the wave as they are called to preside over missions of the Church. In that service they will shape the destiny of generations born and unborn. Mission presidents hold keys of responsibility for the welfare, safety, and success of their missionaries. After consulting with stake and district presidents in his mission, each mission president assigns missionaries to serve in specific stakes, wards, and branches.

8 Stake presidents and bishops catch the wave as they spend more and more hours interviewing prospective missionaries. These priesthood leaders hold keys of responsibility for missionary work in their units, and they inspire members to participate.

9 Brothers and sisters on each ward council are beginning to catch the wave. On that council is the ward mission leader.^g I would like to speak specifically to each of you ward mission leaders. You have been called by your bishop to lead missionary work in the ward. And some of you are so successful that an assistant has also been called to help you. Along with others on

the ward council, you identify less-active members, part-member families, and interested neighbors. You meet regularly with assigned full-time missionaries. You advise and assist the missionaries. Please help them to fill their daily planners with focused and meaningful teaching opportunities. This is your responsibility. Your role is crucial, truly crucial to the success of this work. If you catch the wave with faith and enthusiasm, others will also. You, as the ward mission leader, are the connecting link between members and missionaries in this sacred work of rescuing God's children.^h

10 Our inquiring friends and neighbors not of our faith can also catch the wave. We encourage them to keep all that is good and true in their lives. And we invite them to receive more, especially the glorious truth that through God's eternal plan, families can be together forever.ⁱ

11 This wave of truth and righteousness is wondrous! It is not man-made! It comes from the Lord, who said, "I will hasten my work in its time."^j This wave is empowered by a divine announcement made 193 years ago. It consisted of only sev-

g See Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 5.1.

h We are grateful for Saints who are sincerely striving for consecration. They are trying to be more holy. They seek "first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38 [in Matthew 6:33, footnote a]).

i See "Families Can Be Together Forever," Hymns, no. 300; additional clarification is found in Doctrine and Covenants 132:7, 19.

j Doctrine and Covenants 88:73.

19 Elias conferred keys of knowledge about Abraham.^u

20 Elijah restored keys of the sealing authority.^v

21 In addition, the Restoration added knowledge that Saints had anciently. The Lord provided a new book of scripture. To the Holy Bible, He added the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. It is a record of prophecies and the ministry of the resurrected Lord to the people of ancient America. It explains God's great plan of happiness^w—the plan of salvation.^x The Book of Mormon is in full harmony with the Bible. Both sacred records affirm the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the importance of His Atonement.^y

22 The Restoration fulfills many biblical prophecies. For example, Isaiah prophesied that the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains.^z The exodus of Mormon pioneers to the mountains of western America is a fulfilling saga of sacrifice and faith. Isaiah also foretold

that God will do "a marvellous work and a wonder."^{aa} That is now being fulfilled by the sacred work of our growing army of missionaries.

23 Old Testament teachings about tithing have been restored.^{ab} As a result, more tithe payers are blessed because of their obedience. References to Melchizedek are clarified by scriptures of the Restoration.^{ac} Prophecies that the stick of Joseph (the Book of Mormon) and the stick of Judah (the Bible) would be as one in God's hand have now been fulfilled.^{ad}

24 The Restoration also clarifies New Testament scriptures. Its reference to baptism for the dead is now better understood.^{ae} Ordinances for our deceased ancestors are now performed vicariously in 141 temples throughout the world! There is no other way to offer salvation to our ancestors who died without a knowledge of the gospel!^{af} John the Revelator's vision of "another angel [flying] in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that

u See Doctrine and Covenants 110:12.

v See Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16.

w See Alma 42, especially verse 8.

x See, for example, Alma 12:28–30.

y See, for example, 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 34:9.

z See Isaiah 2:2.

aa Isaiah 29:14.

ab See Genesis 14:18–20; Malachi 3:8–10; Doctrine and Covenants 119–20.

ac See Genesis 14:18; Psalm 110:4; see also Alma 13:14–18; Doctrine and Covenants 84:14–22.

ad See Ezekiel 37:16, 19; Doctrine and Covenants 27:5.

ae See 1 Corinthians 15:29; Doctrine and Covenants 128.

af See Doctrine and Covenants 137:7; 138:31–34.

dwell on the earth," foretold the mission of the angel Moroni and the Book of Mormon.^a

25 The Book of Mormon is the centerpiece of the Restoration. It was written, preserved, and transmitted under the Lord's direction. It was translated "by the gift and power of God."^b The book of Doctrine and Covenants contains many additional revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Through him we have received more pages of scripture than we have from any other prophet. In what must have been a wistful moment, he said to the Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois, "I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught."^c

26 Together, members and missionaries invite all to learn of God, of Jesus Christ, and of His gospel. Each inquiring individual should seek earnestly and pray fervently for the assurance that these things are true. The truth will be manifest by the power of the Holy Ghost.^d

27 I thank God and His Son, Jesus Christ, for the Restoration and its power to propel a magnificent wave of truth and righteousness across the earth. May we catch this wave and fulfill

the Lord's command to take the gospel "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,"^e I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 14

The Work of Salvation: Parable of a Father at Bedtime - Delivered during the 2013 Worldwide Leadership Training.

MY dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful to be with you on this special occasion. This event is historic because we have in attendance 173 new mission presidents and their companions! They come from 19 different countries and are assigned to serve in 50 nations around the world. This record number of new mission presidents, coupled with the record number of 70,000-plus missionaries, are significant signs that the Lord is hastening His work.

2 Missionary work comes alive when we hear remarkable stories of individual conversion. I would like to begin my message today by relating a conversation recently recorded with Sister Neill F. Marriott, sustained last April as second counselor in the general Young Women presidency. Many lessons can be learned as you listen carefully to her story.

a Revelation 14:6; see also Doctrine and Covenants 133:36–39.
b Title page of the Book of Mormon, authored by Moroni; Doctrine and Covenants 135:3.
c Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 522.
d See Moroni 10:4–5.
e Revelation 14:6; see also 1 Nephi 19:17; Doctrine and Covenants 133:37.

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*A Conversation with
Sister Neill F. Marriott*

3 ELDER NELSON: Sister Marriott, I've had the privilege of previous associations with you and your dear husband, David. But most members of the Church don't know you as well as I do. Would you be willing to tell us a little bit about your conversion to the Church?

4 SISTER MARRIOTT: Thank you, Elder Nelson. When I was 22 I moved to Boston, Massachusetts, to work, and there I met two members of the Church. And one of them said, "I'm a Mormon." And my roommates and I said, "What's a Mormon?"

5 So one of them said, "Well, would you like us to bring a couple of friends over to your apartment so they could tell you more about our beliefs?" So about a week later they brought their two friends over, and that was the first look I got at Mormon missionaries. And I have to say I had many, many questions.

6 But they kept coming, and finally they came back to the plan of salvation. And I can still remember that night so well. They said, "Before you came here, you lived in a spirit world with your Heavenly Father. You are a spirit daughter of Him." Elder Nelson, I recognized those words. They were familiar to me. I'd never heard them in this life, but I knew I'd heard them before somewhere.

7 At the end of this meeting one of the members spoke up and

said, "I'd like to ask one last question." He looked right at me and said, "Neill, how do you feel about the Book of Mormon?" And the words that popped out of my mouth were, "I think it's true." I was so startled to hear those words hanging in the air there. "I think it's true." And he—very wisely—didn't pounce on me; he just said, "Well, then, with that understanding, what are you going to do?" And I promised him that night I would pray honestly. I knelt down in my bedroom—I had my own room—and I just said, "Heavenly Father, if this is the Savior's only true church on the earth, I'll be baptized. I just need to know it's true." And immediately a voice in my head or in my heart said, "It is true." Just like that. And I jumped up off my knees and said, "It's true," almost surprised at this wonderful answer. And I called the mission president the next morning and said, "Hello, I need to be baptized."

8 ELDER NELSON: Oh, I'll bet he was happy to hear from you. Did you have any feeling about your ancestors?

9 SISTER MARRIOTT: Well, it's interesting you'd ask that because my very first calling in the Church was so inspired. The bishop called me in and asked if I would be a member of the genealogy committee.

10 I wrote my two grandmothers who were in their 80s. I remember it being several weeks, but the mail came and there was a shoebox full of pictures and

names on the back and little notes. And so I sat down on the floor in my bedroom, and I began to make stacks of families—the Dade family, the Hill family, the Ray family, the Fielding family. And as I was sorting them through, all of a sudden I just looked up. I didn't see anything, but the room was full. I felt it was full of people who were interested and happy. And I could feel their presence somehow.

11 I think within the first two or three years of being a member, I did about 70 names, had about 70 names endowed in the temple. I would send them out here to relatives of David, my husband. I should speak about David a minute.

12 ELDER NELSON: Oh, please. Tell us who David is.

13 SISTER MARRIOTT: David is so special. He was one of the members that asked us if we wanted to know more about the Church. And we were married in the Salt Lake Temple just 13 months after my baptism.

14 ELDER NELSON: Well isn't that a nice fringe benefit of being a member missionary?

15 SISTER MARRIOTT: Yes, I recommend it.

16 ELDER NELSON: Well, you and David have a nice family now. Tell us about your family.

17 SISTER MARRIOTT: Well, we have 11 children, and when we got married we wanted to have

a family, to start a family, and the children just came. They were choice spirits.

18 ELDER NELSON: Any counsel that you have for our wonderful sisters who try to balance being a wife and a mother and a faithful servant of the Lord, a disciple of the Lord?

19 SISTER MARRIOTT: Well, I love Church meetings. I know that sounds strange, but my real heart is in my home. And so with each calling—and they did seem to build one on another—I would take care of my home first. Some meetings I missed, but it wasn't an intrusion on family life. If anything, it taught me to be a better mother.

20 ELDER NELSON: You're a better mother because you're anchored to the gospel.

21 SISTER MARRIOTT: That's right.

22 ELDER NELSON: Well, we are so grateful for you, for the service that you've rendered and will yet render.

23 SISTER MARRIOTT: Thank you.

24 Thank you, Sister Marriott. Isn't her story instructive and inspiring? Did you note the cooperation between members and missionaries? (He even became her husband.) Did they really care for her? Did you sense the role of relatives on the other side of the veil who also cared about her? Could you feel the

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goodness of a woman who loves her husband and her children? When I sense the joy that has come to her life and to generations that follow, my own testimony is strengthened and my enthusiasm to share the gospel increases.

25 Too often we tend to split the Lord's work into parts that seem unrelated. Whether it is preaching the gospel to nonmembers, serving with new converts, reactivating less-active members, teaching and strengthening active members, or performing family history and temple work, the work really is indivisible. These efforts are not separate. They are all part of the work of salvation.

26 Those on the other side of the veil rejoice and shout praises when their descendants accept or return to the gospel, for they know that their descendants are now able to perform vital temple ordinances in their behalf, linking together generations who have passed. This is a lesson Sister Marriott learned soon after her baptism. I hope that every member of the Church may have the opportunity to experience that lifting love from ancestors.

27 To illustrate how our Heavenly Father expects us to love one another, I would like to relate a parable to you entitled "A Father at Bedtime."

28 A caring father is seated at home one evening after his wife and children have gone to bed. He feels an impulse—a prompt-

ing—to check on the children. He takes off his shoes and walks quietly to the door of a bedroom. In the dim light from an open doorway, he sees two little heads on pillows and blankets covering these snuggling children, soundly sleeping.

29 As he listens to their quiet breathing, his mind rehearses scenes from earlier in the day. He hears their laughter as they played together. He sees their smiles as they shared a picnic and their giggles when they were caught feeding ice cream to the dog. (Patience with children comes more easily when they are asleep.) As they slumber, he ponders what they need and how he can help them. He feels a surge of love and a strong duty to protect them.

30 He then tiptoes to a second bedroom where two older children should be. He sees two beds, but his heart skips a beat when he finds that one of those beds is empty.

31 He spins around and walks to the study, where he has on occasion found that missing daughter. There he finds her in a chair, quietly reading a book.

32 "I couldn't sleep," she said.

33 He pulls up a chair next to her. They talk about her day, about her friends, about her goals and dreams. Later she returns to bed, and the father makes one final round before turning out the lights and retiring to his bed.

34 In the morning, the father assists his dear wife as she prepares breakfast. He sets a place for each of their children, even the youngest, who likes to sleep longer. Aromas from the kitchen arouse the children, and they come running in a blur of motion and chatter.

35 But one of the chairs is empty. The father asks them to wait while he goes to awaken that missing child. Soon, the entire family is together enjoying their breakfast.

36 What can we learn from this simple parable? The father followed his impulse to check on his children. He evaluated his relationship with them. He searched for a missing child. His actions were all motivated purely by love. He didn't do what he did because he had read a handbook. No one gave him a checklist. He followed the feelings of his heart.

37 So it is with missionary work. The most effective missionaries always act out of love. Love is the lubricant and life of good missionary work.

38 The father in the parable loved each child. So we too should act out of love to help all, not just a favored few. Opportunities come in various ways, and sadly, some of those are missed opportunities.

39 An illustration comes from my own family. All eight of my great-grandparents were converts to the Church in Europe.

All eight of them immigrated to America. The gospel meant everything to them. However, some in the later generation of my parents drifted from activity in the Church. Consequently, I grew up in a home where my parents did not attend services of the Church.

40 During my many years of surgical specialization and research, my wife and I lived away from our parents, with our children, in other parts of the country. Out of a constant concern, and even anguish, over the eternal welfare of my beloved parents, I wrote a heartfelt letter to their bishop. I knew him well and had high hopes that he could help. I expressed my love for my parents and asked this good bishop if he could please invite or call someone to teach the gospel to my dear mother and daddy.

41 Later, I received a reply from their bishop. He wrote how sorry he was that he did not have anyone upon whom he could call to teach my parents!

42 The bishop's response dashed my hopes. He had no one to help him!

43 Now in our day, that should never happen! Never again need a bishop feel empty-handed! Now bishops have members of their ward councils, ward mission leaders, and missionaries ready, willing, and able to help rescue parents of pleading children.

44 Decades later, my parents

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became truly converted to the Lord. They were sealed in the temple and their children sealed to them. But I will never forget the lesson learned from their experience. Could a loving Father in Heaven, who commanded us to preach the gospel to every creature, ever draw a line of distinction between those who had never heard the gospel and those who had once heard and then forgotten?

45 Surely the answer is no. The work of salvation excludes no one! Missionaries and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are sent forth to labor in the Lord's vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.^f This includes member missionary work at its best, with activation of less-active members and preparation of God's children for all the blessings of the temple. God wants all of His children to return to Him and qualify for eternal life.

46 Missionary work in the Lord's kingdom is a rescue effort. Our beloved President Thomas S. Monson has taught us repeatedly about our reach to rescue. He said, "We can reach out to those for whom we are responsible and bring them to the table of the Lord, there to feast on His word and to enjoy the companionship of His Spirit."^g

47 In this great work, we love to bring souls unto Christ with their first covenants, and we also love to bring souls back to their previous covenants. President Joseph Fielding Smith so explained. He said, "To save the souls of those who have strayed from the fold is just as worthy and commendable, and causes just as much rejoicing in heaven, as to save souls in far away parts of the earth."^h

48 In every ward are two individuals who set the pace for missionary work. They are the bishop and the ward mission leader. The bishop holds keys to direct the work. Handbook 2 states that "the bishop and his counselors give priority to member missionary work. They teach the doctrines of missionary work regularly. They encourage ward members to work with full-time missionaries to find, teach, and baptize investigators. They set an example by finding and preparing individuals and families for the missionaries to teach."ⁱ

49 Under the inspired call of the bishop, the ward mission leader directs missionary work. He coordinates, conducts, arranges, organizes, helps, participates in, attends to, and otherwise leads missionary work in the ward. He regularly holds missionary coordination meetings with the full-

f See Doctrine and Covenants 138:56; also Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 5.1.1.

g Thomas S. Monson, "To the Rescue," Ensign, May 2001, 48.

h Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 3:118.

i Handbook 2, 5.1.1.

58 PRESIDENT BOWMAN: We were concerned as a presidency about what was happening, and we counseled together. So we sent a letter out, asking the members to join together in a fast for missionary work and for the drought.

59 CHRIS EUBANKS: We received this letter, and the entire stake and other stakes around us fasted, and the missionary work immediately started to pick up.

60 The floodgates kind of opened up, and everybody was getting involved.

61 Elder Bowen of the Seventy came to this area and offered missionary training. One of the first comments that he made was, "Full-time missionaries in your ward or branch are simply there to assist you in the missionary work."

62 It's our job as members of the Church to actively be engaged in the work and to invite our friends and family to church.

63 PRESIDENT BOWMAN: It can't happen without either the full-time missionaries or the members being engaged in it. That's kind of our goal, is to get those ward mission leaders and the ward council really the ones that are driving that, not the full-time missionaries.

64 BISHOP: The ward mission leader role is to meet with the bishop and with the ward council and to formulate a ward mission plan and then to try and

carry out that plan, which is to help the members find and fellowship people for the full-time missionaries to teach.

65 CHRIS EUBANKS: The only thing that I try to do, along with my assistant ward mission leader and the missionaries, is try to keep the missionaries' calendar full. Since this whole missionary effort has taken off over the past year, we went from averaging two, three, four lessons taught with member presence per week to 10 to 12. A few months ago we were averaging 14 to 16, and now our goal is 20 lessons taught per week with a member present.

66 As I sit back and look at this transformation in our ward and within our stake, it's really easy to see two main aspects that led to this missionary effort exploding, and that's members being involved in the missionary effort and then extending the invitation to attend church or to meet with the missionaries. So I'm just helping my family and every other family in the ward come up with opportunities to share the gospel with other people.

67 TRISH GAUVIN: I'm Trish Gauvin. This is Mark Gauvin.

68 MARK GAUVIN: We were baptized January 26, 2013.

69 CHRIS EUBANKS: It was the perfect story of member missionary work. We had one family that became friends with them; they introduced them to another family. Their kids met

other kids in our ward, and they became friends.

70 TRISH GAUVIN: I believe that God placed a lot of members of the Church in our lives for a purpose.

71 CHRIS EUBANKS: And that led to more serious discussions with the missionaries, and they started to attend church on a more regular basis.

72 TRISH GAUVIN: I saw just how the gospel is working in their lives and how they are just lights.

73 CHRIS EUBANKS: It's important for our members to get to know our missionaries and our missionaries to get to know our members. But even more importantly, it's crucial for our members to get to know our investigators and start fellowshiping them.

74 MARK GAUVIN: It puts you at ease when you learn and you meet people like that because you can just feel free to ask. You can feel free to explore and learn something that you don't know. There's no judgment.

75 TRISH GAUVIN: To me I felt a lot like Joseph Smith as I went to church after church after church. It never felt like there's something so big missing, and I never found it. This fits. It fits my family; it fits my life.

76 CHRIS EUBANKS: This drought or stagnant period of missionary work in this area has

clearly ended, and it's just building momentum day by day. And I don't see it subsiding any time soon.

77 This is the great work of the latter days. This is the reason why we're here, to gather Israel. And for me and for all members of the Church, it's our responsibility to share the gospel with as many people as we can.

78 We're grateful to President Kent W. Bowman and his wonderful ward mission leader for showing us how the ward mission and the missionaries worked together. With single purpose and unified vision, they knew the spiritual and temporal needs of those they love. Yes, the real rewards and work of the ward council take place outside their meetings, in the presence of people they teach.

79 In our parable, you might suppose that the father represented a ward bishop or a ward mission leader. Actually, the father could have represented any member of the Church. With love, each can do as the Good Shepherd would do to plan and to rescue. And each can do so prayerfully with inspiration from the Father of us all.

80 With divine guidance, each ward auxiliary leader need not wait for the bishop or ward mission leader to make assignments. Each will have the feeling that "our flock seemed complete until we started setting a place at the table for everyone who should be there, not just for

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those who come." Each member will want to seek out those who are not yet members of the Church or those who need help in reclaiming the joy of the gospel. They will act by inspiration, motivated by love.

81 When we follow Jesus Christ, we act as He would act and love as He would love. His objectives are accomplished one soul at a time! Our efforts are exerted out of love for our neighbor and for our Heavenly Father, whose children we are.

82 Yes, God is our Father! Jesus is the Christ! This is His Church! We are His servants! I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 15

Youth of the Noble Birthright: What Will You Choose? - Delivered as a CES Devotional for Young Adults on September 6, 2013 at Brigham Young University-Hawaii.

MY wife, Wendy, and I are very grateful to be with you. From the Cannon Activities Center on the campus of BYU-Hawaii, we are broadcasting to congregations of young adults throughout the entire world. We extend a special welcome to those who are attending a CES devotional for the first time. As you enroll in institutions of higher learning, you will want to participate in institute classes and these devotionals to maintain a spiritual

balance to your secular learning. And if you are soon headed for a mission, we are most grateful. You will be in the Lord's service full time.

2 I bring greetings and love from President Thomas S. Monson, President Henry B. Eyring, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, and my beloved associates in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. I also bring greetings from the Board of Trustees of the Church Educational System and from Elder Paul V. Johnson, Commissioner of the Church Educational System.

3 We have had three previous speakers at our CES devotionals this year. Do you remember them? President Dieter F. Uchtdorf's talk was entitled "What Is Truth?" He taught us how to find real truth in an age when so much information is available, much of which is not true. The title of Elder David A. Bednar's talk was "That We Might 'Not ... Shrink' ."a He strengthened our spirits as he taught us how to increase our faith through a powerful question that helped a young couple as the husband battled cancer. The question posed by Elder Bednar was, "Do you have the faith not to be healed?" Elder William R. Walker strengthened our testimonies about the ministry and matchless example of our beloved President, Thomas S. Monson.

4 Today, the title of my message

a D&C 19:18

is “Youth of the Noble Birthright^b: What Will You Choose?”

5 You, as youth of the noble birthright, are literally sons and daughters of God, born at this particular time in the world’s history for a most sacred purpose. Although the moral and religious values of society seem to be weakening across the globe, youth of this Church are to be standard bearers of the Lord and beacons of light to attract others to Him. Your identity and purpose are unique.

6 What is your identity? You are children of the covenant. What covenant? That which God made with Father Abraham when Abraham was promised that “in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”^c You are also children of the promised day,^d this period of world history when the gospel will be broadly proclaimed across the entire planet.

7 What is your purpose? You brethren were foreordained in a premortal realm to bear the priesthood.^e Think of that! And you, dear sisters, were chosen before the foundation of the world to bear and care for God’s children, and in doing so, you glorify God.^f Have you sisters considered what it really means to be cocreators with God?

8 Each of you young men and young women was commissioned by your Heavenly Father to build up the kingdom of God on earth right now and prepare a people to receive the Savior when He will rule and reign as the Millennial Messiah. Your noble birthright, identity, purpose, and divine commission set you apart from all others.

9 But neither your birthright nor your premortal ordinations and commissions can save or exalt you. That you will do through your individual decisions and as you choose to access the power of the Lord’s Atonement in your lives. You know that “ev’ry soul is free / To choose his life and what he’ll be.”^g That great eternal principle of agency is vital to our Father’s plan. So, you youth of the noble birthright, what will you choose?

10 Will you choose to increase in learning?

11 Education is yours to obtain. No one else can gain it for you. Wherever you are, develop a deep desire to learn. For us as Latter-day Saints, gaining an education is not just a privilege, it is a religious responsibility. The glory of God is intelligence.^h Indeed, our education is for the eternities.

b See “Carry On,” Hymns, no. 255.
c Acts 3:25; see also 1 Nephi 15:18; 3 Nephi 20:25.
d See “Hope of Israel,” Hymns, no. 259.
e See Alma 13:2–3.
f See Doctrine and Covenants 132:63.
g “Know This, That Every Soul Is Free,” Hymns, no. 240.
h See Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.

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12 “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

13 “And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life ... , he [or she] will have so much the advantage in the world to come.”ⁱ

14 Such a long-range perspective will help you make good choices about learning. I remember a conversation many years ago with a very bright 16-year-old high school student. He was uncertain about his religious commitment and undecided about his career. He wondered about the possibility of becoming a doctor of medicine. He asked me a simple question: “How many years did it take for you to become a heart surgeon?”

15 I quickly made the calculations: “From the time I graduated from high school until I first collected a fee for service as a surgeon, it took me 14 years.”

16 “Wow!” he replied. “That’s too long for me!”

17 Then I asked, “How old will you be 14 years from now if you don’t become a heart surgeon?”

18 “Just the same,” he replied. “Just the same!”

19 I had a special interest in this

young man. On occasion I took him in my car on his early-morning route to deliver newspapers. Over the years his faith became strong. He was a powerful missionary. He decided to pursue his educational goal. First, he married his sweetheart in the temple. Then, while he studied medicine and surgery, they became the parents of four wonderful children. Now he is fully board certified as a heart surgeon—after intensive education and training over a period of 14 years.

20 Brothers and sisters, don’t be afraid to pursue your goals—even your dreams! There is no shortcut to excellence and competence. Education is the difference between wishing you could help other people and being able to help them.

21 Here is another question: What manner of living will you choose?

22 You, as youth of the noble birthright, are expected to live differently than others. You know what Paul said to young Timothy: “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”^j Choose to think and act differently than those of the world. Choose to look different and see what an influence for good you will become. As Sister Ardeth G. Kapp

i Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19.

j 1 Timothy 4:12; see also Hebrews 13:7. The Greek word *anastrophe*, from which conversation was translated, means an upward manner of living.

once said, "You can't be a life saver if you look like all the other swimmers on the beach."^k

23 As youth of the noble birth-right, you have a great start in life. But you also have an additional responsibility. "For of him [or her] unto whom much is given much is required."^l Part of that requirement is to be a recruit. Have you ever thought of yourself as an army recruit? When you were baptized, you were actually reenlisted in the Lord's army.^m Premortally, you stood by Jesus Christ during the War in Heaven. And now the conflict between the forces of good and evil continues here on earth. It is real! That conflict in which we are now engaged is still between the forces of good and the forces of evil.ⁿ On God's side is Jesus Christ, foreordained to be the Savior of the world.^o On the other side is Satan—a rebel, a destroyer of agency.^p

24 God's plan allows the adversary to tempt you so that you, now in this mortal world, can exercise your agency to choose good over evil, to choose to repent, to choose to come unto Jesus Christ and believe His teachings and follow His example.

What a huge responsibility and a huge trust!

25 Your freedom to choose is clearly explained in the Book of Mormon: "Men are free according to the flesh. ... They are free to choose liberty and eternal life ... or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself."^q What will you choose?

26 Another verse reveals that "wickedness never was happiness."^r Many youth have tried to challenge that truth and have failed every time.

27 Your freedom to act for yourself is so central to your eternal progress and happiness that the adversary exerts extraordinary efforts to undermine it.^s Satan truly is an incorrigible insomniac, which means he never sleeps. Many of you have already experienced that!

28 Here is another question: Will you establish priorities to help you make your choices in life?

29 Your choices will not all be between good and evil. Many will

k Ardeth Greene Kapp, *I Walk by Faith* (1987), 97.
l Doctrine and Covenants 82:3; see also Luke 12:48.
m See "We Are All Enlisted," Hymns, no. 250.
n See Revelation 12:7-9; Doctrine and Covenants 29:40-41.
o See 1 Nephi 10:4.
p See Moses 4:3. Some people describe agency as "free agency." But that expression is not scriptural. Scripture speaks only of moral agency (see Doctrine and Covenants 101:78).
q 2 Nephi 2:27.
r Alma 41:10.
s See 2 Nephi 10:23.

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be choices between two good options. Not all truths are created equal, so you will need to establish priorities. In your pursuit of knowledge, know that the most important truth you can learn comes from the Lord. In His Intercessory Prayer to His Father, the Savior Himself confirmed this. He said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."^t Above everything else you are seeking to learn, seek to know God, your Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. Come to know Them and love Them, as I do.

30 Another priority scripture that has helped me throughout my life is this one: "Seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."^u

31 More than anything else in this world, you want to make choices that lead to the ultimate and glorious destiny of eternal life. That is God's great glory for you.^v Choose eternal life as your highest priority! Study the scriptures, such as sections 76 and 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, in order to understand more about the different blessings awaiting those who choose eternal life and those who don't. Choose eternal life as your highest priority and notice how other choices fall into place.

32 Another question: With whom will you choose to associate?

33 As youth of the noble birthright, you will mingle with many good people who also believe in God. Whether they be Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, or Muslim, believers know that there actually is absolute truth. In President Uchtdorf's earlier message, he stressed that there really is right and wrong, and the willful breaking of one of God's commandments really is sin. Believers in God also have a conscience. Believers obey civil and divine law voluntarily, even laws that might otherwise be unenforceable.

34 With your commitment to obey civil and divine law, you stop for a red light, even if no other traffic is in sight. You, as a child of God, know that even if the police don't catch you, that if you were to steal, murder, or commit adultery, these acts are wrong, and God will ultimately hold you accountable. You know that the consequences for not playing by the rules are not only temporal but eternal.

35 As you move along life's journey, you will also become acquainted with people who do not believe in God. Many of them have not yet found divine truth and don't know where to look for it. But you youth of the noble birthright are coming to

^t John 17:3.

^u Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38 (in Matthew 6:33, footnote a).

^v See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; Moses 1:39.

their rescue. In great numbers, you are rallying to the call of God’s prophet for more missionaries. We are deeply grateful for each one! Many of you have already served; others are preparing to go.

36 As you mingle with nonbelievers, be aware that there may be a few who do not have your best interest at heart.^w As soon as you make that judgment—as soon as you discern that—flee from them quickly and permanently.^x

37 Sadly, you will meet people whose desperate search for something that seems to them like happiness takes them down the slippery slopes of sin. Beware of that slimy slide! Any pleasure in sin is only fleeting, and haunting memories are smeared by gnawing and grinding guilt. The sinful warping of the embrace divinely designed to unite husband and wife is but a hollow counterfeit. Each unlawful experience is stripped of deep meaning and sweet memory.

38 One more question: Will you choose freedom or bondage?

39 Godless forces are all around. You are literally living in enemy-occupied territory.^y A plague of poisonous pornography abounds. It ensnares all who

yield to its insidious grasp.

40 This was foreseen by the Lord, who said, “And now I show unto you a mystery, a thing which is had in secret chambers, to bring to pass even your destruction in process of time, and ye knew it not.”^z Then He added a second warning: “And again, I say unto you that the enemy in the secret chambers seeketh your lives.”^{aa}

41 Consider how many people, in however many secret chambers, are seeking to destroy your life and happiness! If you brothers and sisters are viewing pornography, stop it right now! Stop it absolutely! It is as destructive as leprosy, as addictive as meth, and as corrosive as lye.

42 Carnal temptation is not new. The Apostle Peter warned of this same snare when he wrote:

43 “They allure through the lusts of the flesh ... those that were clean. ...

44 “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”^{ab}

45 Avoid that bondage, my beloved brothers and sisters. If you are presently viewing pornography, stop it! And stop it now!

w See Doctrine and Covenants 1:16; 89:4.

x See 1 Timothy 6:5–6, 11.

y See Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2011, 18.

z Doctrine and Covenants 38:13.

aa Doctrine and Covenants 38:28.

ab 2 Peter 2:18–19.

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Seek help from your bishop. None are smart enough to outwit the adversary on their own once they have been poisoned by pornography.

46 Now let me move to another serious question: Will you choose to follow the Lord or the philosophies of men?

47 For example, arguments swirl around that the earth is dangerously overpopulated and that couples should restrict the number of their children. Have you heard that one? However, at the fifth World Congress of Families, in 2009, Sister Nelson and I heard a scholar present a paper in which he made a stunning statement. He said that if each man, woman, and child now living upon the earth were allotted a quarter of an acre of land, all 6.8 billion people would fit in the country of Brazil, with 20 percent of Brazil still left unoccupied.^{ac} Does that sound like the earth is overcrowded?

48 I checked that calculation. It is correct. I adjure you to believe the Lord, who said that “the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare.”^{ad}

49 Another reality is that you live at a time when unemployment is high and financial markets throughout the world are jittery. Again, a worldly solution is to look at alternatives to God’s plan. But we know that strong marriages and families actually help the economy to thrive. And we are not alone in those feelings.

50 The scholar Dr. Patrick F. Fagan^{ae} wrote: “The indispensable building block upon which the fortunes of the economy depends [is] the married-parent household—especially the child-rich family that worships weekly. ...

51 “... Every marriage creates a new household, an independent economic unit that generates income, spends, saves, and invests.”^{af}

52 Dr. Fagan added that “the married mother at home exerts a more far-reaching impact on the economy than [does] the married father in the workplace. ... While the husband contributes to the present economy, the mother contributes to both present and future economy.”^{ag}

ac See Don Feder, “The Perpetual-Crisis Machine of the Apocalyptic Left,” donfeder.com/articles/1002chickenLittle.htm.

ad Doctrine and Covenants 104:17.

ae Dr. Patrick F. Fagan is a senior fellow at the Family Research Council and directs the Marriage and Religion Research Institute in Washington, D.C.

af Patrick F. Fagan, “The Family GDP: How Marriage and Fertility Drive the Economy,” *The Family in America*, vol. 24, no. 2, spring 2010, 136.

ag Patrick F. Fagan, “The Family GDP,” 142.

53 Dr. Fagan’s report confirms concepts expressed years ago by the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” I hope that each of you has a copy. Study it carefully. While the family is under attack across the entire world, the truths of the family proclamation will fortify you.

54 You wonderful youth of the noble birthright, you need to understand the far-reaching consequences of society’s current skirmish over the very definition of marriage. The present debate involves the question of whether two people of the same gender can be married. If you have a question about the position of the Church on this or any other important issue, prayerfully ponder it, and then heed the prophetic messages at this forthcoming October general conference of the Church. Those inspired addresses, plus inspiration from the Holy Ghost, will bring to your mind a fuller and truer understanding.

55 The marriage debate is but one of the many controversies that will challenge you in the future. Against the strident voices of the adversary, you, as youth of the noble birthright, will choose to stand for the Lord and His truth. Remember the words of the following hymn. Repeat them. Memorize them. This hymn is all about you:

56 *Shall the youth of Zion falter
In defending truth and right?
While the enemy assaileth,
Shall we shrink or shun the fight?
No!
True to the faith that our parents
have cherished,
True to the truth for which mar-
tyrs have perished,
To God’s command,
Soul, heart, and hand,
Faithful and true we will ever
stand.^{ah}*

57 The Apostle Paul prophesied about the plight of our day. His description sounds like our 10:00 nightly news broadcast. Listen!

58 “In the last days perilous times shall come.

59 “For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

60 “Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

61 “Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

62 “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”^{ai}

63 That’s the end of his warning.

64 Paul’s accurate vision of the spiritual devastation of our day

ah “True to the Faith,” Hymns, no. 254.
ai 2 Timothy 3:1–5.

was followed by his reassuring conclusion, telling us how to stay safe: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."^{aj}

65 To his advice I would add my own: Keep studying the scriptures. Keep doing the things that build your faith in Jesus Christ. And then notice the wise choices you are naturally drawn to make.

66 Your faith in Jesus Christ and His gospel will give you the courage to marry and to bring children into your family while you are young and able to have them. When you are my age, you will prize your children, your grandchildren, and their children above any fame or fortune that otherwise might have come.

67 Now for a question I pray that you will consider on a daily basis: How will you prepare for your personal interview with the Savior?

68 You youth of the noble birthright are not perfect yet. None of us are. So, you, along with the rest of us, are very grateful for the Atonement of the Savior, which provides full forgiveness as you truly repent. You also know that your stay here in mortality is relatively brief. (And the older you get, the more you re-

alize that.) In time, each of you will graduate from this frail existence and move on to the next world.

69 Judgment day awaits each one of us. I don't know whether the heavenly gate is pearly or not, but I do know, as do all students of the Book of Mormon, that "the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employ[s] no servant there; ... for the Lord God is his name."^{ak} Yes, each one of us will have a personal interview with Jesus Christ.

70 Each day on earth gives you time and opportunity to prepare for that interview. Please know this: As you choose to live on the Lord's side, you are never alone. God has given you access to His help while you move along through mortality's perilous pathway. As you diligently, earnestly pour out your heart to Him in daily prayer, He will send His angels to help you.^{al} He has given you the Holy Ghost to be by your side as you live worthily. He has given you scriptures so that you can fully feast upon the words of Jesus Christ.^{am} He has given you words to heed from living prophets.

71 He has given you an opportunity to receive a patriarchal blessing. It will provide insight about your connection to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the

aj 2 Timothy 3:15.

ak 2 Nephi 9:41.

al See Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.

am See 2 Nephi 9:51; 32:3.

covenant made with them for their posterity. Your patriarchal blessing also provides insight about your potential in life here and hereafter. Each of these and other divine aids will help you to choose well so that you may look forward to your meeting, face to face, with our Lord and Savior.

72 My last question: In whom will you put your trust?

73 You youth of the noble birthright know that God is your Father. He loves you. He wants you to be happy. Put your trust in Him.^{an} Maintain your focus on His holy temple. Be worthy to receive your endowment and sealing ordinances. Remain faithful to those covenants, and return frequently to the temple. Remember, your loftiest goal is to gain the greatest of all the blessings of God, that of eternal life.^{ao} Ordinances of the temple are essential for that blessing.^{ap}

74 I invite you to study prayerfully the scriptural statement of your identity, purpose, and blessing, as recorded in section 86 of the Doctrine and Covenants. It is about you. Listen!

75 “Thus saith the Lord unto you [youth of the noble birthright], with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers—

76 “For ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God—

77 “Therefore your life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began.

78 “Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savior unto my people Israel.”^{aq}

79 Yes, you truly are youth of the noble birthright, created in God’s image. You are the lawful heirs, to be tried and tested. You may choose to be a light to the world, to help save God’s children, to have joy, and ultimately to earn the blessing of eternal life.

80 Now, to assist you in these critical choices before you, I would like to bestow a blessing upon you. Invoking the keys of the holy apostleship vested in me, I bless you that you may feast upon the words of Jesus Christ and apply His teachings into your lives. I bless you with the power to live as He would have you live and, through your example of righteousness, become worthy of emulation as a member of the Church that bears

an See 2 Nephi 4:34; 28:31.

ao See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

ap See Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–3.

aq Doctrine and Covenants 86:8–11; emphasis added.

His holy name. I bless you with success in your educational and occupational pursuits, to the end that you can render service of worth to your fellow human beings. I bless you with health and strength needed to fulfill the divine destiny that God has in store for each of you, that His will may be done by you and through you.

81 I so bless you and bear my testimony that God lives! Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. He directs it through His prophets and apostles. We love and sustain Thomas S. Monson as President of the Lord's Church today. This testimony and blessing I leave with you, my beloved brothers and sisters, with my sincere expression of love for each one of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 16

Will You Choose to Increase in Learning? Published in the September 2014 New Era Magazine. From a Church Educational System devotional given on September 8, 2013.

EDUCATION is yours to obtain. No one else can gain it for you. Wherever you are, develop a deep desire to learn. For us as Latter-day Saints, gaining an education is not just a privilege, it is a religious responsibility. The glory of God is intelligence.^a Indeed, our education is for the eternities.

2 "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

3 "And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life ... , he [or she] will have so much the advantage in the world to come".^b

4 Such a long-range perspective will help you make good choices about learning. I remember a conversation many years ago with a very bright 16-year-old high school student. He was uncertain about his religious commitment and undecided about his career. He wondered about the possibility of becoming a doctor of medicine. He asked me a simple question: "How many years did it take for you to become a heart surgeon?"

5 I quickly made the calculations: "From the time I graduated from high school until I first collected a fee for service as a surgeon, it took me 14 years."

6 "Wow!" he replied. "That's too long for me!"

7 Then I asked, "How old will you be 14 years from now if you don't become a heart surgeon?"

8 "Just the same," he replied. "Just the same!"

9 I had a special interest in this young man. On occasion I took him in my car on his early-morn-

a see D&C 93:36

b D&C 130:18-19

ing route to deliver newspapers. Over the years his faith became strong. He was a powerful missionary. He decided to pursue his educational goal. First, he married his sweetheart in the temple. Then, while he studied medicine and surgery, they became the parents of four wonderful children. Now he is fully board certified as a heart surgeon—after intensive education and training over a period of 14 years.

10 Brothers and sisters, don't be afraid to pursue your goals—even your dreams! There is no shortcut to excellence and competence. Education is the difference between wishing you could help other people and being able to help them.

CHAPTER 17

Decisions for Eternity - Delivered during the Sunday Afternoon session of the October 2013 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, each day is a day of decision.

President Thomas S. Monson has taught us that “decisions determine destiny.”^a The wise use of your freedom to make your own decisions is crucial to your spiritual growth, now and for eternity. You are never too young to learn, never too old to change. Your yearnings to learn and change come from a divinely instilled striving for eternal progression.^b Each day brings opportunity for decisions for eternity.

2 We are eternal beings—spirit children of heavenly parents. The Bible records that “God created man in his own image, ... male and female created he them.”^c Recently I heard a chorus of children sing the beloved song “I Am a Child of God.”^d I wondered, “Why haven't I heard that song rendered more often by singing mothers or faithful fathers?” Are we not all children of God? In truth, not one of us can ever stop being a child of God!

3 As children of God, we should love Him with all our heart and soul, even more than we love

a Thomas S. Monson, “Decisions Determine Destiny” (Church Educational System fireside, Nov. 6, 2005), 3; speeches.byu.edu.

b The concept of eternal progression was captured well by W. W. Phelps in his text to the hymn “If You Could Hie to Kolob” (Hymns, no. 284). Verse 4 reads: “There is no end to virtue; / There is no end to might; / There is no end to wisdom; / There is no end to light. / There is no end to union; / There is no end to youth; / There is no end to priesthood; / There is no end to truth.” Verse 5 concludes: “There is no end to glory; / There is no end to love; / There is no end to being; / There is no death above.”

c Genesis 1:27; see also Colossians 3:10; Alma 18:34; Ether 3:15; Moses 6:9.

d “I Am a Child of God,” Hymns, no. 301.

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our earthly parents.^e We should love our neighbors as brothers and sisters. No other commandments are greater than these.^f And we should ever revere the worth of human life, through each of its many stages.

4 Scripture teaches that the body and the spirit are the soul of man.^g As a dual being, each of you can thank God for His priceless gifts of your body and your spirit.

The Human Body

5 My professional years as a medical doctor gave me a profound respect for the human body. Created by God as a gift to you, it is absolutely amazing! Think of your eyes that see, ears that hear, and fingers that feel all the wondrous things around you. Your brain lets you learn, think, and reason. Your heart pumps tirelessly day and night, almost without your awareness.^h

6 Your body protects itself. Pain comes as a warning that something is wrong and needs attention. Infectious illnesses strike from time to time, and when they do, antibodies are formed that increase your resistance to subsequent infection.

7 Your body repairs itself. Cuts and bruises heal. Broken bones can become strong once again. I have cited but a tiny sample of the many amazing God-given qualities of your body.

8 Even so, it seems that in every family, if not in every person, some physical conditions exist that require special care.ⁱ A pattern for coping with such a challenge has been given by the Lord. He said, "I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; ... for if they humble themselves ... and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them."^j

e See Matthew 10:37.

f See Mark 12:30–31.

g See Doctrine and Covenants 88:15.

h Other God-given mechanisms are also at work in your body. Elements like sodium, potassium, and calcium and compounds like water, glucose, and proteins are essential for survival. The body deals with gases like oxygen and carbon dioxide. It makes hormones like insulin, adrenalin, and thyroxin. Levels of each of these and many other constituents in the body are auto-regulated within certain bounds. Servo-regulatory relationships exist between glands of the body. For example, the pituitary gland at the base of the brain emits a hormone to stimulate the cortex of the adrenal glands to produce adrenal cortical hormones. Rising levels of cortical hormones in turn suppress the pituitary's output of the stimulating hormone and vice versa. Your body temperature is maintained at a normal range of 98.6°F (or 37°C), whether you're at the equator or at the North Pole.

i Some conditions are easily evident; others are latent. Some are familial; others are not. Some people are predisposed to cancer, others have allergies, and so on. Each of us can be alert to his or her own area of weakness and humbly learn what the Lord would teach, that the weakness may become a strength.

j Ether 12:27.

you can develop here on earth^t as you persistently seek them.^u

15 A pivotal spiritual attribute is that of self-mastery—the strength to place reason over appetite. Self-mastery builds a strong conscience. And your conscience determines your moral responses in difficult, tempting, and trying situations. Fasting helps your spirit to develop dominance over your physical appetites. Fasting also increases your access to heaven’s help, as it intensifies your prayers.

Why the need for self-mastery? God implanted strong appetites within us for nourishment and love, vital for the human family to be perpetuated.^v When we master our appetites within the bounds of God’s laws, we can enjoy longer life, greater love, and consummate joy.^w

16 It is not surprising, then, that most temptations to stray from God’s plan of happiness come through the misuse of those essential, God-given appetites. Controlling our appetites is not

t Attributes of “faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence” (Doctrine and Covenants 4:6) are among the spiritual gifts we can develop and be given. Gratitude is another spiritual attribute that can be developed. Gratitude shapes mood and productivity. And when you have “spiritually been born of God,” you may gratefully receive His image in your countenance (see Alma 5:14).

u See 1 Corinthians 12; 14:1–12; Moroni 10:8–19; Doctrine and Covenants 46:10–29.

v Some are tempted to eat too much. “Obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally, with at least 2.8 million people dying each year as a result of being overweight” (“10 Facts on Obesity,” World Health Organization, Mar. 2013, www.who.int/features/factfiles/obesity/en). Others are tempted to eat too little. Anorexia and bulimia devastate many lives, marriages, and families. And some are tempted by sexual appetites forbidden by our Creator. Clarification is found in Handbook 2: Administering the Church, which states: “The Lord’s law of chastity is abstinence from sexual relations outside of lawful marriage and fidelity within marriage. ... Adultery, fornication, homosexual or lesbian relations, and every other unholy, unnatural, or impure practice are sinful.” Still quoting from the handbook: “Homosexual behavior violates the commandments of God, is contrary to the purposes of human sexuality, and deprives people of the blessings that can be found in family life and in the saving ordinances of the gospel. ... While opposing homosexual behavior, the Church reaches out with understanding and respect to individuals who are attracted to those of the same gender” ([2010], 21.4.5; 21.4.6).

w See 1 Corinthians 6:9–20; James 1:25–27; Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21. And we should always remember that “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

always easy. Not one of us manages them perfectly.^x Mistakes happen. Errors are made. Sins are committed. What can we do then? We can learn from them. And we can truly repent.^y

17 We can change our behavior. Our very desires can change. How? There is only one way. True change—permanent change—can come only through the healing, cleansing, and enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.^z He loves you—each of you!^{aa} He allows you to access His power as you keep His commandments, eagerly, earnestly, and exactly. It is that simple and certain. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of change!^{ab}

18 A strong human spirit with control over appetites of the flesh is master over emotions and passions and not a slave to them. That kind of freedom is as vital to the spirit as oxygen is to the body! Freedom from

self-slavery is true liberation!^{ac}

19 We are “free to choose liberty and eternal life ... or to choose captivity and death.”^{ad} When we choose the loftier path toward liberty and eternal life, that path includes marriage.^{ae} Latter-day Saints proclaim that “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.” We also know that “gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”^{af}

20 Marriage between a man and a woman is fundamental to the Lord’s doctrine and crucial to God’s eternal plan. Marriage between a man and a woman is God’s pattern for a fulness of life on earth and in heaven. God’s marriage pattern cannot be abused, misunderstood, or misconstrued.^{ag} Not if you want true joy. God’s marriage pattern

x Mortality is a period of testing, as explained in scripture: “We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25).

y See Mosiah 4:10; Alma 39:9; Helaman 15:7. Handbook 2 includes this message: “Homosexual behavior can be forgiven through sincere repentance” (21.4.6).

z Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and by obedience to the principles of the gospel, all mankind may be saved (see Doctrine and Covenants 138:4; Articles of Faith 1:3).

aa See Ether 12:33–34; Moroni 8:17.

ab See Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12–14.

ac See Romans 8:13–17; Galatians 5:13–25; Doctrine and Covenants 88:86.

ad 2 Nephi 2:27.

ae See Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4.

af “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2010, 129.

ag See Matthew 19:4–6; Mosiah 29:26–27; Helaman 5:2.

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protects the sacred power of procreation and the joy of true marital intimacy.^{ah} We know that Adam and Eve were married by God before they ever experienced the joy of uniting as husband and wife.^{ai}

21 In our day civil governments have a vested interest in protecting marriage because strong families constitute the best way of providing for the health, education, welfare, and prosperity of rising generations.^{aj} But civil governments are heavily influenced by social trends and secular philosophies as they write, rewrite, and enforce laws. Regardless of what civil legislation may be enacted, the doctrine of the Lord regarding marriage and morality cannot be changed.^{ak} Remember: sin, even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God!

22 While we are to emulate our

Savior's kindness and compassion, while we are to value the rights and feelings of all of God's children, we cannot change His doctrine. It is not ours to change. His doctrine is ours to study, understand, and uphold.

23 The Savior's way of life is good. His way includes chastity before marriage and total fidelity within marriage.^{al} The Lord's way is the only way for us to experience enduring happiness. His way brings sustained comfort to our souls and perennial peace to our homes. And best of all, His way leads us home to Him and our Heavenly Father, to eternal life and exaltation.^{am} This is the very essence of God's work and glory.^{an}

24 My dear brothers and sisters, each day is a day of decision, and our decisions determine our destiny. One day each of

ah Each person is born with unique identity, chromosomes, and DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). DNA is a molecule that encodes genetic instructions used in the development and function of living cells. Each person's DNA is created when the DNA from a father and a mother combine to create the DNA of a new body—a partnership between father, mother, and child.

ai See Genesis 2:24–25; 3:20–21; 4:1–2, 25.

aj Dr. Patrick F. Fagan wrote: "The indispensable building block upon which the fortunes of the economy depends [is] the married-parent household—especially the child-rich family that worships weekly. ... Every marriage creates a new household, an independent economic unit that generates income, spends, saves, and invests" ("The Family GDP: How Marriage and Fertility Drive the Economy," *The Family in America*, vol. 24, no. 2 [Spring 2010], 136).

ak See Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27–28; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Romans 1:26–27; 13:9; Mosiah 13:22; 3 Nephi 12:27–28; Doctrine and Covenants 42:24; 59:6.

al See Gordon B. Hinckley, "This Thing Was Not Done in a Corner," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 49.

am See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

an See Moses 1:39.

el,^h the great I Am and Jehovah of Old Testament times.ⁱ

8 He was sent by His Father to accomplish the Atonement, the central act of all human history. Because of His Atonement, immortality became a reality for all, and eternal life became a possibility for those who choose to follow Him.^j These objectives are the work and glory of Almighty God.^k

9 As our great Exemplar, Jesus taught us how to live, to love, and to learn. He taught us how to pray, to forgive, and endure to the end.^l

10 He taught us how to care about others more than we care about ourselves. He taught us about mercy and kindness—making real changes in our lives through His power. He taught us how to find peace of heart and mind. One day, we will stand before Him as our just Judge and merciful Master.^m

11 These sacred responsibilities of the Lord cause us to adore Him as our personal and perennial Prince of Peace. We praise Him for our privilege as parents, grandparents, and teachers of children.

12 Christmastime is cherished family time. Family time is sacred time. We can help our children to turn to the Savior. Music can aid us. Our children like to sing “I’m Trying to Be like Jesus.”ⁿ

13 Jesus said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”^o

14 He can bring peace to those whose lives have been ravaged by war. Families disrupted by military duty bear memories of war, which in my mind were imbedded during the Korean War.

15 Wars of our present era are more sophisticated but are still as wrenching to families. Those who so suffer can turn to the Lord. His is the consoling message of peace on earth and good will among men.^p

16 Peace can come to those who are not feeling well. Some bodies are wounded. Others ache spiritually because of missing loved ones or other emotional trauma. Brothers and sisters, peace can come to your soul as you build faith in the Prince of Peace.

17 “Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither.

h See Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; 2 Nephi 17:14.

i See Exodus 3:11–14; 6:3; Abraham 1:16; 2:8.

j See 3 Nephi 27:13–14.

k See Moses 1:39.

l See 3 Nephi 27:21.

m See 2 Nephi 9:41.

n Children’s Songbook, 78–79.

o Matthew 19:14.

p See Luke 2:14.

30 “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

31 “And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”^a

32 Peace can come to all who earnestly seek the Prince of Peace. His is the sweet and saving message our missionaries take throughout the world. They preach the gospel of Jesus Christ as restored by Him through the Prophet Joseph Smith.^b Missionaries teach these life-changing words of the Lord: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”^c

33 Peace can come to all who choose to walk in the ways of the Master. His invitation is expressed in three loving words: “Come, follow me.”^d

34 We’ll sing all hail to the Prince of Peace,^e for He will come again. Then “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”^f As the millennial Messiah, He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.^g

35 As we follow Jesus Christ, He will lead us to live with Him

and our Heavenly Father, with our families. Through our many challenges of mortality, if we remain faithful to covenants made, if we endure to the end, we will qualify for that greatest of all the gifts of God, eternal life.^h In His holy presence, our families can be together forever.

36 God bless you, my dear brothers and sisters. May each of you have a very merry Christmas! And may you and your loved ones enjoy forever all the blessings of our Lord—our Prince of Peace—I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 19

Let Your Faith Show - Delivered in the Saturday Afternoon session of the April 2014 General Conference.

DEAR brothers and sisters, we express our deepest feelings of love and gratitude for you. We are grateful for our assignments among you.

2 On a recent flight, our pilot announced that we would encounter turbulence during our descent and that all passengers must fasten their seat belts securely. Sure enough, turbulence came. It was really rough. Across

a John 11:25–26.

b We also remember the birthday of the Prophet Joseph Smith (December 23, 1805) at Christmastime.

c John 14:15.

d Luke 18:22.

e See “We’ll Sing All Hail to Jesus’ Name,” Hymns, no. 182.

f Isaiah 40:5.

g See Revelation 19:16.

h See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

the aisle and a couple of rows behind me, a terrified woman panicked. With each frightening drop and jarring bump, she screamed loudly. Her husband tried to comfort her but to no avail. Her hysterical shouts persisted until we passed through that zone of turbulence to a safe landing. During her period of anxiety, I felt sorry for her. Because faith is the antidote for fear, I silently wished that I could have strengthened her faith.

3 Later, as passengers were leaving the aircraft, this woman's husband spoke to me. He said, "I'm sorry my wife was so terrified. The only way I could comfort her was to tell her that 'Elder Nelson is on this flight, so you don't need to worry.'"

4 I'm not sure that my presence on that flight should have given her any comfort, but I will say that one of the realities of mortal life is that our faith will be tested and challenged. Sometimes those tests come as we face what appear to be life-and-death encounters. For this frightened woman, a violently rocking plane presented one of those moments when we come face-to-face with the strength of our faith.

5 When we speak of faith—the faith that can move mountains—

we are not speaking of faith in general but of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can be bolstered as we learn about Him and live our religion. The doctrine of Jesus Christ was designed by the Lord to help us increase our faith. In today's vernacular, however, the word religion can mean different things to different people.

6 The word religion literally means "to ligate again" or "to tie back" to God.ⁱ The question we might ask ourselves is, are we securely tied to God so that our faith shows, or are we actually tied to something else? For example, I have overheard conversations on Monday mornings about professional athletic games that took place on the preceding Sunday. For some of these avid fans, I have wondered if their "religion" would "tie them back" only to some kind of a bouncing ball.

7 We might each ask ourselves, where is our faith? Is it in a team? Is it in a brand? Is it in a celebrity? Even the best teams can fail. Celebrities can fade. There is only One in whom your faith is always safe, and that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you need to let your faith show!

8 God declared in the first of His Ten Commandments, "Thou

i When a baby is born, the umbilical cord is doubly ligated and severed between those two ligatures. A ligature is a tie—a secure tie. The word religion comes from Latin roots: re, meaning "again" or "back to," and likely ligare, meaning "to tie" or "to ligate." Thus, we understand that religion "ties believers to God."

shalt have no other gods before me.”^j He also said, “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”^k Yet so many people look only to their bank balance for peace or to fellow human beings for models to follow.

9 Clinicians, academicians, and politicians are often put to a test of faith. In pursuit of their goals, will their religion show or will it be hidden? Are they tied back to God or to man?

10 I had such a test decades ago when one of my medical faculty colleagues chastised me for failing to separate my professional knowledge from my religious convictions. He demanded that I not combine the two. How could I do that? Truth is truth! It is not divisible, and any part of it cannot be set aside.

11 Whether truth emerges from a scientific laboratory or through revelation, all truth emanates from God. All truth is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.^l Yet I was being asked to hide my faith. I did not comply with my colleague’s request. I let my faith show!

12 In all professional endeavors, rigorous standards of accuracy

are required. Scholars cherish their freedom of expression. But full freedom cannot be experienced if part of one’s knowledge is ruled “out-of-bounds” by edicts of men.

13 Spiritual truth cannot be ignored—especially divine commandments. Keeping divine commandments brings blessings, every time! Breaking divine commandments brings a loss of blessings, every time!^m

14 Problems abound in this world because it is populated by imperfect people. Their objectives and desires are heavily influenced by their faith or lack of it. Many put other priorities ahead of God. Some challenge the relevance of religion in modern life. As in every age, so today there are those who mock or decry the free exercise of religion. Some even blame religion for any number of the world’s ills. Admittedly, there have been times when atrocities have been committed in the name of religion. But living the Lord’s pure religion, which means striving to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ, is a way of life and a daily commitment that will provide divine guidance. As you practice your religion, you are exercising

j Exodus 20:3. In addition, the Lord said, “Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn ... from all your abominations” (Ezekiel 14:6).

k Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.

l See Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 391.

m See Mosiah 2:41; Doctrine and Covenants 58:30–33; 82:10. This principle is true for everyone, for “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34; see also Moroni 8:12).

people can be wrong—totally wrong. Immorality is still immorality in the eyes of God, who one day will judge all of our deeds and desires.^s

22 Contrast the fear and faithlessness so prevalent in the world today with the faith and courage of my dearly beloved daughter Emily, who now lives on the other side of the veil. As mortal life was leaving her cancer-ridden body, she could barely speak. But with a smile on her face, she said to me, “Daddy, don’t worry about me. I know I will be all right!” Emily’s faith was showing—showing brightly—in that tender moment, right when we needed it most.

23 This beautiful young mother of five had full faith in her Heavenly Father, in His plan, and in the eternal welfare of her family. She was securely tied back to God. She was totally faithful to covenants made with the

Lord and with her husband. She loved her children but was at peace, despite her impending separation from them. She had faith in her future, and theirs too, because she had faith in our Heavenly Father and His Son.

24 In 1986, President Thomas S. Monson said: “Of course we will face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God’s approval. ... Remember that all men have their fears, but those who face their fears with [faith] have courage as well.”^t

25 President Monson’s counsel is timeless! So I plead with you, my dear brothers and sisters: Day after day, on your path toward your eternal destiny, increase your faith. Proclaim your faith! Let your faith show!^u

s Scripture teaches: “Come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name” (2 Nephi 9:41).

t Thomas S. Monson, “Courage Counts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 41. On another occasion, President Monson gave this inspiring admonition: “To live greatly, we must develop the capacity to face trouble with courage, disappointment with cheerfulness, and triumph with humility. ... We are sons and daughters of a living God, in whose image we have been created. ... We cannot sincerely hold this conviction without experiencing a profound new sense of strength and power, even the strength to live the commandments of God, the power to resist the temptations of Satan” (“Yellow Canaries with Gray on Their Wings,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 43).

u “Deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:32). Do not fear man more than God (see Doctrine and Covenants 3:7; 59:5).

teachings of the Lord and killed the prophets. Ten tribes were carried captive into Assyria. From there they became lost to the records of mankind, though not lost to the Lord. Two tribes remained for a short time, but because of their rebellion they were taken captive into Babylon. When they returned, they were favored of the Lord, but again they rejected Him!

*The Scattering and
Gathering of Israel*

6 A loving but grieving Father scattered Israel far and wide, but He promised that one day scattered Israel would be gathered back into the fold. This promise was just as emphatic as the promise of the scattering of Israel.^f Isaiah, for example, foresaw that in the latter days the Lord would send “swift messengers” to these people, who were “scattered and peeled”.^g

7 As prophesied, all things were to be restored in this dispensation. Therefore, the long-awaited gathering of scattered Israel must come as part of that restoration.^h The gathering of Israel is interrelated with the second promise because the gathering is a necessary prelude to the Second Coming of the Lord.ⁱ

Again, that heavenly perspective is ever evident.

8 This concept of the gathering is one of the important teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Lord has declared, “I give unto you a sign ... that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion”.^j

9 The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a tangible sign to the world that the Lord has commenced gathering Israel and fulfilling covenants He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.^k We not only teach this concept, but we also get to participate in it! We do so as we help to gather the elect of the Lord on both sides of the veil.

10 Mercifully, the invitation to “come unto Christ”^l can also be extended to those who died without a knowledge of the gospel.^m Part of the preparation on behalf of those who live on the other side of the veil requires earthly efforts of those who live on this side of the veil. We gather pedigree charts, create family group sheets, and do vicarious temple work to gather individu-

f See Isaiah 11:12; 22:16–18; 3 Nephi 15:20–22; Abraham 2:10–11.

g Isaiah 18:2, 7

h See 1 Nephi 15:18; see also the title page of the Book of Mormon.

i See Doctrine and Covenants 133:8–17.

j 3 Nephi 21:1

k See Genesis 12:2–3; 26:3–4; 35:11–12; see also chapter headings for 3 Nephi 21 and 29.

l Jacob 1:7. See also Omni 1:26; Moroni 10:30, 32; Doctrine and Covenants 20:59.

m See Doctrine and Covenants 137:5–8.

als unto the Lord and into their families.ⁿ

11 This dispensation of the fulness of times was foreseen by God as the time to gather, both in heaven and on earth. The Apostle Peter knew that after a period of apostasy, a restoration would come. He declared:

12 “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; ...

13 “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began”.^o

14 In our day, Peter, James, and John were sent by the Lord with “the keys of [His] kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times,” in which He would “gather together in one all things, both which are in heav-

en, and which are on earth”.^p

15 Many aspects of the Abrahamic covenant have already been fulfilled. The Savior of the world did indeed come through the lineage of Abraham, through Jacob’s son Judah. Land was allocated for an inheritance long ago. A map in the LDS edition of the Bible shows how the land inherited by the tribes was divided among the descendants of Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh.^q We learn from the Book of Mormon that the land reserved for the lineage of Joseph was the American hemisphere.^r

16 The great promise that all nations would be blessed by the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has yet to be fulfilled. But this promise of the gathering, woven through the fabric of all scriptures, will be fulfilled just as surely as were the prophecies of the scattering of Israel.^s

n See 1 Corinthians 15:29; 1 Peter 4:6.

o Acts 3:19, 21

p D&C 27:13. Paul also prophesied of our day: “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times [the Lord] might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth” (Ephesians 1:10).

q See Genesis 35:23–26; 41:50–52. The tribe of Levi provided priests among the people and was neither numbered as a tribe nor received a tribal inheritance. Two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, were given land inheritances and were numbered among the tribes in the stead of their father. The number of twelve tribes was thus maintained.

r See Ether 13:8; see also Genesis 49:22.

s See Leviticus 26:44; Deuteronomy 4:27–31; 28; 29; 30:1–10; Nehemiah 1:9; Isaiah 11:11–12; Jeremiah 31:7–12; Ezekiel 37:21–22; Amos 9:14–15; Matthew 24:31; Jacob 6:2. See also Russell M. Nelson, “The Exodus Repeated,” *Ensign*, July 1999, 6–13. The gathering of Israel is particularly forecast in Isaiah 49–51 and Jacob 5.

*The Gathering as a Prelude
to the Second Coming*

17 Why is this promise of gathering so crucial? Because the gathering of Israel is necessary to prepare the world for the Second Coming! And the Book of Mormon is God's instrument needed to accomplish both of these divine objectives.^t

18 The Book of Mormon is a gift from God to the entire world. It is the only book the Lord has testified to be true.^u It is a gift from Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, Moroni, and its inspired and martyred translator, the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon is purposely addressed to the remnant of the house of Israel.^v

19 Regarding the Second Coming, we know it is "now nigh at hand, and in a time [yet] to come".^w And when the Savior comes again, it will not be in secret.^x Meanwhile, much work must be done to gather Israel and prepare the world for the glorious Second Coming.

*The Gathering of Israel
in This Dispensation*

20 Thanks to the Book of Mormon, we know when this promised gathering will take place: "Wherefore, our father hath not

spoken of our seed alone, but also of all the house of Israel, pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days; which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed".^y

21 Six hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, prophets knew that the gathering of Israel would take place "in the latter days."

22 To Latter-day Saints, the honored name Abraham is important. Each member of the Church is linked to Abraham.^z The Lord reaffirmed the Abrahamic covenant in our day through the Prophet Joseph Smith.^{aa} In the temple we receive our ultimate and highest blessings, as promised to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.^{ab}

23 We need to gain that heavenly perspective. We need to know about the Abrahamic covenant and understand our responsibility in helping to bring about the promised gathering of Israel. We need to know why we are privileged to receive patriarchal blessings and learn of our connection to ancient patriarchs. We

t See Matthew 24:14; Doctrine and Covenants 133:17.

u See Doctrine and Covenants 17:6.

v See Mormon 7:10; 9:37; Moroni 10:31–34.

w D&C 63:53

x See Isaiah 40:5.

y 1 Nephi 15:18; emphasis added

z The covenant may also be received by adoption (see Matthew 3:9; Luke 3:8; Galatians 4:5–7).

aa See Doctrine and Covenants 124:58; 132:31–32.

ab See Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–40; 132:19; Abraham 2:11.

need to know that Jacob’s son Joseph became the birthright son after Reuben lost his birthright.^{ac} Joseph and his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became the seed to lead in the gathering of Israel.^{ad} Other tribes were to follow.

24 Think of those heavenly messengers who brought precious keys of the priesthood to the Lord’s restored Church. On April 3, 1836, after the Lord had accepted the Kirtland Temple, came Moses, who restored “the keys of the gathering of Israel”.^{ae} Next, “Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed”.^{af} Thus the Abrahamic covenant was renewed as part of the Restoration! Then came Elijah, who restored keys of the sealing authority, as prophesied by Malachi.^{ag} Those keys are necessary to seal the families of gathered Israel and enable them to enjoy the greatest of all blessings, that of eternal life.

25 What is the perspective of the

Father and the Son regarding the Book of Mormon? They see it as evidence of the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith. They see it as the instrument by which people can learn more about Jesus Christ, believe His gospel, and join His Church. They see it as the text to clarify our connection with the biblical house of Israel. The Book of Mormon declares the advent of the gathering^{ah} and is God’s instrument to bring about that gathering. Without the Book of Mormon, there would be no gathering of Israel.^{ai}

26 The Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the gospel. Without the Book of Mormon, we would know little about the Atonement of Jesus Christ.^{aj} Because it teaches of the Atonement, the Book of Mormon helps us to repent, make and keep sacred covenants, and merit the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. It leads us to the temple, where we can qualify for eternal life.

27 Here on earth we can have

ac See 1 Chronicles 5:1.

ad Ephraim was given the birthright in Israel to bear the message of the Restoration to all nations and to lead the gathering of scattered Israel (see Jeremiah 31:7–9; Doctrine and Covenants 64:36; 133:32–34).

ae D&C 110:11

af D&C 110:12

ag See Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16; see also Malachi 4:5–6.

ah The doctrine related to the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel is among the earliest lessons taught in the Book of Mormon (see 1 Nephi 10:14).

ai See Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (1985), 554.

aj The word atonement in any of its forms appears in only one verse of the King James Version of the New Testament (see Romans 5:11). It appears in 24 verses of the Book of Mormon.

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that heavenly perspective in all we do. With that perspective, we see that missionary work is crucial to the gathering of Israel. In many nations, our missionaries search for those of scattered Israel.

28 Zion exists wherever righteous Saints gather.^a Publications, communications, and congregations give nearly all Church members access to the doctrine, keys, ordinances, and blessings of the gospel, regardless of location. As a convenience to Saints across the globe, 143 temples are available, and more are coming.^b

29 Saints in every land have equal claim upon the blessings of the Lord. Spiritual security will always depend upon how we live, not where we live.

30 The gathering of Israel is not an ultimate endpoint. It is but the beginning. The end to which we endure includes the endowment and sealing ordinances of the temple. It includes our entrance into a covenant relationship with God either by lineage or adoption and then dwelling with Him and our families forever. That is God's glory—eternal life for His children.^c

31 Our loving Father in Heaven truly wants His children to return to Him, not by coercion but by individual choice and personal preparation. And He wants

them sealed as eternal families.

32 That is our Heavenly Father's perspective. That is the Beloved Son's perspective. And it can be our perspective as well.

CHAPTER 21

Disciples of Jesus Christ—Defenders of Marriage - Delivered as a Commencement address at BYU Provo on August 14, 2014. Reprinted in the August 2015 Ensign magazine as well as the Religious Educator Vol 20 No 1.

THANK you, President Worthen, for your gracious introduction. Wendy and I are grateful for the privilege of being here on this significant occasion. I bring love and greetings from President Thomas S. Monson, President Henry B. Eyring, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, my beloved Brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and members of the board of trustees.

2 We are grateful for President Kevin J. Worthen and President Cecil O. Samuelson, who have presided over the studies of this graduating class. We thank the faculty and staff for their service and tireless striving for excellence. And today we congratulate every graduate, along with their families and friends who have provided encouragement along the way. We are very proud of each of you!

a See Doctrine and Covenants 97:21.

b As of May 2014.

c See Moses 1:39.

11 That you were kind and patient.

12 Or humble and hardworking.

13 Or a person of virtue.

14 The greatest guardians of any and all virtues are marriage and family. This is particularly the case with the virtues of chastity and fidelity in marriage, both of which are required to create enduring and fully rewarding marriage partnerships and family relationships.

15 Male and female are created for what they can do and become, together. It takes a man and a woman to bring a child into the world. Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable. Men and women are distinct and complementary. Children deserve a chance to grow up with both a mom and a dad.

16 As you go forth from BYU, you will likely encounter increasing debate about the definition of marriage. Many of your neighbors, colleagues, and friends will have never heard logical and inspired truths about the importance of marriage as God Himself defined it. You will have many opportunities to strengthen understanding of the Lord's side of that argument by the eloquence of your examples, both as individuals and as families.

17 The Apostle Paul foresaw our circumstances when he said:

18 In the last days perilous times shall come.

19 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

20 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, . . . despisers of those that are good,

21 . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

22 Then he concluded, "From such turn away."^d

23 After his remarkable prophecy of our time, Paul added this word of warning:

24 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.^e

25 Ponder that! It means that during these perilous times, life will not be comfortable for true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. But we will have His approval. He gave us this assurance:

26 And blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.^f

27 In short, as disciples, each of us will be put to the test. At

d 2 Timothy 3:1–5.

e 2 Timothy 3:12.

f 3 Nephi 12:10; see also JST Matthew 5:12.

any hour of any day we have the privilege of choosing between right and wrong. This is an age-old battle that started in a pre-mortal realm. And that battle is becoming more intense every day. Your individual strength of character is needed now more than ever before.

28 The day is gone when you can be a quiet and comfortable Christian. Your religion is not just about showing up for church on Sunday. It is about showing up as a true disciple from Sunday morning through Saturday night—24/7! There is no such thing as a “part-time” disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus invited anyone who wants to be His disciple to take up His cross and follow Him.^g Are you ready to join the ranks?

29 Or will you be ashamed of the gospel? Will you be ashamed of your Lord and His plan?^h Will you yield to voices of those who would have you join them on the popular side of contemporary history?

30 No! The youth of Zion will not falter! I believe you will be courageous and proclaim God’s truth with clarity and kindness, even when His truth is politically unpopular! Paul set that pattern when he declared:

31 For I am not ashamed of the

gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.ⁱ

32 Disciples of the Lord are defenders of marriage. We cannot yield. History is not our judge. A secular society is not our judge. God is our judge! For each of us, Judgment Day will be held in God’s own way and time.^j

33 The future of marriage and of countless human lives will be determined by your willingness to bear solemn witness of the Lord and live according to His gospel. Great protection is available to us as we enter the waters of baptism and take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. King Benjamin so explained:

34 And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.^k

35 I appreciate a statement made by Sister Sheri L. Dew at the recent BYU Women’s Conference. She said:

36 At the heart of becoming disciples is doing what we promise

g See Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; D&C 56:2; 112:14.
h See Mormon 8:38.
i Romans 1:16, see also 2 Timothy 1:8.
j See Romans 2:5; Alma 33:22; Ether 11:20; D&C 88:104; 133:38.
k Mosiah 5:7; see also verse 8.

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to do every time we partake of the sacrament—which is to “always remember” the Lord.^l This means remembering Him when we choose what media we’re willing to expose our spirits to. It means remembering Him in how we spend our time and when choosing between a steady diet of pop culture or the Word of God. It means remembering Him in the middle of conflict or when temptation looms. It means remembering Him when critics attack His Church and mock truth. It means remembering that we have taken His name upon us.^m

37 Sister Dew’s message is consonant with a message from President Howard W. Hunter (1907–1995), who said:

38 If our lives and our faith are centered upon Jesus Christ and his restored gospel, nothing can ever go permanently wrong. . . . If our lives are not centered on the Savior and his teachings, no other success can ever be permanently right.ⁿ

39 Wherever we go, you and I as disciples of the Lord bear a solemn responsibility to proclaim the will of God to all people.

And one of the more demanding opportunities of our time is to stand up for the truth regarding the sacred nature of marriage.

40 Our message is shaped by divine doctrine, canonized in the Bible:

41 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.^o

42 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.^p

43 And God blessed them, and . . . said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.^q

44 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.^r

45 And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.^s

46 God is the Father of all men and women. They are His children. It was He who ordained marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Marriage was not created by human judges or

l see Moroni 4:3; 5:2

m Mosiah 5:7. Sheri L. Dew, “Sweet Above All That Is Sweet,” BYU Women’s Conference address, 1 May 2014; emphasis in original; ce.byu.edu/cw/womensconference/pdf/archive/2014/sheri_dew.pdf.

n Howard W. Hunter, “Fear Not, Little Flock,” BYU devotional address, 14 March 1989.

o Genesis 1:1.

p Genesis 1:27.

q Genesis 1:28.

r Genesis 2:24.

s Genesis 3:20; see also Moses 4:26.

legislators. It was not created by think tanks or by popular vote or by oft-quoted bloggers or by pundits. It was not created by lobbyists. Marriage was created by God!

47 The Ten Commandments forbade adultery and covetousness.^t Those ancient commandments were given later to people of New Testament^u and Book of Mormon^v times. In modern revelation the Lord has reaffirmed:

48 Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else.^w

49 True intimacy, as planned by our Creator, is experienced only within the sacred union of a husband and wife because it is enriched by truth and ennobled by the honoring of covenants a husband and wife make with each other and with God. It is crucial to note that full fidelity to those covenants forbids pornography, lust, or abuse in any form.

50 Social and political pressures to change marriage laws are resulting in practices contrary to God’s will regarding the eternal nature and purposes of marriage. Man simply cannot make moral what God has declared to be immoral. Sin, even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God.

51 Brothers and sisters, undergirded by incontrovertible truth, proclaim your love for God! Proclaim your love for all human beings “with malice toward none, with charity for all.”^x They as children of God are our brothers and sisters. We value their rights and feelings. But we cannot condone efforts to change divine doctrine. It is not for man to change.

52 God loves His children. And if they love Him, they will show that love by keeping His commandments,^y including chastity before marriage and total fidelity within marriage. Scriptures warn that behavior contrary to the commandments of the Lord will not only deprive couples of divinely approved intimacy but will bring about the stern judgments of God.^z

53 The noblest yearning of the human heart is for a marriage that will endure beyond death. Complete fidelity to covenants made in holy temples will allow husband and wife to be sealed together throughout all eternity.^{aa}

54 Dear graduates, families, and friends, the burden of discipleship is heavy. As disciples of the Lord you will stand as defenders of marriage. And as you are true

t See Exodus 20:14, 17; Deuteronomy 5:18, 21.
u See Matthew 5:27; 19:18; Romans 13:9.
v See Mosiah 13:22, 24; 3 Nephi 12:27.
w D&C 42:22.
x Abraham Lincoln, second inaugural address, 4 March 1865.
y See John 14:15, 21; 1 John 5:2; D&C 46:9; 124:87.
z See Leviticus 26:15–20; Psalm 89:31–32; Matthew 5:19.
aa See D&C 132:7, 19.

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and faithful, not only will He help you and protect you,^a He will bless your families.^b

55 You are beneficiaries of the infinite Atonement of the Lord. Because of Him all of you will eventually be rewarded with immortality. And because of Him you may enjoy the blessing of eternal life with Him and your families.

56 Now, invoking the keys of the holy apostleship in me vested, I bless you with a fervent desire to feast on the words of Jesus Christ and to apply His teachings in your daily lives. I bless you with success in your continuing educational and occupational pursuits. I bless you with joy as you keep the commandments of Almighty God. And I bless you with protection, peace, and continual growth as you stand as disciples and defenders of the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel.

57 God lives! Jesus is the Christ! He stands as the Head of His Church, restored in these latter days to accomplish its divine destiny. I so testify, with my expression of love and gratitude for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 22

Sustaining the Prophets - Delivered in the Sunday Morning session of the October 2014 General Conference.

PRESIDENT Eyring, we thank you for your instructive and inspiring message. My dear brothers and sisters, we thank you for your faith and devotion. Yesterday, we were each invited to sustain Thomas S. Monson as the prophet of the Lord and President of the Lord's Church. And often we sing, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet."^c Do you and I really understand what that means? Imagine the privilege the Lord has given us of sustaining His prophet, whose counsel will be untainted, unvarnished, unmotivated by any personal aspiration, and utterly true!

2 How do we really sustain a prophet? Long before he became President of the Church, President Joseph F. Smith explained, "It is an important duty resting upon the Saints who ... sustain the authorities of the Church, to do so not only by the lifting of the hand, the mere form, but in deed and in truth."^d

3 Well do I remember my most unique "deed" to sustain a prophet. As a medical doctor and cardiac surgeon, I had the

a See D&C 84:88.

b See Isaiah 49:25; D&C 98:37; 105:14.

c "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," Hymns, no. 19.

d Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith (1998), 211; emphasis added. This statement was made in 1898, when President Smith was Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

responsibility of performing open-heart surgery on President Spencer W. Kimball in 1972, when he was Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He needed a very complex operation. But I had no experience doing such a procedure on a 77-year-old patient in heart failure. I did not recommend the operation and so informed President Kimball and the First Presidency. But, in faith, President Kimball chose to have the operation, only because it was advised by the First Presidency. That shows how he sustained his leaders! And his decision made me tremble!

4 Thanks to the Lord, the operation was a success. When President Kimball's heart resumed beating, it did so with great power! At that very moment, I had a clear witness of the Spirit that this man would one day become President of the Church!^e

5 You know the outcome. Only 20 months later, President Kimball became President of the Church. And he provided bold and courageous leadership for many years.

6 Since then we have sustained Presidents Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, and now Thomas S. Monson as Presidents of the Church—prophets in every sense of the word!

7 My dear brothers and sisters, if the Restoration did anything, it shattered the age-old myth that God had stopped talking to His children. Nothing could be further from the truth. A prophet has stood at the head of God's Church in all dispensations, from Adam to the present day.^f Prophets testify of Jesus Christ—of His divinity and of His earthly mission and ministry.^g We honor the Prophet Joseph Smith as the prophet of this last dispensation. And we honor each man who has succeeded him as President of the Church.

8 When we sustain prophets and other leaders,^h we invoke the law of common consent, for the Lord said, "It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he

e For further details, see Spencer J. Condie, Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle (2003), 153–56.

f See Bible Dictionary, "Dispensations."

g A number of prophets foretold the coming of the Lord, including Lehi (see 1 Nephi 1:19), Nephi (see 1 Nephi 11:31–33; 19:7–8), Jacob (see Jacob 4:4–6), Benjamin (see Mosiah 3:5–11, 15), Abinadi (see Mosiah 15:1–9), Alma (see Alma 40:2), and Samuel the Lamanite (see Helaman 14:12). Before the Savior was born in Bethlehem, they foresaw His atoning sacrifice and His subsequent Resurrection.

h The principle of sustaining leaders is fundamental throughout the Lord's Church. A person is sustained before being set apart to a calling or being ordained to an office in the priesthood.

has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church.”ⁱ

9 This gives us, as members of the Lord’s Church, confidence and faith as we strive to keep the scriptural injunction to heed the Lord’s voice^j as it comes through the voice of His servants the prophets.^k All leaders in the Lord’s Church are called by proper authority. No prophet or any other leader in this Church, for that matter, has ever called himself or herself. No prophet has ever been elected. The Lord made that clear when He said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.”^l You and I do not “vote” on Church leaders at any level. We do, though, have the privilege of sustaining them.

10 The ways of the Lord are different from the ways of man.

Man’s ways remove people from office or business when they grow old or become disabled. But man’s ways are not and never will be the Lord’s ways. Our sustaining of prophets is a personal commitment that we will do our utmost to uphold their prophetic priorities. Our sustaining is an oath-like indication that we recognize their calling as a prophet to be legitimate and binding upon us.

11 Twenty-six years before he became President of the Church, then-Elder George Albert Smith said: “The obligation that we make when we raise our hands ... is a most sacred one. It does not mean that we will go quietly on our way and be willing that the prophet of the Lord shall direct this work, but it means ... that we will stand behind him; we will pray for him; we will defend his good name, and we will

i Doctrine and Covenants 42:11. The practice of sustaining our leaders was implemented on April 6, 1830, when the Church was organized, and in March 1836, when members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators (see History of the Church, 1:74–77; 2:417).

j The Book of Mormon warns of danger if we disregard prophetic teachings. From it we read that “the great and spacious building was the pride of the world; and it fell, and the fall thereof was exceedingly great. And the angel of the Lord spake ... , saying: Thus shall be the destruction of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, that shall fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (1 Nephi 11:36).

k See Daniel 9:10; Amos 3:7; Doctrine and Covenants 21:1, 4–5; 124:45–46.

l John 15:16. The fifth article of faith clarifies: “We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.”

strive to carry out his instructions as the Lord shall direct.”^m

12 The living Lord leads His living Church!ⁿ The Lord reveals His will for the Church to His prophet. Yesterday, after we were invited to sustain Thomas S. Monson as President of the Church, we also had the privilege to sustain him, the counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. Think of that! We sustain 15 men as prophets of God! They hold all the priesthood keys that have ever been conferred upon man in this dispensation.

13 The calling of 15 men to the holy apostleship provides great protection for us as members of the Church. Why? Because decisions of these leaders must be unanimous.^o Can you imagine how the Spirit needs to move upon 15 men to bring about unanimity? These 15 men have varied educational

and professional backgrounds, with differing opinions about many things. Trust me! These 15 men—prophets, seers, and revelators—know what the will of the Lord is when unanimity is reached! They are committed to see that the Lord’s will truly will be done. The Lord’s Prayer provides the pattern for each of these 15 men when they pray: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”^p

14 The Apostle with the longest seniority in the office of Apostle presides.^q That system of seniority will usually bring older men to the office of President of the Church.^r It provides continuity, seasoned maturity, experience, and extensive preparation, as guided by the Lord.

15 The Church today has been organized by the Lord Himself. He has put in place a remarkable system of governance that provides redundancy and backup. That system provides for prophetic leadership even when

m Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith (2011), 64; emphasis added. This quotation came from a conference address by Elder George Albert Smith in 1919. He became President of the Church in 1945.

n See Doctrine and Covenants 1:30, 38.

o See Doctrine and Covenants 107:27.

p 3 Nephi 13:10; see also Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2.

q When a President of the Church dies, the First Presidency is dissolved and the counselors take their places in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The Quorum of the Twelve then presides over the Church until the First Presidency is reorganized. That period of time is known as an apostolic interregnum. Historically, that interval has varied in length from four days to three and a half years.

r Of course, that pattern of succession did not apply to the calling of Joseph Smith, who was foreordained to be the prophet of the Restoration and the first President of the Church (see 2 Nephi 3:6–22; see also Abraham 3:22–23).

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the inevitable illnesses and incapacities may come with advancing age.^s Counterbalances and safeguards abound so that no one can ever lead the Church astray. Senior leaders are constantly being tutored such that one day they are ready to sit in the highest councils. They learn how to hear the voice of the Lord through the whisperings of the Spirit.

16 While serving as First Counselor to President Ezra Taft Benson, who was then nearing the end of his mortal life, President Gordon B. Hinckley explained:

17 “The principles and procedures which the Lord has put in place for the governance of His church make provision for any ... circumstance. It is important ... that there be no doubts or concerns about the governance of the Church and the exercise of the prophetic gifts, including the right to inspiration and revelation in administering the affairs and programs of the Church, when the President may be ill or is not able to function fully.

18 “The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles, called and ordained to hold the keys of the priesthood, have the authority and responsibility to govern the Church, to administer its ordinances, to expound

its doctrine, and to establish and maintain its practices.”

19 President Hinckley continued:

20 “When the President is ill or not able to function fully in all of the duties of his office, his two Counselors together comprise a Quorum of the First Presidency. They carry on with the day-to-day work of the Presidency. ...

21 “... But any major questions of policy, procedures, programs, or doctrine are considered deliberately and prayerfully by the First Presidency and the Twelve together.”^t

22 Last year, when President Monson reached the milestone of 5 years of service as President of the Church, he reflected on his 50 years of apostolic service and made this statement: “Age eventually takes its toll on all of us. However, we join our voices with King Benjamin, who said, ... ‘I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind; yet I have been chosen ... and consecrated by my father, ... and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power, to serve you with all the might, mind and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me’.”^u

s We know that the Lord Himself can call any of us home anytime He chooses.

t Gordon B. Hinckley, “God Is at the Helm,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 54; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, “He Slumbers Not, nor Sleeps,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 6.

u Mosiah 2:11

23 President Monson continued: “Despite any health challenges that may come to us, despite any weakness in body or mind, we serve to the best of our ability. I assure you that the Church is in good hands. The system set up for the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve [Apostles] assures [us] that it will always be in good hands and that, come what may, there is no need to worry or to fear. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, whom we follow, whom we worship, and whom we serve, is ever at the helm.”^a

24 President Monson, we thank you for those truths! And we thank you for your lifetime of exemplary and dedicated service. May I presume to speak for the members of the Church throughout the world in our united and sincere expression of gratitude for you. We honor you! We love you! We sustain you, not only with uplifted hands but with all our hearts and consecrated efforts. Humbly and fervently, “we ever pray for thee, our prophet dear”!^b In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 23

The Lord Uses the Unlikely to Accomplish the Impossible - Delivered as a devotional at BYU-Idaho on January 27th, 2015.

THANK you, President Clark, for your gracious introduction. We love you and Sister Clark. We are very grateful for your commitment to improve the education of the youth of the Church. Wendy and I are most grateful for this opportunity to visit you, the students, and staff here at BYU-Idaho.

2 Dear brothers and sisters, you are exceptional individuals. You have been reserved for this particular time to accomplish your mission in mortality.^c Since your memory of your eternal identity has been largely forgotten, you need a reminder of how precious you are. You need to understand how really important you are in the eyes of your Maker. Most of you do not fully appreciate who you really are. And most of you do not fully foresee your future potential for greatness. That is understandable. You think of great people as men or women who are older and better known. And you are made aware of them because of their titles.

3 Such a circumstance occurred many years ago when I was teaching a missionary discussion to a woman from Great Britain. I was teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ, and how He had restored His gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. She really liked the teachings of the gospel, but she had a hard time

a “Message from President Thomas S. Monson,” Church News, Feb. 3, 2013, 9.

b “We Ever Pray for Thee,” Hymns, no. 23.

c See Doctrine and Covenants 86:8-92.

accepting the Prophet's First Vision. She said she could believe in the Restoration more sincerely if God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ had appeared to the Archbishop of Canterbury!

4 Actually, the fact that the Father and the Son appeared to an untitled youth is one of the most remarkable aspects of the Restoration. Joseph Smith did not have to "unlearn" anything. He was tutored personally by Them. Joseph was also tutored by other heavenly messengers, including Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elias, and Elijah. His mission in mortality was foreordained. His receptive and pristine mind was receptive. But, by worldly standards, Joseph was most unlikely. And his task to be the Prophet of this last dispensation seemed totally impossible. This example typifies the title of my message for you today: "The Lord Uses the Unlikely to Accomplish the Impossible!"

5 This pattern is one the Lord has used repeatedly throughout history. For instance, you know the story of David who slew Goliath with a stone and a sling.^d That was another example of how the Lord uses the unlikely to accomplish the impossible.

6 You may remember the account of Gideon, as recorded in the book of Judges. In his capacity as a servant of the Lord, Gideon was leading his forces against the Midianite enemies when "the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many, . . . lest Israel vaunt themselves . . . saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."

7 So the Lord told Gideon to excuse all who were afraid. That trimmed the number from 22,000 down to 10,000. Then the Lord said unto Gideon, "The people are yet too many." So He ordered a drink test. They went down to the water. Some bowed down upon their knees to drink. Others cupped their hands to their mouths to drink.

8 The Lord said unto Gideon, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand."^e

9 The Lord delivered the victory to Gideon and his men. They were outnumbered about 500 to 1.^f Here again we see the pattern: the Lord uses the unlikely to accomplish the impossible.

10 Think of Moses. In his advanced years, he was called to lead the children of Israel

d See 1 Samuel 17:49-50.

e See Judges 7:2-7.

f Judges 7:12 states, "the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. Gideon pursued the Midianites to Karkor where "about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword" (Judges 8:10). This would seem to imply that this was the number that Gideon pursued. This idea is confirmed in Harpers Bible Dictionary, 347.

ble; but with God all things are possible.”^m

15 So much for history. Now we are living in the twenty-first century. Might these patterns apply to us? Scripture describes us and what we may experience as latter-day Saints. Quote: “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; . . . God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the . . . mighty.”ⁿ

16 Those “weak ones” even include us—the Brethren. For example, in 1984, in a most unexpected way, Elder Dallin H. Oaks and I were called away from our professions of law and medicine respectively, to serve as Apostles of the Lord. In the following year, President Ezra Taft Benson gave to me the assignment to supervise the work of the Lord in Europe and Africa, with a specific charge to open the nations of Eastern Europe now under the yoke of communism.

17 If ever a task ever seemed impossible to me, that was it. In the ensuing years, I tried my best. In each atheistic nation, I was never wanted and never welcome. Their governmental leaders wouldn’t even give appointments to a man who professed faith in God. In fact, at that time, some believers were imprisoned or even executed.

18 Those countries kept good re-

cords on visits by foreigners. I was on record as an American heart surgeon, who, as a volunteer, had previously taught in some of those countries. Paired with Elder Hans B. Ringger of the Seventy, a Swiss engineer and architect, our partnership was disarming to them. We were truly unlikely, and different from leaders of other faith groups. Country by country, we labored diligently in Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Belarus, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Poland, Armenia, and the German Democratic Republic.

19 Each country presented different challenges for us. We did the very best we could, and then the Lord made up the difference. He did what we could not do. Time will not permit sharing the many details with you, but I can give you the conclusion. Before President Benson passed away, we were able to report that the Church was now established in all countries of Eastern Europe!

20 I testify to you that the Lord meant what He said when He declared: “I will show unto the children of men that I am able to do mine own work.”^o Yes, I am an eye-witness—I am a part of that pattern: the Lord used the unlikely to accomplish the impossible.

21 Now, let us apply this pattern to you. You are young. You are

m Matthew 19:26; see also 17:20; Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37; 18:27
 n 1 Corinthians 1:27
 o 2 Nephi 27:21

we are a part shall be accomplished. With you and through you, prophecies of the ages shall be fulfilled. I so testify, with my expression of love for you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 24

Because He Lives - Printed in the March 2015 Ensign and New Era magazines.

ONE of the most significant of all scriptural phrases is found in Matthew 28:6, "He is not here: for he is risen." Given by angelic messengers near an empty tomb, this proclamation declared that the Lord Jesus Christ had overcome death through His Atonement and Resurrection. Later He appeared to His Apostles and charged His followers to declare their witness to the world that He lives.

2 As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in these, the latter days, we have also been charged with testifying of the realities of the Savior's Atonement and Resurrection. This Easter season gives each of us a personal opportunity to discover His sacrifice, embrace His teachings, and share His joy.

Discover His Sacrifice

3 During that first Easter season two millennia ago, the Lord suffered unspeakable agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross as He took upon Himself the sins and pains of all hu-

mankind. Betrayed by one He had called friend, He was arrested, scourged, mocked, and crucified. The Savior Himself has taught that this great sacrifice was for a purpose:

4 "For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

5 "But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

6 "Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

7 "Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men".^a

8 As we discover, through prayerful and purposeful study, the impact His mission in mortality has on us, the Holy Ghost can teach and testify to us of the Atonement's eternal significance.

Embrace His Teachings

9 With the understanding that comes from discovering the power of His Atonement, we ask ourselves, as did the Jews of ancient Jerusalem, "What shall we do?" The Apostle Peter instructed them to be baptized. "Then they that gladly received

a D&C 19:16–19

his word were baptized".^a Likewise, we also need to embrace the Savior's teachings.

10 Indeed, embracing His teachings—and helping others do so—is the great work of these latter days. That is why we have missionaries; that is why we have temples—to bring the fullest blessings of the Atonement to faithful children of God. That is why we respond to our own calls from the Lord. When we comprehend His voluntary Atonement, any sense of sacrifice on our part becomes completely overshadowed by a profound sense of gratitude for the privilege of serving Him.

Share His Joy

11 During His brief ministry in the American hemisphere, the Savior observed that the Nephites had discovered His sacrifice and embraced His teachings, and He said unto them, "Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full".^b As we follow this pattern of discovering the power of the Savior's Atonement and embracing His teachings, we experience the joy that comes from striving to be more like Him. As we do so, we naturally want to share our joy with those we love, inviting them to discover His sacrifice, embrace His teachings, and share in His joy.

12 To share the joy of this Eas-

ter season, please visit HeLives.mormon.org to view a powerful video and share your testimony of the Savior using the social media hashtag #BecauseHeLives.

13 Like those angelic messengers in the meridian of time, we also declare, "He is not here: for he is risen." He lives. And because He lives we, too, can know "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come".^c

CHAPTER 25

The Sabbath Is a Delight - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon session of the April 2015 General Conference.

DEAR brothers and sisters, these two days of conference have been glorious. We have been uplifted by inspiring music and eloquent prayers. Our spirits have been edified by messages of light and truth. On this Easter Sunday, we again unitedly and sincerely thank God for a prophet!

2 The question for each of us is: because of what I have heard and felt during this conference, how will I change? Whatever your answer might be, may I invite you also to examine your feelings about, and your behavior on, the Sabbath day.

3 I am intrigued by the words of Isaiah, who called the Sabbath "a delight."^d Yet I wonder, is the Sabbath really a delight for you and for me?

a see Acts 2:37–41
b 3 Nephi 17:20
c D&C 59:23
d Isaiah 58:13.

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4 I first found delight in the Sabbath many years ago when, as a busy surgeon, I knew that the Sabbath became a day for personal healing. By the end of each week, my hands were sore from repeatedly scrubbing them with soap, water, and a bristle brush. I also needed a breather from the burden of a demanding profession. Sunday provided much-needed relief.

5 What did the Savior mean when He said that “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath”?^e I believe He wanted us to understand that the Sabbath was His gift to us, granting real respite from the rigors of daily life and an opportunity for spiritual and physical renewal. God gave us this special day, not for amusement or daily labor but for a rest from duty, with physical and spiritual relief.

6 In Hebrew, the word Sabbath

means “rest.” The purpose of the Sabbath dates back to the Creation of the world, when after six days of labor the Lord rested from the work of creation.^f When He later revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses, God commanded that we “remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”^g Later, the Sabbath was observed as a reminder of the deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt.^h Perhaps most important, the Sabbath was given as a perpetual covenant, a constant reminder that the Lord may sanctify His people.ⁱ

7 In addition, we now partake of the sacrament on the Sabbath day in remembrance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.^j Again, we covenant that we are willing to take upon us His holy name.^k

8 The Savior identified Himself as Lord of the Sabbath.^l It is His day! Repeatedly, He has asked

e Mark 2:27.

f See Genesis 2:2–3.

g Exodus 20:8; see also Deuteronomy 5:12; Mosiah 13:16; 18:23.

h See Deuteronomy 5:14–15. People who choose to work seven days a week are essentially in bondage—to work or perhaps to money, but they are slaves nevertheless. A millionaire who works seven days a week is a rich slave.

i See Exodus 31:13, 16.

j See Doctrine and Covenants 59:12. Prior to His Crucifixion, the Lord introduced the sacrament among His disciples at the Feast of the Passover (see Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24). The resurrected Lord instituted the sacrament in remembrance of His Atonement among the people of ancient America (see 3 Nephi 18:1–12; Moroni 4:1–3; 5:2) and restored it in modern times (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79). Partaking of the sacrament renews our covenant made at baptism to keep His commandments (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:68).

k See Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, 77.

l See Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5.

us to keep the Sabbath^m or to hallow the Sabbath day.ⁿ We are under covenant to do so.

9 How do we hallow the Sabbath day? In my much younger years, I studied the work of others who had compiled lists of things to do and things not to do on the Sabbath. It wasn't until later that I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a sign between me and my Heavenly Father.^o With that understanding, I no longer needed lists of dos and don'ts. When I had to make a decision whether or not an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I simply asked myself, "What sign do I want to give to God?" That question made my choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear.

10 Though the doctrine pertaining to the Sabbath day is of ancient origin, it has been renewed in these latter days as part of a new covenant with a promise. Listen to the power of this divine decree:

11 "That thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

12 "For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from

your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High. ...

13 "And on this day ... let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, ... that thy joy may be full. ...

14 "And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, ... the fulness of the earth is yours."^p

15 Imagine the scope of that statement! The fulness of the earth is promised to those who keep the Sabbath day holy.^q No wonder Isaiah called the Sabbath "a delight."

16 How can you ensure that your behavior on the Sabbath will lead to joy and rejoicing? In addition to your going to church, partaking of the sacrament, and being diligent in your specific call to serve, what other activities would help to make the Sabbath a delight for you? What sign will you give to the Lord to show your love for Him?

17 The Sabbath provides a wonderful opportunity to strengthen family ties. After all, God wants each of us, as His children, to return to Him as endowed Saints, sealed in the temple as families,

m See Exodus 31:13; Leviticus 19:3, 30; 26:2; Doctrine and Covenants 68:29.

n See Ezekiel 20:20; 44:24.

o See Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

p Doctrine and Covenants 59:9-10, 13, 15-16.

q See Leviticus 26:2-4.

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to our ancestors, and to our posterity.^r

18 We make the Sabbath a delight when we teach the gospel to our children. Our responsibility as parents is abundantly clear. The Lord said, “Inasmuch as parents have children in Zion ... that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.”^s

19 Years ago the First Presidency stressed the importance of quality family time. They wrote:

20 “We call upon parents to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church. The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.

21 “We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands

or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform.”^t

22 When I ponder this counsel, I almost wish I were a young father once again. Now parents have such wonderful resources available to help them make family time more meaningful, on the Sabbath and other days as well. They have LDS.org, Mormon.org, the Bible videos, the Mormon Channel, the Media Library, the Friend, the New Era, the Ensign, the Liahona, and more—much more. These resources are so very helpful to parents in discharging their sacred duty to teach their children. No other work transcends that of righteous, intentional parenting!

23 As you teach the gospel, you will learn more. This is the Lord’s way of helping you to comprehend His gospel. He said:

24 “I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

25 “Teach ye diligently ... , that you may be instructed more perfectly ... in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God.”^u

r See Doctrine and Covenants 128:15–18.

s Doctrine and Covenants 68:25; emphasis added; see also Moses 6:58–62.

t First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999; quoted in Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 1.4.1.

u Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–78.

26 Such study of the gospel makes the Sabbath a delight. This promise pertains regardless of family size, composition, or location.

27 In addition to time with family, you can experience true delight on the Sabbath from family history work. Searching for and finding family members who have preceded you on earth—those who did not have an opportunity to accept the gospel while here—can bring immense joy.

28 I have seen this firsthand. Several years ago, my dear wife Wendy determined to learn how to do family history research. Her progress at first was slow, but little by little she learned how easy it is to do this sacred work. And I have never seen her happier. You too need not travel to other countries or even to a family history center. At home, with the aid of a computer or mobile device, you can identify souls who are yearning for their ordinances. Make the Sabbath a delight by finding your ancestors and liberating them from spirit prison!^v

29 Make the Sabbath a delight by rendering service to others, especially those who are not feeling well or those who are lonely or in need.^w Lifting their spirits will lift yours as well.

30 When Isaiah described the Sabbath as “a delight,” he also taught us how to make it delightful. He said:

31 “If thou turn away ... from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, ... and shalt honour [the Lord], not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

32 “Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.”^x

33 Not pursuing your “own pleasure” on the Sabbath requires self-discipline. You may have to deny yourself of something you might like. If you choose to delight yourself in the Lord, you will not permit yourself to treat it as any other day. Routine and recreational activities can be done some other time.

34 Think of this: In paying tithing, we return one-tenth of our increase to the Lord. In keeping the Sabbath holy, we reserve one day in seven as His. So it is our privilege to consecrate both money and time to Him who lends us life each day.^y

35 Faith in God engenders a love for the Sabbath; faith in the Sabbath engenders a love for God. A sacred Sabbath truly is a delight.

36 Now, as this conference comes to a close, we know that wherev-

v See Isaiah 61:1; Doctrine and Covenants 128:22; 138:57–59.
w See Matthew 25:35–40.
x Isaiah 58:13–14; emphasis added.
y See Mosiah 2:21.

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er we live we are to be examples of the believers among our families, neighbors, and friends.^a True believers keep the Sabbath day holy.

37 I conclude with the farewell plea of Moroni, as he closed the Book of Mormon. He wrote, "Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then ... are ye sanctified in Christ."^b

38 With love in my heart, I leave this with you as my prayer, testimony, and blessing in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 26

To Do and To Be - Delivered as a Commencement address at BYU-Provo on August 13th, 2015.

THANK you, Elder Oaks, for your very important address. My wife, Wendy, had planned to be with us today. Unfortunately, she sprained her ankle and is propped up at home watching these proceedings on TV. She was on the faculty here for thirteen years. We love BYU. She joins me in extending our heartfelt congratulations to all graduates and their families. We are especially grateful for the excellent messages given by three of the leading lights of this dispensation: President Kevin J Worth-

en, Dr. Donald B. Doty, and Elder Dallin H. Oaks.

2 President Worthen stands tall in his position as the thirteenth president of the university. He excelled in his chosen field of law and once served as dean of the J. Reuben Clark Law School and as advancement vice president at BYU. In the Church he serves as an Area Seventy. We trust him. His peers look up to him. His students emulate him.

3 Dr. Donald B. Doty is regarded across the globe as the premiere teacher of cardiac surgery. His textbooks are used by specialists throughout the world. You will want to read every word of his amazing biographical summary in your commencement program. While excelling in his profession, he has served in the Church as bishop, stake president, regional representative, and Area Seventy. Later we called upon him to direct the medical affairs of the Missionary Department, which he did as a volunteer for nine years. We are most grateful for his and Cheryl's building a network of help for our missionaries that will endure for years. We love them and salute them today, particularly Brother Doty as he gets his honorary degree. No one could be more deserving.

4 Elder Dallin H. Oaks and I were called to the Quorum of the Twelve in April 1984. It has been my rare privilege to sit beside

a See 1 Timothy 4:12.

b Moroni 10:32-33.

him in our quorum meetings for more than thirty-one years. You know of Elder Oaks' past service as the eighth president of BYU and as a justice of the supreme court of the state of Utah. Today you heard him talk about your need to take heart. He also asked you to consider what God wants you to be: to be joyful, to be creative, and to develop a love of God that will bring you a fulness of joy.

5 Now, let me share a thought for you graduates. You are entering a new phase of life. To this point you have been striving to meet expectations imposed upon you by other people. You have passed exams and may have to pass others in order to become certified. You have been jumping over high hurdles established by others. In order to prepare for what you want to do in life, this is good. But with this transition in the pursuit of your formal education, you need to continue to focus on becoming the person the Lord needs you to be. Strive to develop the spiritual attributes of faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, and diligence.

6 These attributes are difficult to measure, but they constitute the substance of what the Lord hopes for each of you. Remember His counsel posed to us as a question: "What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am".^a

7 Each day we can become more like Him, regardless of our chosen field of occupational endeavor. That is the lesson I would like you to learn from leaders like President Worthen, Dr. Doty, and Elder Oaks. With each passing day they have worked hard to become more like the Lord. You, too, can do as they have done. You, too, can leave a legacy of faith in your families to bless generations yet unborn.

8 Now, with the apostolic authority vested in Elder Oaks and me, we would like to bless you with joy, health, and wisdom to sustain you throughout your lifetime of opportunity, with success in your educational and occupational pursuits and within your families. We bless you in your Church service to participate joyfully in building up the kingdom of God upon the earth. We so bless you, with our expression of heartfelt love and gratitude for each one of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 27

Remarks and Dedicatory Prayer at Priesthood Restoration Site - Delivered at Harmony Pennsylvania on September 19th, 2015.

Historic Site of Translation, Revelation, and Restoration

WHILE the choir is exiting, I'd like to express gratitude to them in behalf of all of us. And not only that, I loved the opening song. I love the choir that's be-

a 3 Nephi 27:27

fore me here. You were focusing where we need to focus—Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee. And I’m looking forward to your closing hymn, “Nearer My God To Thee.” And after you sing that closing hymn, Sister Beverly Walker will compliment us by offering the closing prayer. I’d like to express special thanks to Sandra Major for being here and for all you represent in the way of community support.

2 Well, you are dear brothers and sisters. I love you all. Thank you for being here. On this historic occasion, we are assembled here in Harmony, Pennsylvania, but if you look for it on a map it won’t be there. If it’s a good map, you’ll find Oakland Township. Can you fix that, Sister Major? As we consider the significance of the many sacred events that transpired here, we are truly inspired. This rural and remote place was the scene of transcendent translation, revelation and restoration.

3 And I know both you and I appreciate what we’ve heard from our Church Historian and Recorder, Elder Steven E. Snow. In addition, he has published an article for this month’s edition of the Ensign magazine titled “Joseph Smith in Harmony.”^b That article will be very helpful for any of you who would like to read more about the remarkable events that took place here

during the early days of the Restoration of the Church.

Isaac and Elizabeth Hale Family

4 The saga of Harmony began with love. Here young Joseph Smith Jr. fell in love with a beautiful maiden named Emma Hale. Emma was one of nine children of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale. I don’t know how nine children fit in that little house. Yeah, I do—you squeeze in. The Hale family had a 130-acre farm, with orchards of apples and pears, a large garden, and groves of maple trees.

5 Emma was born here in July 1804, growing up with her eight brothers and sisters, all of whom acquired some basic education. Emma was described by her family as “a good horse-woman, and a canoe on the river was her plaything.” She was described as “a fair scholar for the common schools of the time, and a good singer and possessed of a fine voice . . . Her general intelligence and fearless integrity, united with her kindness of heart and splendid physical developments commanded both admiration and respect.”^c

6 North of here, in nearby South Bainbridge, New York, lived a prominent resident named Josiah Stowell. Like many others in his day, Stowell made efforts to locate buried treasure. In late 1825, Joseph Smith, Sr., his

^b Steven E. Snow, “Joseph Smith in Harmony,” Ensign, Sep. 2015, 50–57.

^c Recollections of the Pioneers of Lee County (Dixon, IL: Inez A. Kennedy, 1893), 96.

Emma served as Joseph's scribe. Later, in April 1828, Martin Harris arrived to assume temporary duties as scribe. Emma and her brother, Reuben, acted briefly as scribes during the winter of 1828–29.

12 But challenges continued. Emma gave birth to their son on June 15, 1828. He lived only a few hours. Then Emma became very ill—she was near death herself. Over the next few weeks Joseph cared for her. As she became stronger, she inquired about a 116-page manuscript of translated text that Joseph had reluctantly loaned to Martin Harris. She insisted that Joseph check on Martin Harris. So in early July, Joseph traveled back to Manchester. Upon learning of the loss of that precious manuscript, Joseph anguished with inconsolable grief. His mother, Lucy, described “sobs and groans and the most bitter lamentations” filling the house. Joseph cried out, “Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the Angel of the most high?” His mother added that he continued “pacing backwards and forwards weeping and grieving like a tender infant untill about sunset.”^e Joseph was chastised and the plates were taken away for a time.

13 Then, from April to June 1829, translation of the plates was resumed with full intensity. Oliver

Cowdery assisted as scribe. By the end of June, Joseph Smith had translated that ancient record from a language, unknown to him into the English language. It was done in less than three months! He translated at the rate of six to eight manuscript pages per day! Compare that with how you feel when you read eight to ten pages per day. He translated at that rate.

14 Other distractions occurred during that three-month period. Joseph and Emma had to move to Fayette, New York. He temporarily ran out of paper. He filed for a copyright, received heavenly messengers who restored the priesthood, and received 15 revelations that are now canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants.^f How in the world could he have done all that? Only with the Lord's help!

15 Most of what we know of this period of translation comes from eyewitnesses to the process. The miracle of this translation was underscored by Joseph's wife, Emma, who said that Joseph “could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon.” To their children she further explained, “Your father would dictate to me for hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off,

e Lucy Mack Smith history, 1844-1845, bk. 7, [6], LDS Church History Library.

f Doctrine and Covenants sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 24, 25, 26, 27.

without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him.”^g

16 David Whitmer added, “One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was the principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear.”^h

17 God prepared sacred objects to assist Joseph with the translation. Interpreters—often referred to as the Urim and Thummim—were buried with the gold plates, described as a clear pair of stones bound together with a metal rim. In 1829, Joseph used the interpreters and other seer stones in the translation process. This pattern was not without precedent, as such instruments had been used by prophets throughout scriptural history to translate texts and receive divine communications.ⁱ

18 In what was then called “the

preface” to the Book of Mormon, Joseph explained, “I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God.”^j He later noted that “it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon, & also said that it was not expedient for him to relate these things &c.”^k

19 Though the precise mechanics are unknown to us, we know that it was a spiritual process. For us here and now, individual faith and receiving a testimony of the Book of Mormon far outweigh any details of stories or descriptions of how the text was revealed to Joseph Smith.

Restoration of the Priesthood

20 Now let us consider the remarkable reality of the restoration of the holy priesthood. We are here today to commemorate that restoration.

21 While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph and Oliver came across passages that prompted questions regarding baptism and the authority to administer in such ordinances. On May 15, 1829, the two

g “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald* 26 (Oct. 1, 1879), 289–90.

h David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, MO: By the author, 1887), 12.

i See Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65.

j 1830 Edition of the Book of Mormon, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed 6 May 2015, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1830#!/paperSummary/book-of-mormon-1830&p=10>

k Minute book 2 (Far West Record), October 25-26, 1831, LDS Church History Library.

sought a secluded spot nearby to approach the Lord in prayer with specific questions. Where were they when they impo-
 tuned the Lord at that “secluded spot”? While long-held tradition placed them along the banks of the Susquehanna River, historical records indicate that they retreated to a grove of sugar maple trees on the north end of the Hale farm property.¹

22 As the two men prayed, they heard the voice of the Redeemer speaking peace to them, “while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the gospel of repentance.”^m That heavenly messenger was John the Baptist,ⁿ who had baptized the Lord Himself in mortality. Now John came as a glorious resurrected personage. We learn about the keys and powers of the restored Aaronic Priesthood in section 13 of the Doctrine and Covenants. John explained that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, Christ’s ancient Apostles who held the keys of the higher priesthood. With the laying on of hands—the procedure used for administering priesthood ordinances from the time of Adam throughout all dis-

pensations, even to our present day—John the Baptist bestowed priesthood authority upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

23 Soon thereafter, true to John’s word, the Melchizedek Priesthood was restored by Christ’s Apostles Peter, James, and John. Joseph and Oliver did not specify a date for the event, but it is believed to have happened soon after the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood. No doubt they were learning “line upon line,” perhaps not fully comprehending the nature of the priesthood and its divisions. We now know that the holy priesthood is “without beginning of days or end of years.”^o It didn’t start in 1829.

24 The location for the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood was described by Joseph as being “in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna County, and Colesville, Broome County, on the Susquehanna River.”^p

25 In September 1830, Emma and Joseph Smith left Harmony and moved to Fayette, New York. Even though they lived at Harmony for only a brief time, the experiences they had here were crucial to the Restoration of the Lord’s gospel. Harmony provid-

1 See Mark L. Staker, “Where Was the Aaronic Priesthood Restored?: Identifying the Location of John the Baptist’s Appearance, May 15, 1829,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 143-159.

m Oliver Cowdery, “Dear Brother,” *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 1 (October 1834), 15.

n See Joseph Smith History 1:68–72.

o Doctrine and Covenants 84:17.

p Doctrine and Covenants 128:20.

General Authorities and officers of the Church. We thank Thee for our missionaries and members who strive to establish Thy righteousness among people throughout the world.

34 We thank Thee for the restoration of this historic site here in Harmony, Pennsylvania, with its homes, statues, buildings, and grounds. We thank Thee for the tithes and offerings of Saints across the world, whose donations have made this restoration possible. We thank Thee for the skills and artistry of craftsmen and women who actually did the work. Wilt Thou bless them and their families for their efforts.

35 Now we are assembled to dedicate this historic site unto Thee. Invoking the keys of the holy apostleship vested in me, and as authorized by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I dedicate this place as the Priesthood Restoration Site of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I dedicate it unto Thee and Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. I dedicate it for Thy holy purposes. I dedicate it as a place of faith, a place of prayer, a place of learning, a place of glory, indeed, a place of holiness.

36 I dedicate the combined visitors' center and meetinghouse, where Thy sons and daughters may worship and learn of Thee and Thy Beloved Son. I dedicate its commemorative statuary and sculptures that they may kindle grateful memories of the Resurrection and Restoration.

37 I dedicate the reconstructed Joseph and Emma Smith home, where much of the translation of the Book of Mormon was originally done. I dedicate the reconstructed home of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale, where their daughter, Emma, once spent the days of her childhood and youth and where Joseph Smith had once lived with Emma. There the Prophet Joseph Smith began translating characters from the golden plates. There he began to exercise his spiritual gifts and perform his prophetic ministry.

38 I dedicate the furnishings, infrastructure, appliances, electrical and plumbing constituents, gardens, grounds, and other complements for these buildings. I dedicate all supporting facilities and surroundings, with gratitude and appreciation for the many conveniences that will be enjoyed by Thy children here. May these precincts be revered and respected.

39 I dedicate the baptismal area of the Susquehanna River, where the first baptisms in this dispensation were performed. I dedicate the groves of trees—those sacred woods—where, under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the Aaronic Priesthood was restored by John the Baptist. And here I commemorate and dedicate the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of the Apostles Peter, James, and John.

40 I dedicate the highway, roads, underpass, pathways, and all other avenues, that safe access

4 Today we would ask you please, to prepare for our discussions in tomorrow's meetings on how the sabbath day can become more of a delight for members of the church everywhere. Let me begin with my expression of love for God.

5 Each one of us greatly acknowledges the omnipotence, the omniscience, the infinite love of our Heavenly Father. He proved that: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

6 Before I was a surgeon, I'd memorize people's lists about things that were okay to do and not okay to do. My wife and I tried to be obedient to those lists. But when I found these two scriptures, I threw the lists away. And I said, "All I have to do is decide what sign I want to give to God."

CHAPTER 29

A Plea to My Sisters - Delivered in the Sunday Morning session of the October 2015 General Conference.

DEAR Elders Rasband, Stevenson, and Renlund, we, your Brethren, welcome you to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. We thank God for the revelations that He gives to His prophet, President Thomas S. Monson.

2 Brothers and sisters, when we met in general conference six months ago, none of us anticipated the coming changes that

would tug at the heartstrings of the entire Church. Elder L. Tom Perry delivered a powerful message about the irreplaceable role that marriage and family occupy in the Lord's plan. We were stunned when just a few days later, we learned of the cancer that would soon take him from us.

3 Though President Boyd K. Packer's health had been declining, he continued to "soldier on" in the work of the Lord. He was frail last April, yet he was determined to declare his witness as long as he had breath. Then, just 34 days after Elder Perry's passing, President Packer also stepped across the veil.

4 We missed Elder Richard G. Scott at our last general conference, but we've reflected upon the powerful witness of the Savior he had borne in many previous conferences. And just 12 days ago, Elder Scott was called home and reunited with his beloved Jeanene.

5 I had the privilege of being with all of these Brethren during their final days, including joining members of President Packer's and Elder Scott's immediate families just before their passing. It has been difficult for me to believe that these three treasured friends, these magnificent servants of the Lord, are gone. I miss them more than I can say.

6 As I've reflected on this unexpected turn of events, one of the impressions that has lingered with me is that which I observed

in these surviving wives. Etched in my mind are the serene images of Sister Donna Smith Packer and Sister Barbara Dayton Perry at their husbands' bedsides, both women filled with love, truth, and pure faith.

7 As Sister Packer sat next to her husband in his final hours, she radiated that peace that passes all understanding.^{1a} Though she realized that her beloved companion of almost 70 years would soon depart, she showed the tranquility of a faith-filled woman. She seemed angelic, just as she was in this photo of them at the dedication of the Brigham City Utah Temple.

8 I saw that same kind of love and faith emanating from Sister Perry. Her devotion to both her husband and the Lord was obvious, and it moved me deeply.

9 Through their husbands' final hours and continuing to the present day, these stalwart women have shown the strength and courage that covenant-keeping women always demonstrate.^b It would be impossible to measure the influence that such wom-

en have, not only on families but also on the Lord's Church, as wives, mothers, and grandmothers; as sisters and aunts; as teachers and leaders; and especially as exemplars and devout defenders of the faith.^c

10 This has been true in every gospel dispensation since the days of Adam and Eve. Yet the women of this dispensation are distinct from the women of any other because this dispensation is distinct from any other.^d This distinction brings both privileges and responsibilities.

11 Thirty-six years ago, in 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball made a profound prophecy about the impact that covenant-keeping women would have on the future of the Lord's Church. He prophesied: "Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world ... will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the

a See Philippians 4:7.

b This includes tears—in keeping the commandment to weep for those we love when they graduate from this life (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:45).

c See Rebekah's influence on Isaac and their son Jacob in Genesis 27:46; 28:1–4.

d See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. (1957–66), 4:166. Note: All previous dispensations were limited to a small segment of the world and were terminated by apostasy. In contrast, this dispensation will not be limited in location or time. It will fill the world and merge with the Second Coming of the Lord.

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women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”^e

12 My dear sisters, you who are our vital associates during this winding-up scene, the day that President Kimball foresaw is today. You are the women he foresaw! Your virtue, light, love, knowledge, courage, character, faith, and righteous lives will draw good women of the world, along with their families, to the Church in unprecedented numbers!^f

13 We, your brethren, need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom, and your voices. The kingdom of God is not and cannot be complete without women who make sacred covenants and then keep them, women who can speak with the power and authority of God!^g

14 President Packer declared:

15 “We need women who are organized and women who can organize. We need women with executive ability who can plan and direct and administer; women who can teach, women who can speak out. ...

16 “We need women with the gift of discernment who can view the trends in the world and detect those that, however popular, are shallow or dangerous.”^h

17 Today, let me add that we need women who know how to make important things happen by their faith and who are courageous defenders of morality and families in a sin-sick world. We need women who are devoted to shepherding God’s children along the covenant path toward exaltation; women who know how to receive personal revelation, who understand the power and peace of the temple endowment; women who know how to call upon the powers of heaven to protect and strengthen chil-

e Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball (2006), 222–23.

f When I was born, there were fewer than 600,000 members of the Church. Today there are more than 15 million. That number will continue to increase.

g President Joseph Fielding Smith told sisters of the Relief Society, “You can speak with authority, because the Lord has placed authority upon you.” He also said that the Relief Society has “been given power and authority to do a great many things. The work which they do is done by divine authority” (“Relief Society—an Aid to the Priesthood,” Relief Society Magazine, Jan. 1959, 4, 5). These quotations were also cited by Elder Dallin H. Oaks in a conference address, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2014, 51.

h Boyd K. Packer, “The Relief Society,” Ensign, Nov. 1978, 8; see also M. Russell Ballard, Counseling with Our Councils: Learning to Minister Together in the Church and in the Family (1997), 93.

dren and families; women who teach fearlessly.

18 Throughout my life, I have been blessed by such women. My departed wife, Dantzel, was such a woman. I will always be grateful for the life-changing influence she had on me in all aspects of my life, including my pioneering efforts in open-heart surgery.

19 Fifty-eight years ago I was asked to operate upon a little girl, gravely ill from congenital heart disease. Her older brother had previously died of a similar condition. Her parents pleaded for help. I was not optimistic about the outcome but vowed to do all in my power to save her life. Despite my best efforts, the child died. Later, the same parents brought another daughter to me, then just 16 months old, also born with a malformed heart. Again, at their request, I performed an operation. This child also died. This third heart-breaking loss in one family literally undid me.

20 I went home grief stricken. I threw myself upon our living room floor and cried all night long. Dantzel stayed by my side, listening as I repeatedly declared that I would never perform another heart operation.

Then, around 5:00 in the morning, Dantzel looked at me and lovingly asked, "Are you finished crying? Then get dressed. Go back to the lab. Go to work! You need to learn more. If you quit now, others will have to painfully learn what you already know."

21 Oh, how I needed my wife's vision, grit, and love! I went back to work and learned more. If it weren't for Dantzel's inspired prodding, I would not have pursued open-heart surgery and would not have been prepared to do the operation in 1972 that saved the life of President Spencer W. Kimball.ⁱ

22 Sisters, do you realize the breadth and scope of your influence when you speak those things that come to your heart and mind as directed by the Spirit? A superb stake president told me of a stake council meeting in which they were wrestling with a difficult challenge. At one point, he realized that the stake Primary president had not spoken, so he asked if she had any impressions. "Well, actually I have," she said and then proceeded to share a thought that changed the entire direction of the meeting. The stake president continued, "As she spoke, the Spirit testified to me that she had

i See Spencer J. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle* (2003), 146, 153–56. Note: In 1964 President Kimball set me apart as a stake president and blessed me that the mortality rates would decline in my pioneering efforts with operations on the aortic valve. Little did either of us then know that eight years later, I would be doing an operation on President Kimball that included replacement of his incompetent aortic valve.

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given voice to the revelation we had been seeking as a council.”

23 My dear sisters, whatever your calling, whatever your circumstances, we need your impressions, your insights, and your inspiration. We need you to speak up and speak out in ward and stake councils. We need each married sister to speak as “a contributing and full partner”^j as you unite with your husband in governing your family. Married or single, you sisters possess distinctive capabilities and special intuition you have received as gifts from God. We brethren cannot duplicate your unique influence.

24 We know that the culminating act of all creation was the creation of woman!^k We need your strength!

25 Attacks against the Church, its doctrine, and our way of life are going to increase. Because of this, we need women who have a bedrock understanding of the doctrine of Christ and who will use that understanding to teach

and help raise a sin-resistant generation.^l We need women who can detect deception in all of its forms. We need women who know how to access the power that God makes available to covenant keepers and who express their beliefs with confidence and charity. We need women who have the courage and vision of our Mother Eve.

26 My dear sisters, nothing is more crucial to your eternal life than your own conversion. It is converted, covenant-keeping women—women like my dear wife Wendy—whose righteous lives will increasingly stand out in a deteriorating world and who will thus be seen as different and distinct in the happiest of ways.

27 So today I plead with my sisters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to step forward! Take your rightful and needful place in your home, in your community, and in the kingdom of God—more than you ever have before. I plead with you to fulfill Presi-

^j “When we speak of marriage as a partnership, let us speak of marriage as a full partnership. We do not want our LDS women to be silent partners or limited partners in that eternal assignment! Please be a contributing and full partner” (Spencer W. Kimball, “Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 106).

^k “All the purposes of the world and all that was in the world would be brought to naught without woman—a keystone in the priesthood arch of creation” (Russell M. Nelson, “Lessons from Eve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 87). “Eve became God’s final creation, the grand summation of all of the marvelous work that had gone before” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Women in Our Lives,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 83).

^l See Russell M. Nelson, “Children of the Covenant,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 33.

dent Kimball’s prophecy. And I promise you in the name of Jesus Christ that as you do so, the Holy Ghost will magnify your influence in an unprecedented way!

28 I bear witness of the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His redeeming, atoning, and sanctifying power. And as one of His Apostles, I thank you, my dear sisters, and bless you to rise to your full stature, to fulfill the measure of your creation, as we walk arm in arm in this sacred work. Together we will help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. Of this I testify, as your brother, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 30

Becoming True Millennials - Delivered as a Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults on January 10, 2016 at Brigham Young University-Hawaii.

MY dear brothers and sisters, this new year will surely be an eventful one. In its opening days, Wendy and I have already said farewell to my dear sister Marjory, who departed from this mortal life. We have welcomed into our family two new babies—Wade Richard Walker and Isaac Russell McDonough. And now we have the privilege of speaking with you great young adults throughout the entire world. We are very thankful for you.

2 I deeply appreciate Wendy’s important message and her inspiring example! I too gratefully

acknowledge the attendance of Elder Kim B. Clark of the Seventy and Church Commissioner of Education; his wife, Sue; and Chad H. Webb, administrator of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, and his wife, Kristi.

3 I bring you greetings and love from the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. We are thankful for your devotion to the Lord and His restored gospel. We are grateful for each time you stand up and speak up for truth—especially when it is not popular.

4 Many people refer to you as Millennials. I’ll admit that when researchers refer to you by that word and describe what their studies reveal about you—your likes and dislikes, your feelings and inclinations, your strengths and weaknesses—I’m uncomfortable. There is something about the way they use the term Millennial that bothers me. And frankly, I am less interested in what the experts have to say about you than what the Lord has told me about you.

5 When I pray about you and ask the Lord how He feels about you, I feel something far different from what the researchers say. Spiritual impressions I’ve received about you lead me to believe that the term Millennial may actually be perfect for you. But for a much different reason than the experts may ever understand.

6 The term Millennial is perfect for you if that term reminds you

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of who you really are and what your purpose in life really is. A True Millennial is one who was taught and did teach the gospel of Jesus Christ premortally and who made covenants with our Heavenly Father there about courageous things—even morally courageous things—that you would do while here on earth.

7 A True Millennial is a man or woman whom God trusted enough to send to earth during the most compelling dispensation in the history of this world. A True Millennial is a man or woman who lives now to help prepare the people of this world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and His millennial reign. Make no mistake about it—you were born to be a True Millennial.

8 The question is “How can you stand and live as a True Millennial?” I have four recommendations.

Learn Who You Really Are

9 My first recommendation: Learn who you really are.

10 Take time to think prayerfully about these facts:

- You are an elect son or daughter of God.
- You are created in His image.
- You were taught in the spirit world to prepare you for anything and everything you would encounter during

this latter part of these latter days.^a That teaching endures within you!

11 You are living in the “eleventh hour.” The Lord has declared that this is the last time that He will call laborers into His vineyard to gather the elect from the four quarters of the earth.^b And you were sent to participate in this gathering. Again and again I have seen firsthand the powerful influence of True Millennials as they bring others to a knowledge of the truth. This is part of your identity and your purpose as the seed of Abraham!^c

12 Several months ago Wendy and I had a remarkable experience in remote Siberia. Among those traveling with us on our “P-day” in Irkutsk were the mission president, Gregory S. Brinton; his wife, Sally; and their returned-missionary son, Sam, who had served his mission in Russia. We visited beautiful Lake Baikal and a marketplace on its shores.

13 When we returned to our van, we noticed that Sam was missing. Moments later he returned, accompanied by a middle-aged woman named Valentina. In her native Russian, Valentina enthusiastically exclaimed, “I want to meet this young man’s mother. He is so polite, intelligent, and kind! I want to meet his mother!” Valentina was drawn to Sam’s bright, light-filled countenance.

a See Doctrine and Covenants 138:56.

b See Doctrine and Covenants 33:3–6.

c See Galatians 3:26–29.

professional life opening hearts to perform life-saving operations, but I had no experience that would lead me to believe I could open countries for the preaching of the gospel. And yet, a prophet had given me an assignment, so I set out to do what seemed utterly impossible.

23 From the outset, obstacles were placed in my way. I arrived in most countries not knowing where to go. Even when I was able to find the name of an appropriate government official, it was not unusual for a meeting to be canceled at the last minute or to be postponed. In one country, when an appointment was delayed for two days, a number of temptations were intentionally placed in my way to test me—including traps for black market money and other illicit activities. On another occasion, a meeting was opened with the demand that I depart immediately!

24 But the Lord is able to do His own work,^e and I was privileged to watch the unfolding of one miracle after another—always, and only, after I had brought my best thinking, my most courageous efforts, and my most fervent prayers to the task.

25 Recognition of the Church was granted by some of those countries before the Berlin Wall came down. Others came later. In the year 1992, I was able to report to President Benson that the Church was now established

in every country in Eastern Europe!

26 As a True Millennial whom the Lord can count on, you will make history too! You will be asked to accept challenging assignments and become an instrument in the Lord's hands. And He will enable you to accomplish the impossible.

27 How will you accomplish the impossible? By doing whatever it takes to strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ by increasing your understanding of the doctrine taught in His restored Church and by relentlessly seeking truth. As a True Millennial, anchored in pure doctrine, when you are asked to do impossible things, you will be able to step forward with faith and dogged persistence and cheerfully do all that lies in your power to fulfill the purposes of the Lord.^f

28 You will have days when you will be thoroughly discouraged. So, pray for courage not to give up! You will need that strength because it will become less and less popular to be a Latter-day Saint. Sadly, some whom you thought were your friends will betray you. And some things will simply seem unfair.

29 However, I promise you that as you follow Jesus Christ, you will find sustained peace and true joy. As you keep your covenants with increasing precision, and as you defend the Church

e See 2 Nephi 27:20–21.

f See Doctrine and Covenants 123:17.

revelators. When a thorny problem arises—and they only seem to get thornier each day—these 15 men wrestle with the issue, trying to see all the ramifications of various courses of action, and they diligently seek to hear the voice of the Lord. After fasting, praying, studying, pondering, and counseling with my Brethren about weighty matters, it is not unusual for me to be awakened during the night with further impressions about issues with which we are concerned. And my Brethren have the same experience.

41 The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counsel together and share all the Lord has directed us to understand and to feel individually and collectively. And then we watch the Lord move upon the President of the Church to proclaim the Lord's will.

42 This prophetic process was followed in 2012 with the change in minimum age for missionaries and again with the recent additions to the Church's handbook, consequent to the legalization of same-sex marriage in some countries. Filled with compassion for all, and especially for the children, we wrestled at length to understand the Lord's will in this matter. Ever mindful

of God's plan of salvation and of His hope for eternal life for each of His children, we considered countless permutations and combinations of possible scenarios that could arise. We met repeatedly in the temple in fasting and prayer and sought further direction and inspiration. And then, when the Lord inspired His prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, to declare the mind of the Lord and the will of the Lord, each of us during that sacred moment felt a spiritual confirmation. It was our privilege as Apostles to sustain what had been revealed to President Monson. Revelation from the Lord to His servants is a sacred process, and so is your privilege of receiving personal revelation.

43 My dear brothers and sisters, you have as much access to the mind and will of the Lord for your own life as we Apostles do for His Church. Just as the Lord requires us to seek and ponder, fast and pray, and study and wrestle with difficult questions, He requires you to do the same as you seek answers to your own questions.

44 You can learn to hear the voice of the Lord through the whisperings of the Holy Ghost.^h As helpful as Google, Twitter, and Facebook may seem, they sim-

^h In February 1847, nearly three years after the Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred, he appeared to President Brigham Young and gave him this message: "Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the small still voice; it will teach you what to do and where to go" (quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 159).

these amazing experiences were enabled for one reason: I heeded the counsel of a prophet to study Mandarin!

53 Prophets see ahead. They see the harrowing dangers the adversary has placed or will yet place in our path. Prophets also foresee the grand possibilities and privileges awaiting those who listen with the intent to obey. I know this is true! I have experienced it for myself over and over again.

54 The Lord has promised us that He will never allow the prophet to lead us astray. President Harold B. Lee declared: “You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord Himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory’.”^j

55 You may not always understand every declaration of a living prophet. But when you know a prophet is a prophet, you can

approach the Lord in humility and faith and ask for your own witness about whatever His prophet has proclaimed.

56 Around 41 b.c., many Nephites joined the Church, and the Church prospered. But secret combinations also began to grow, and many of their cunning leaders hid among the people and were difficult to detect. As the people became more and more prideful, many of the Nephites made “a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and of revelation.”^k

57 Those same threats are among us today. The somber reality is that there are “servants of Satan”^l embedded throughout society. So be very careful about whose counsel you follow.^m

58 My beloved brothers and sisters, you were born to be True Millennials! You are a chosen generation,ⁿ fore-determined by God to do a remarkable work—to help prepare the people of this world for the Second Coming of the Lord.

59 Now, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I bless each one of you, as though I had my hands upon your heads, with the ability to become the True Millennial you were born to be. I

j D&C 21:6 . Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee (2000), 84–85.

k Helaman 4:12.

l Doctrine and Covenants 10:5.

m See Helaman 12:23.

n See 1 Peter 2:9.

4 Their skill at that moment was simply to convey compassion in a time of need. They weren't concerned about speaking any language other than the language of Christlike love. They weren't worried about missing a grandchild's birthday or a baby blessing, as important as those events may be. They were concerned about being where the Lord could use them to bless the life of one of His children. And because they were willing, He was able to let them represent Him.

Service Is Seldom Convenient

5 The truth is, no senior missionary finds it convenient to leave home. Neither did Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, or Wilford Woodruff. They had children and grandchildren too, and they loved their families just as we do. But they also loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him. Someday we may meet these stalwarts who helped to establish this dispensation. When we do, we will rejoice that we did not seek the shadows when we should have served.

6 Some may prefer to serve while still living at home. After a stroke left Aase Schumacher Nelson (no relation) confined to a wheelchair, she feared her lifelong desire to go on a mission with her husband, Don, would not be fulfilled. Then a neighbor talked to them about his Church-service mission at a bishops' storehouse. Encouraged, they talked with a super-

visor at the facility, completed their recommendation forms, and were called to serve for two days a week at a storehouse near their home.

7 "It's easy to just lay back and think, 'Oh, I'm not needed anymore,'" Aase Nelson says. "But now I feel that I am needed. And that's been a testimony to me."

You Are Definitely Needed

8 If you are tempted to think you're not needed, let me reassure you that you are. There is not a mission president in the Church who would not love to have additional couples serving in his mission. Seniors strengthen the younger elders and sisters. They provide support that helps others to serve better in their own responsibilities. And can you imagine what it means to a leader who has only been a member for a few years to have ready access to seasoned Church members? Senior couples are often a literal answer to the prayers of bishops and branch presidents.

9 We encourage mission presidents to seek out couples to meet needs in their missions. Bishops should seek out couples who could serve. LDS.org lists pages and pages of opportunities for senior couples. But most of all, couples might get on their knees and ask Heavenly Father if the time is right for them to serve a mission together. Of all the qualifications, a desire to serve may be the most important.^b

^b see D&C 4:3

10 As I extol the work of senior missionaries, I realize that there are many who would like to serve but are not able to do so. Limitations imposed by age or poor health deserve realistic appraisal, as do the important needs of family members. When desire burns within yet such limitations exist, others can be your arms and legs, and you can provide needed funds.

11 Senior couples, no matter who you are or where you are, please pray about this opportunity to create great senior missionary moments together. Heavenly Father will help you know what you can do.

CHAPTER 32

The Price of Priesthood Power - Delivered in the Priesthood Session of the April 2016 General Conference.

SIX months ago in the October 2015 general conference, I spoke to the sisters of the Church about their divine role as women of God. Now I wish to speak to you brethren about your divine role as men of God. As I travel the world, I marvel at the strength and sheer goodness of the men and boys of this Church. There is simply no way to number the hearts you've healed and the lives you've lifted. Thank you!

2 In my last conference message, I related my devastating experience many years ago when, as a heart surgeon, I was not able to

save the lives of two little sisters. With permission of their father, I would like to say more about that family.

3 Congenital heart disease afflicted three children born to Ruth and Jimmy Hatfield. Their first son, Jimmy Jr., died without a definitive diagnosis. I entered the picture when the parents sought help for their two daughters, Laural Ann and her younger sister, Gay Lynn. I was heartbroken when both girls died following their operations.^a Understandably, Ruth and Jimmy were spiritually shattered.

4 Over time, I learned that they harbored lingering resentment toward me and the Church. For almost six decades, I have been haunted by this situation and have grieved for the Hatfields.

5 I tried several times to establish contact with them, without success.

6 Then one night last May, I was awakened by those two little girls from the other side of the veil. Though I did not see or hear them with my physical senses, I felt their presence. Spiritually, I heard their pleadings. Their message was brief and clear: "Brother Nelson, we are not sealed to anyone! Can you help us?" Soon thereafter, I learned that their mother had passed away, but their father and younger brother were still alive.

7 Emboldened by the pleadings

^a See Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96.

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of Laural Ann and Gay Lynn, I tried again to contact their father, who I learned was living with his son Shawn. This time they were willing to meet with me.

8 In June, I literally knelt in front of Jimmy, now 88 years old, and had a heart-to-heart talk with him. I spoke of his daughters' pleadings and told him I would be honored to perform sealing ordinances for his family. I also explained that it would take time and much effort on his and Shawn's part to be ready and worthy to enter the temple, as neither of them had ever been endowed.

9 The Spirit of the Lord was palpable throughout that meeting. And when Jimmy and Shawn each accepted my offer, I was overjoyed! They worked diligently with their stake president, bishop, home teachers, and ward mission leader, as well as with young missionaries and a senior missionary couple. And then, not long ago, in the Payson Utah Temple, I had the profound privilege of sealing Ruth to Jimmy and their four children to them. Wendy and I wept as we participated in that sublime experience. Many hearts were healed that day!

10 On reflection, I have marveled at Jimmy and Shawn and what they were willing to do.

They have become heroes to me. If I could have the wish of my heart, it would be that each man and young man in this Church would demonstrate the courage, strength, and humility of this father and son. They were willing to forgive and let go of old hurts and habits. They were willing to submit to guidance from their priesthood leaders so that the Atonement of Jesus Christ could purify and magnify them. Each was willing to become a man who worthily bears the priesthood "after the holiest order of God."^b

11 To bear means to support the weight of that which is held. It is a sacred trust to bear the priesthood, which is the mighty power and authority of God. Think of this: the priesthood conferred upon us is the very same power and authority through which God created this and numberless worlds, governs the heavens and the earth, and exalts His obedient children.^c

12 Recently, Wendy and I were in a meeting where the organist was poised and ready to play the opening hymn. His eyes were on the music, and his fingers were on the keys. He began pressing the keys, but there was no sound. I whispered to Wendy, "He has no power." I reasoned that something had stopped the flow of electrical power to that organ.

^b Doctrine and Covenants 84:18.

^c See Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood: Basic Manual for Priesthood Holders, Parts A and B (2000); see also Alma 13:7–8; Doctrine and Covenants 84:17–20, 35–38; Moses 1:33, 35.

and Oliver Cowdery^h—declared qualities we should seek to “be partakers of the divine nature.”ⁱ

*The Voice of Peter,
James and John*

20 He named faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, and diligence.^j And don’t forget humility!^k So I ask, how would our family members, friends, and coworkers say you and I are doing in developing these and other spiritual gifts?^l The more those attributes are developed, the greater will be our priesthood power.

21 How else can we increase our power in the priesthood? We need to pray from our hearts. Polite recitations of past and upcoming activities, punctuated with some requests for blessings, cannot constitute the kind of communing with God that brings enduring power. Are you willing to pray to know how to pray for more power? The Lord will teach you.

22 Are you willing to search the

scriptures and feast on the words of Christ^m—to study earnestly in order to have more power? If you want to see your wife’s heart melt, let her find you on the Internet studying the doctrine of Christⁿ or reading your scriptures!

23 Are you willing to worship in the temple regularly? The Lord loves to do His own teaching in His holy house. Imagine how pleased He would be if you asked Him to teach you about priesthood keys, authority, and power as you experience the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood in the holy temple.^o Imagine the increase in priesthood power that could be yours.

24 Are you willing to follow President Thomas S. Monson’s example of serving others? For decades he has taken the long way home, following promptings of the Spirit to arrive on someone’s doorstep and then hear words such as, “How did you know it was the anniversary of our daughter’s death?” or “How did you know it was my birthday?” And if you tru-

h See Doctrine and Covenants 128:20. The Savior, Moses, and Elijah (sometimes referred to as Elias) initially gave the keys to Peter, James, and John on the mount when Jesus was transfigured before them (see Matthew 17:1–4; Mark 9:2–9; Luke 9:28–30; Doctrine and Covenants 63:21).

i 2 Peter 1:4.

j See 2 Peter 1:5–10.

k See Doctrine and Covenants 4:6 (note: here, in a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord added humility to Peter’s list).

l See 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Moroni 10:8–17; Doctrine and Covenants 46:11.

m See 2 Nephi 32:3.

n See 2 Nephi 31:2–21.

o See Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–20.

ments and prosper in this land.

2 We pray for the youth of this nation. Our youth are the hope of Israel—children of this promised day.

3 We thank Thee for this beautiful temple. We are grateful for the artisans, craftsmen, and laborers who have built it. Here Thy children can serve their beloved ancestors who have waited long for their own temple blessings.

4 Now as an apostle of the Lord, with the authority of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, I hereby dedicate this Sapporo Japan Temple as Thy holy house. Here sacred ordinances of salvation and exaltation will be performed by proper authority.

5 I dedicate the baptismal font, the initiatory, endowment, sealing, and celestial rooms for Thy eternal purposes. I dedicate this house for the blessing of individuals and families on both sides of the veil.

6 I dedicate and consecrate this temple from its footings to the majestic figure of the angel Moroni that crowns its highest point. I dedicate all mechanical, electrical, and other equipment that will allow this temple to function well. I dedicate the beautiful grounds and plantings that lend beauty to this temple.

7 Father we pray that Thou wilt protect this sacred edifice from earthquakes and other disasters. Bless the land on which it

stands. Protect this temple from any evil intent to damage it. Protect it from any influence that might disrupt the sacred work of this temple.

8 Please bless each president and his counselors, each matron and her assistants. Bless all who will be called to serve in this temple. May they and their families be strengthened and enabled to perform the sacred work of this temple.

9 Holy Father, we express our great love for Thee and Thy Son. As we dedicate this temple, we rededicate our lives to Thee and Thy holy cause. This temple stands as a symbol of our testimony that Thou art our God and that Jesus is the Christ whom Thou hast sent. We love Thee and so dedicate this Sapporo Japan Temple, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 34

Joy and Spiritual Survival - Delivered in the Sunday Morning session of the October 2016 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, today I would like to discuss a principle that is key to our spiritual survival. It is a principle that will only become more important as the tragedies and travesties around us increase.

2 These are the latter days, so none of us should be surprised when we see prophecy fulfilled. A host of prophets, including Isaiah, Paul, Nephi, and Mor-

mon, foresaw that perilous times would come,^a that in our day the whole world would be in commotion,^b that men would “be lovers of their own selves, ... without natural affection, ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,”^c and that many would become servants of Satan who uphold the adversary’s work.^d

3 Indeed, you and I “wrestle ... against the rulers of the darkness of this world, [and] against spiritual wickedness in high places.”^e

4 As conflicts between nations escalate, as cowardly terrorists prey on the innocent, and as corruption in everything from business to government becomes increasingly commonplace, what can help us? What can help each of us with our personal struggles and with the rigorous challenge of living in these latter days?

5 The prophet Lehi taught a principle for spiritual survival. First, consider his circumstances: He had been persecuted for preaching truth in Jerusalem and had been commanded by the Lord to leave his possessions and flee with his family into the wilderness. He had lived in a tent and survived on what food could be found on the way to an unknown destination, and he had

watched two of his sons, Laman and Lemuel, rebel against the teachings of the Lord and attack their brothers Nephi and Sam.

6 Clearly, Lehi knew opposition, anxiety, heartache, pain, disappointment, and sorrow. Yet he declared boldly and without reservation a principle as revealed by the Lord: “Men are, that they might have joy.”^f Imagine! Of all the words he could have used to describe the nature and purpose of our lives here in mortality, he chose the word joy!

7 Life is filled with detours and dead ends, trials and challenges of every kind. Each of us has likely had times when distress, anguish, and despair almost consumed us. Yet we are here to have joy?

8 Yes! The answer is a resounding yes! But how is that possible? And what must we do to claim the joy that Heavenly Father has in store for us?

9 Eliza R. Snow, second General President of the Relief Society, offered a riveting answer. Because of Missouri’s infamous extermination order, issued at the onset of the grueling winter of 1838,^g she and other Saints were forced to flee the state that

a See 2 Timothy 3:1–5.

b See Doctrine and Covenants 45:26; 88:91.

c 2 Timothy 3:2–4.

d See Doctrine and Covenants 10:5.

e Ephesians 6:12.

f 2 Nephi 2:25.

g Governor Lilburn W. Boggs of Missouri issued the order of Mormon extermination on October 27, 1838 (see Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007], 349).

very winter. One evening, Eliza's family spent the night in a small log cabin used by refugee Saints. Much of the chinking between the logs had been extracted and burned for firewood by those who preceded them, so there were holes between the logs large enough for a cat to crawl through. It was bitter cold, and their food was frozen solid.

10 That night some 80 people huddled inside that small cabin, only 20 feet square (6.1 meters square). Most sat or stood all night trying to keep warm. Outside, a group of men spent the night gathered around a roaring fire, with some singing hymns and others roasting frozen potatoes. Eliza recorded: "Not a complaint was heard—all were cheerful, and judging from appearances, strangers would have taken us to be pleasure excursionists rather than a band of gubernatorial exiles."

11 Eliza's report of that exhausting, bone-chilling evening was strikingly optimistic. She declared: "That was a very merry night. None but saints can be happy under every circumstance."^h

12 That's it! Saints can be happy

under every circumstance. We can feel joy even while having a bad day, a bad week, or even a bad year!

13 My dear brothers and sisters, the joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives.

14 When the focus of our lives is on God's plan of salvation, which President Thomas S. Monson just taught us, and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him. He is the source of all joy. We feel it at Christmas-time when we sing, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come."ⁱ And we can feel it all year round. For Latter-day Saints, Jesus Christ is joy!

15 That is why our missionaries leave their homes to preach His gospel. Their goal is not to increase the number of Church members. Rather, our missionaries teach and baptize^j to bring joy to the people of the world!^k

16 Just as the Savior offers peace that "passeth all understand-

^h See Eliza R. Snow, in Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (1877), 145–46.

ⁱ "Joy to the World," Hymns, no. 201.

^j Missionaries do as the Lord has commanded: they preach, teach, and baptize in His name (see Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Mormon 9:22; Doctrine and Covenants 68:8; 84:62; 112:28). In His Intercessory Prayer, Jesus proclaimed His relationship to the joy of His disciples. He said, "These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13; emphasis added).

^k See Alma 13:22.

dren focused on the joy of being worthy to have the Holy Ghost as his constant companion. That focus motivated him to put off the natural man,^r to which he had too often succumbed, and make needed changes.

24 A dear colleague recently told me of his past two decades of heavy trials. He said, "I have learned to suffer with joy. My suffering was swallowed up in the joy of Christ."^s

25 What will you and I be able to endure as we focus on the joy that is "set before" us?^t What repenting will then be possible? What weakness will become a strength?^u What chastening will become a blessing?^v What disappointments, even tragedies, will turn to our good?^w And what challenging service to the Lord will we be able to give?^x

26 As we diligently focus on the Savior and then follow His pattern of focusing on joy, we need to avoid those things that can interrupt our joy. Remember Korihor, the anti-Christ? Spewing falsehoods about the Savior, Korihor went from place to place until he was brought before a high priest who asked him: "Why do ye go about perverting the ways of the Lord? Why do ye teach this people that there shall be no Christ, to interrupt their rejoicings?"^y

27 Anything that opposes Christ or His doctrine will interrupt our joy. That includes the philosophies of men, so abundant online and in the blogosphere, which do exactly what Korihor did.^z

28 If we look to the world and follow its formulas for happi-

r See Mosiah 3:19. Note: the "natural man" is not only an enemy to God; he is also an enemy to his wife and children.

s See Alma 31:38.

t Hebrews 12:2.

u See Ether 12:27.

v See Hebrews 12:6.

w See Doctrine and Covenants 122:7.

x See Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27.

y Alma 30:22. The Book of Mormon is filled with examples of men and women who experience joy and rejoicing because they choose to follow Jesus Christ. Any other choice, as in the case of Korihor, leads to eventual destruction.

z Calumny, meaning a misrepresentation, is defined as a false and malicious statement designed to injure the reputation of someone or something. Calumny was happening in the days of Korihor, and it is happening now. The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of the invincibility of the Church even in the face of calumny. He said: "The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (Teachings: Joseph Smith, 444).

ness,^a we will never know joy. The unrighteous may experience any number of emotions and sensations, but they will never experience joy!^b Joy is a gift for the faithful.^c It is the gift that comes from intentionally trying to live a righteous life, as taught by Jesus Christ.^d

29 He taught us how to have joy. When we choose Heavenly Father to be our God^e and when we can feel the Savior’s Atonement working in our lives, we will be filled with joy.^f Every time we nurture our spouse and guide our children, every time we forgive someone or ask for forgiveness, we can feel joy.

30 Every day that you and I choose to live celestial laws, every day that we keep our covenants and help others to do the same, joy will be ours.

31 Heed these words of the Psalmist: “I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. ... In [His] presence is fulness of joy.”^g As this principle is embedded in our hearts,

each and every day can be a day of joy and gladness.^h I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 35

Prophets, Leadership, and Divine Law - Delivered as a Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults on January 8, 2017 at Brigham Young University.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, I bring greetings and love to you from the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. We thank you for being with us tonight and for preparing your hearts and minds to be taught spiritually.ⁱ

2 Since January 2016, when I spoke to you in this worldwide devotional gathering, I have been with many of you as I have traveled to Japan, the Philippines, China, Canada, England, Wales, Germany, Italy, Spain, and locations throughout the United States.

3 Last September, I had an unforgettable experience with El-

a The world teaches that the purchase of things will bring joy. And if that doesn’t work, buy more! It also teaches that you can sin your way to joy. And if that doesn’t work, sin more! The promise is that at the end of every hedonistic rainbow is a pot of joy. Not true!

b Not in this world or in the world to come.

c Righteous Saints “who have endured the crosses of the world ... shall inherit the kingdom of God, ... and their joy shall be full forever” (2 Nephi 9:18).

d For examples, see 2 Nephi 27:30; Alma 27:16–18.

e See 1 Nephi 17:40.

f See Mosiah 4:2–3.

g Psalm 16:8, 11.

h See Isaiah 35:10; 2 Nephi 8:3.

i See Acts 17:11; Alma 32:6.

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der M. Russell Ballard and other Church leaders when we went to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to meet with people there after a disastrous flood. On Sunday, each of us held four large sacrament meetings—one for victims and three for volunteers who had come from many states to help with the cleanup. These photos give an idea of those Sabbath day congregations composed of hundreds wearing our trademark Mormon Helping Hands T-shirts.

4 Note the happy faces of young men and women who left their homes to help neighbors they did not know, amidst Louisiana's sweltering summer heat, and who paused on the Sabbath to worship the Lord. As I looked at those marvelous congregations of willing workers, the majority of whom were your age, I had the overwhelming impression that I was looking at men and women who would very soon be the leaders of this Church.

5 So tonight, as I picture you assembled throughout the world, I would like to underscore and speak to that impression. You are the future leaders of the Lord's Church! Are you ready to take the reins of leadership?

6 When I spoke to you a year ago, I challenged you to rise up as the true millennials you were born to be. You are to help prepare the world for the millennial reign of the Savior by helping to gather the elect from the four quarters of the earth, so that all

who choose to do so may receive the gospel of Jesus Christ and all of its blessings. Tonight I want to speak to you about how you can prepare.

7 First, focus on your marriage and family. Implement the impressions you had as you heard "Aunt Wendy's" four truths about love and marriage.

8 Your responsibility to the Lord to help gather the elect out of the moral chaos and the swirling preponderance of sin in our day is no small undertaking. Lucifer and his minions are using every form of technology and communication to spread lies about life and about the true source of happiness. Thus, to do what you came to earth to do will require the finest leadership skills your generation can muster.

9 Thankfully, we have superb models to follow. While the world may look to the considerable leadership abilities of men and women such as Napoleon, Joan of Arc, George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and others, I believe that the finest leaders to have walked the earth are the prophets of God.

10 To date, 16 men have been chosen by the Lord to be Presidents of His Church, restored in this dispensation—this culminating dispensation in the history of the earth. I have personally known 10 of those 16 men. (That says more about my age than anything else. Let's just put it this way: I no longer buy green bananas.)

11 Now, if you are serious about rising up as a true millennial, I urge you to study the lives and teachings of these 16 prophets of God.^j That study will change your life. May I share a few leadership principles I have learned from them?

12 President Joseph Fielding Smith, 10th President of the Church, lived just a few houses away from my childhood home. His two youngest sons were my boyhood friends. They often invited me into their home.

13 President Smith was President of the Church in 1971, when I was called to be the General President of the Sunday School. When my late wife, Dantzel, and I accompanied him later that year to the first area conference, held in Manchester, England, I observed a powerful lesson in effective leadership as President Smith asked for reports from General Authorities who were gathered in a small room prior to the conference.

14 After all had spoken, rather than offering dictatorial direction, President Smith stood with presidential dignity, inviting them to draw upon the wisdom of his 94 years, while he expressed his love and sincere desire to help them. I marveled at the power of this leader in ex-

pressing love for and confidence in his people. After the area conference, when we complimented President Smith on his excellent message, he simply replied, "I did not come here to fail."^k

15 He had faith that the Lord would guide those proceedings as President Smith did everything in his power to further the work. Faith, prayer, study, and hard work make a winning combination. Just as President Smith didn't go to England to fail, so our Father sent you to earth in this final dispensation not to fail but to succeed—and to find joy while doing so.

16 President Ezra Taft Benson had been a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for only two years when, in December 1945, in the aftermath of World War II, President George Albert Smith called then-Elder Benson to preside over the European Mission. Conditions there were severe. In a 10-month mission of love to members whose lives had been upended by war, Elder Benson traveled throughout Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Scandinavia, distributing food, clothing, and bedding to suffering Saints.^l He repeatedly faced what seemed to be insurmountable odds. Yet he repeatedly demonstrated "undaunted faith in the power of the

j See LDS.org. The Gospel Library app also has a multitude of resources to help you in your study.

k See Spencer J. Condie, Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle (2003), 165.

l See Sheri L. Dew, Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography (1987), 197–227.

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Lord to overcome obstacles.”^m

17 Forty years later, in November 1985, President Benson, then newly ordained as President of the Church, assigned me as a junior member of the Twelve to open the doors of countries of Eastern Europe then under the yoke of communism.

18 I felt unprepared for such a challenging assignment, but President Benson had blazed into this wilderness before me. How could I not do as he had done? His example propelled me to pray and work as hard as I could and then watch the miraculous helping hand of the Lord.ⁿ

19 When any of us feel overwhelmed, we can learn much from President Benson. For eight years he served concurrently as an Apostle and as the secretary of agriculture in U. S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower’s cabinet.

20 How did he manage? These are his words: “I work as hard as I can and do everything within my power. And I try to keep the commandments. Then I let the Lord make up the difference.”^o Those are words to live by.

21 President Gordon B. Hinckley was a dynamic leader whose tutoring in Church governance

was unique. Prior to his serving as the 15th President of the Church, he had been a counselor to three previous Presidents. Upon returning from his mission as a young man to England, he worked for the Church in various capacities, always under the direction of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. Repeatedly he was asked to solve significant challenges. For example, President David O. McKay assigned Brother Hinckley to determine how to commit the endowment ordinance to film so that translation needs could be met for the expanding Church.

22 President Hinckley was a communicator par excellence. He spoke confidently about the gospel with everyone from seasoned journalists to world leaders. I witnessed how he softened the heart of Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of the Soviet Union, who initially resisted an invitation to meet with President Hinckley in his office. Instead, Mr. Gorbachev wanted President Hinckley to come to Gorbachev’s hotel room. But when they met at Church headquarters, President Hinckley pointed out the beautiful Circassian walnut paneling in the First Presidency’s council room. When President Hinckley told Mr. Gorbachev where that wood was from, Mr. Gorbachev was amazed! That wood had come

m Harold B. Lee letter to Ezra Taft Benson, in Dew, Ezra Taft Benson, 224.

n See 2 Nephi 27:20–21.

o Ezra Taft Benson, in Dew, Ezra Taft Benson, viii.

from the very region of his birthplace in Russia!^p His mood warmed immediately.

23 President Hinckley was unfailingly optimistic, an outgrowth of his complete faith in the Lord. During nearly 13 years as President, he led the Church through a remarkable period of innovation, including the design of smaller temples, the building of the Conference Center, the announcement of 79 new temples, and the dedication or rededication of 95 of the 124 temples then in operation. President Hinckley’s vision, and what he required of himself because of that vision, knew no bounds.

24 President Hinckley was an authority on Church history. He was also a seer. As such, he was fearless in proclaiming the future. Listen to his words: “This cause [of Christ] will roll on in majesty and power to fill the earth. Doors now closed to the preaching of the gospel will be opened. The Almighty, if necessary, may have to shake the nations to humble them and cause them to listen to the servants of the living God. Whatever is needed will come to pass.”^q

25 Now President Thomas S. Monson is the Lord’s living prophet on the earth. How we love him, sustain him, and pray for him! And how we have learned from him! Think of it. He was called to be a bishop at

age 22. His ward included some 80 widows. He was called to be an Apostle at the tender age of 36. President Monson has lived his life according to the motto “If the Lord needs something done, I want Him to know that He can count on Tom Monson to do it.”^r

26 He has shown us how to reach out and rescue the one. He has taught us by example that taking care of people is always more important than management of time, or meetings, or schedules.

27 Throughout his life, President Monson has often taken random routes home at the end of a long day’s work. Sometimes he stopped at a hospital to comfort those in distress. Other days he would be led to specific homes to visit. Often his unexpected knock on a door has been met with a tearful person saying things such as, “How did you know it was the anniversary of our daughter’s death?” or “How did you know it was my birthday today?”

28 Throughout his life, President Monson has consistently demonstrated two fundamental qualities that make prophets of God extraordinary leaders: First, he has exemplified the first and second great commandments—to love God with all our whole souls and to love our neighbors, God’s children, as we love ourselves. And second, each proph-

p See Condie, Russell M. Nelson, 279.
q Gordon B. Hinckley, “Look to the Future,” Ensign, Nov. 1997, 68.
r Personal conversation with President Thomas S. Monson.

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et knows how to receive revelation and respond to it quickly when it comes. President Thomas S. Monson is the embodiment of righteous leadership.

29 Prophets of God have many attributes in common. One is that each prophet understands the importance of divine law. The knowledge of divine law and effective, righteous leadership go hand in hand. The more of God's laws you may know—and more importantly, the way you live them—the more effective your righteous leadership will be.

30 When I was a young medical student, my rigorous study of the human body convinced me that God lived. And as I came to know that the body was God's creation, I became increasingly intrigued with the laws of God that govern the function of the body. Through extensive laboratory research, I later learned the law that governs the beating of the heart. Further, I learned that the beating heart could safely be stopped temporarily to facilitate delicate surgical repairs. This could be done by changing the sodium/potassium ratio in the blood supplied to the heart. Later, when the heart was nourished by blood with a normal sodium/potassium ratio, the heart would again beat normally. These findings proved to be predictable, dependable, and repeatable.

31 I recently had the opportu-

nity to explain this to a medical school class. A learned professor who was present asked me, "But what if it doesn't work?" I replied, "It always works! It works according to divine law."

32 Divine law is incontrovertible and irrefutable. Divine law cannot be denied or disputed. And when God's laws are obeyed, relevant blessings always result! Blessings are always predicated upon obedience to applicable law.^s

33 Existentialists can expound; relativists can rationalize with their constricted views of reality—that truth is only a subjective experience—laws are laws! God's truth is really true! What God says is right is right! And what He says is wrong is wrong!

34 That is why it is imperative that you know God's laws. They control this universe and multitudes of others. When divine laws are broken, consequences follow. Even though our hearts ache for those who break God's laws, penalties must be paid. Divine law must be obeyed.

35 I learned this as President Spencer W. Kimball's surgeon. When the implanted pacemaker for his heart suddenly failed, President Kimball came back to me for help. But first he asked me to give him a priesthood blessing. After the blessing, which promised correction of his failed pacemaker, he then said to me, "Now you may do whatever

s See Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21.

er you need to do to make that blessing a reality.”

36 I proceeded with the operation. On the wire that carried electricity from the pacemaker to his heart, I found a break in the insulation. When I replaced that faulty wire, the pacemaker immediately worked again, allowing President Kimball’s heart to beat normally. Not even for God’s prophet could the law relating to the transmission of electricity be ignored.

37 Indeed, President Kimball was God’s prophet. As I watched him closely through various illnesses and observed his intense and penetrating study as he sought revelation, he was my mentor. My love for him is boundless!

38 While the world is filled with uncertainty, there need not be uncertainty in your heart and mind about what is true and what is not. Uncertainty is born of imperfect or unknown information. As an Apostle, I plead with you to learn God’s irrevocable laws. Learn them by study and by faith. That means, among other things, “[living] by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.”^t

39 Pray to discern between God’s laws and the philosophies of men, including those cunning counterfeits of the adversary. Through eons of time, Lucifer has honed his craft. He is skilled

at distraction, distortion, deception, and misdirection. I plead with you to avoid his cunning snares as you would avoid a plague!

40 Entrapments designed by Satan can only bring to you misery, spiritual captivity, and death.^u This is true every time. The sad consequences of yielding to Lucifer’s lures are predictable, dependable, repeatable, and regrettable.

41 Conversely, I promise that as you keep God’s commandments, as you live by His laws, you will become increasingly free. This freedom will unveil to you your divine nature and allow you to prosper personally. You will be free from the bondage of sin. You will be free to be you—an effective, righteous leader. You will be prepared to lead by precept and by example wherever you are needed. Happily, the blessings of keeping God’s commandments are also predictable, dependable, and repeatable.

42 As members of His restored Church, we know that Jesus Christ, our Master, is our ultimate Mentor. As a true millennial, you were born to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. In fact, the only way to be a true millennial is to be one of His true disciples!

43 How can you increase in your discipleship? I have an invitation for you that will help—it’s

t Doctrine and Covenants 84:44.
u See 2 Nephi 2:27.

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an assignment, actually—if you choose to accept it. Commence tonight to consecrate a portion of your time each week to studying everything Jesus said and did as recorded in the Old Testament, for He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Study His laws as recorded in the New Testament, for He is its Christ. Study His doctrine as recorded in the Book of Mormon, for there is no book of scripture in which His mission and His ministry are more clearly revealed. And study His words as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, for He continues to teach His people in this dispensation.

44 This may seem like a large assignment, but I encourage you to accept it. If you proceed to learn all you can about Jesus Christ, I promise you that your love for Him, and for God’s laws, will grow beyond what you currently imagine. I promise you also that your ability to turn away from sin will increase. Your desire to keep the commandments will soar. You will find yourself better able to walk away from the entertainment and entanglements of those who mock the followers of Jesus Christ. To assist you, refer to the Topical Guide for references under the topic “Jesus Christ.”^v

45 Study everything Jesus Christ is by prayerfully and vigorously

seeking to understand what each of His various titles and names means personally for you. For example, He really is your Advocate with the Father. He will take your side. He will stand up for you. He will speak on your behalf, every time, as you choose to be more like Him.^w

46 Get to know Him by studying all He continues to teach through His living prophets and apostles. Study “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” Study “The Living Christ” document. These were both received by revelation. Post them online and where you can see them daily.

47 Those revealed words are what every true Latter-day Saint believes. Pray for a witness that those truths represent divine law. Learn to articulate those truths in your own words. Practice! Then pray and look for opportunities to speak about what you believe. Your ability to lead and to have righteous influence will increase as you do so.

48 In a coming day, you will present yourself before the Savior. You will be overwhelmed to the point of tears to be in His holy presence. You will struggle to find words to thank Him for paying for your sins, for forgiving you of any unkindness toward others, for healing you

v See the Topical Guide, “Jesus Christ.” In addition to the text under that major heading, there are 57 subtitles about Him. For non-English language editions of the scriptures, use the Guide to the Scriptures. Let this resource become your personal core curriculum.

w See 3 Nephi 27:27.

from the injuries and injustices of this life.

49 You will thank Him for strengthening you to do the impossible, for turning your weaknesses into strengths, and for making it possible for you to live with Him and your family forever. His identity, His Atonement, and His attributes will become personal and real to you.

50 But you don't have to wait until then. Choose to be one of His true disciples now. Be one who truly loves Him, who truly wants to serve and lead as He did.^a

51 We are His people! We are under covenant to carry the message of the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. As we work intentionally to become righteous leaders, we may sing with one heart, "Let us all press on in the work of the Lord."^b

52 Now, as one of His Apostles, I invoke those keys to leave a blessing upon each of you. I bless you to learn God's laws and live by them. I bless you to be a good example, in word and deed, of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. I bless you to be free from sin, to radiate goodness and light in a way that will attract others to want to know and feel the source of your light. I bless you with success in your education-

al and occupational endeavors. I bless you to seek for and care for your virtuous companion. And I bless you each to be a righteous leader in your family, community, country, and in the Church.

53 I so bless you, and declare that God lives! Jesus is the Christ! This is His Church! I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 36

Open the Heavens through Temple and Family History Work - From a presentation at the RootsTech 2017 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on February 11, 2017.

PRESIDENT Nelson: When my grandfather A. C. Nelson was a young husband and father, just 27 years old, his father died. About three months later, his deceased father, my great-grandfather, came to visit him. The date of that visit was the night of April 6, 1891. Grandfather Nelson was so impressed by his father's visit that he wrote the experience in his journal for his family and friends.

2 "I was in bed when Father entered the room," Grandfather Nelson wrote. "He came and sat on the side of the bed. He said, 'Well, my son, as I had a few spare minutes, I received permission to come and see you

a Abinadi warned his unrighteous captors: "Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding" (Mosiah 12:27). You may observe that same trait among dissidents of your generation.

b "Let Us All Press On," Hymns, no. 243

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for a few minutes. I am feeling well, my son, and have had very much to do since I died.”

3 When Grandfather Nelson asked him what he had been doing, his father answered that he had been busy teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit world.

4 “You cannot imagine, my son, how many spirits there are in the spirit world who have not yet received the gospel,” he said. “But many are receiving it, and a great work is being accomplished. Many are anxiously looking forth to their friends who are still living to administer for them in the temples.”

5 Grandfather Nelson told his father, “We intend to go to the temple and get sealed to you, Father, as soon as we can.”

6 My great-grandfather responded: “That, my son, is partly what I came to see you about. We will yet make a family and live throughout eternity.”

7 Then Grandfather Nelson asked, “Father, is the gospel as taught by this Church true?”

8 His father pointed to a picture of the First Presidency hanging on the wall of the bedroom.

9 “My son, just as sure as you see that picture, just as sure is the gospel true. The gospel of

Jesus Christ has within it the power of saving every man and woman who will obey it, and in no other way can they ever obtain salvation in the kingdom of God. My son, always cling to the gospel. Be humble, be prayerful, be submissive to the priesthood, be true, be faithful to the covenants you have made with God. Never do anything that would displease God. Oh, what a blessing is the gospel. My son, be a good boy.”

10 Sister Nelson: I just love all those B’s. “Be humble, be prayerful, be submissive to the priesthood, be true, be faithful to the covenants you have made with God. ... Be a good boy.” Six B’s brought to you by your departed great-grandfather. He certainly sounds a lot like President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) with his six B’s.^c

11 President Nelson: He does, doesn’t he? It’s so precious to me that my grandfather would leave that record for us. We learned that his father’s children were subsequently sealed to him. So the reason for his visit was accomplished.

The Spirit of Elijah

12 President Nelson: A name of great significance in the scriptures explains why the family is so important. That name is Elijah. EL-I-JAH in Hebrew literally means “Jehovah is my God.”^d Think of it! Embedded in Elijah’s

c See Gordon B. Hinckley, “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 2–11.

d Bible Dictionary, “Elijah.”

dinance work. We need to make time for our ancestors' ordinance-qualifying information.

19 President Nelson: And that means sacrificing time we normally spend on other activities. We need to be spending more time in the temple and in doing family history research, which includes indexing.

20 Sister Nelson: Sacrifice does indeed bring forth the blessings of heaven.ⁱ I have been blessed to find many ancestors who I feel confident were ready to make covenants with God and to receive their essential ordinances. Over time, I realized that if I was working on an overwhelming project and I was out of time, energy, and ideas, if I would make a sacrifice of time by finding the ordinance-qualifying information for some ancestors or by going to the temple to be proxy for them, the heavens opened and the energy and ideas started flowing. Somehow I had enough time to meet my deadline. It was totally impossible, but it would happen every time. Temple and family history work bring me a joy that is truly not of this world.

*Family History and
Missionary Work*

21 President Nelson: If I were a missionary today, my two best friends in the ward or branch where I served would be the ward mission leader and the ward temple and family history consultant.

22 People have an inborn desire to know something about their ancestors. That becomes a natural opportunity for our missionaries. As missionaries learn to love the people they teach, they will naturally ask about their families. "Are your parents living? Are your grandparents living? Do you know your four grandparents?" Conversations flow easily when those who are drawn to speak with the missionaries are invited to talk about the people they love.

23 At that point it can be natural for the missionaries, including member missionaries, to ask, "Do you know any of your great-grandparents? Do you know their names?" The probability is that investigators will not know the names of all eight of their great-grandparents.

24 Then the missionaries can make this suggestion: "I have a friend at our church who can help. If we could find the names of some or maybe even all of your great-grandparents, would it be worth a couple of hours of your time to find out who your great-grandparents are?" That friend at church, of course, is the ward temple and family history consultant.

25 Sister Nelson: I think it can be comforting for missionaries to know that they are never alone when they are finding and teaching those who are receptive to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. President George

i See "Praise to the Man," Hymns, no. 27.

tors, the heavens will open and we will receive all that we need.

31 President Nelson: We can be inspired all day long about temple and family history experiences others have had. But we must do something to actually experience the joy ourselves. I would like to extend a challenge to each one of us so that the wonderful feeling of this work can continue and even increase. I invite you to prayerfully consider what kind of sacrifice—preferably a sacrifice of time—you can make in order to do more temple and family history work this year.

32 We are engaged in the work of Almighty God. He lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. We are His covenant children. He can count on us.

CHAPTER 37

Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives - Delivered in the Saturday Morning session of the April 2017 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, we live in a most difficult dispensation. Challenges, controversies, and complexities swirl around us. These turbulent times were foreseen by the Savior. He warned us that in our day the adversary would stir up anger in the hearts of men and lead them astray.^a Yet our Heavenly Father never intended that we would deal with the maze of personal problems and social issues on our own.

2 God so loved the world that He sent His Only Begotten Son^b to help us.^c And His Son, Jesus Christ, gave His life for us. All so that we could have access to godly power—power sufficient to deal with the burdens, obstacles, and temptations of our day.^d Today I would like to speak about how we can draw into our lives the power of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

3 We begin by learning about Him.^e “It is impossible for [us] to be saved in ignorance.”^f The more we know about the Sav-

a See 2 Nephi 28:19–30.

b See John 3:16.

c Jesus was the Anointed One—anointed by Heavenly Father to be His personal representative in all things pertaining to the salvation of mankind. Jesus was anointed to be our Savior and Redeemer. Before the world was formed, Jesus was anointed to make immortality a reality and eternal life a possibility for all of God’s children (see John 17:24; 1 Peter 1:20). Thus, Jesus bore two unique titles: the Messiah (Hebrew) and the Christ (Greek)—each meaning “anointed.” (See Bible Dictionary, “Anointed One.”)

d We can protect ourselves by knowing and living by the word of God (see Ephesians 6:17–18; Doctrine and Covenants 27:18).

e Under the direction of His Father, Jesus was Creator of the earth (see John 1:2–3) and other worlds without number (see Moses 1:33). Long before His mortal birth, Jesus was the great Jehovah—God of the Old Testament. It was Jehovah who communed with Moses on Mount Sinai. It was Jehovah who made a covenant with Abraham that all nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham’s lineage. And it was Jehovah who made covenants with families of the house of Israel. Jesus was also the promised Immanuel, as prophesied by Isaiah (see Isaiah 7:14).

f Doctrine and Covenants 131:6.

ior’s ministry and mission^g—the more we understand His doctrine^h and what He did for us—the more we know that He can provide the power that we need for our lives.

4 Earlier this year, I asked the young adults of the Church to consecrate a portion of their time each week to study everything Jesus said and did as recorded in the standard works.ⁱ I invited them to let the scriptural citations about Jesus Christ in the Topical Guide become their personal core curriculum.^j

5 I gave that challenge because I had already accepted it myself. I read and underlined every verse cited about Jesus Christ, as listed under the main heading and the 57 subtitles in the Topical Guide.^k When I finished that exciting exercise, my wife asked me what impact it had on me. I told her, “I am a different man!”

6 I felt a renewed devotion to Him as I read again in the Book of Mormon the Savior’s own statement about His mission in mortality. He declared:

7 “I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

8 “And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross.”^l

9 As Latter-day Saints, we refer to His mission as the Atonement of Jesus Christ, which made resurrection a reality for all and made eternal life possible for those who repent of their sins and receive and keep essential ordinances and covenants.

10 It is doctrinally incomplete to speak of the Lord’s atoning sacrifice by shortcut phrases, such as “the Atonement” or “the enabling power of the Atonement” or “applying the Atonement” or “being strengthened by the Atonement.” These expressions present a real risk of misdirecting faith by treating the event as if it had living existence and capabilities independent of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

11 Under the Father’s great eternal plan, it is the Savior who suffered. It is the Savior who broke the bands of death. It is the Savior who paid the price for our sins and transgressions and blots them out on condition of our repentance. It is the Savior who delivers us from physical and spiritual death.

12 There is no amorphous entity called “the Atonement” upon which we may call for succor, healing, forgiveness, or power.

g See Doctrine and Covenants 76:40–41.
h See 2 Nephi 31:2–21.
i Holy Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.
j See Topical Guide, “Jesus Christ.” In addition to text under that major heading, there are 57 subtitles about Him. For non-English editions of the scriptures, use Guide to the Scriptures.
k More than 2,200 listings are cited in those 18 pages of the Topical Guide.
l 3 Nephi 27:13–14.

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Jesus Christ is the source. Sacred terms such as Atonement and Resurrection describe what the Savior did, according to the Father's plan, so that we may live with hope in this life and gain eternal life in the world to come. The Savior's atoning sacrifice—the central act of all human history—is best understood and appreciated when we expressly and clearly connect it to Him.

13 The importance of the Savior's mission was emphasized by the Prophet Joseph Smith, who declared emphatically that "the fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it."^m

14 It was this very statement of the Prophet that provided the incentive for 15 prophets, seers, and revelators to issue and sign their testimony to commemorate the 2,000th anniversary of the Lord's birth. That historic testimony is titled "The Living Christ."ⁿ Many members have memorized its truths. Others barely know of its existence. As you seek to learn more about Jesus Christ, I urge you to study "The Living Christ."

15 As we invest time in learning about the Savior and His atoning sacrifice, we are drawn to participate in another key element to accessing His power: we choose to have faith in Him and follow Him.

16 True disciples of Jesus Christ are willing to stand out, speak up, and be different from the people of the world. They are undaunted, devoted, and courageous. I learned of such disciples during a recent assignment in Mexico, where I met with government officials as well as leaders of other religious denominations. Each thanked me for our members' heroic and successful efforts to protect and preserve strong marriages and families in their country.

17 There is nothing easy or automatic about becoming such powerful disciples. Our focus must be riveted on the Savior and His gospel. It is mentally rigorous to strive to look unto Him in every thought.^o But when we do, our doubts and fears flee.^p

18 Recently I learned of a fearless young Laurel. She was invited to participate in a statewide competition for her high school on the same evening she had committed to participate in a stake Relief Society meeting. When she realized the conflict and explained to competition officials

m Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 49.

n See "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2000, 2–3.

o See Helaman 8:15.

p See Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.

that she would need to leave the competition early to attend an important meeting, she was told she would be disqualified if she did so.

19 What did this latter-day Laurel do? She kept her commitment to participate in the Relief Society meeting. As promised, she was disqualified from the statewide competition. When asked about her decision, she replied simply, "Well, the Church is more important, isn't it?"

20 Faith in Jesus Christ propels us to do things we otherwise would not do. Faith that motivates us to action gives us more access to His power.

21 We also increase the Savior's power in our lives when we make sacred covenants and keep those covenants with precision. Our covenants bind us to Him and give us godly power. As faithful disciples, we repent and follow Him into the waters of baptism. We walk along the covenant path to receive other essential ordinances.^q And gratefully, God's plan provides for those blessings to be extended to ancestors who died without an opportunity to obtain them during their mortal lives.^r

22 Covenant-keeping men and

women seek for ways to keep themselves unspotted from the world so there will be nothing blocking their access to the Savior's power. One faithful wife and mother wrote this recently: "These are troubled and perilous times. How blessed we are to have the increased knowledge of the plan of salvation and the inspired guidance from loving prophets, apostles, and leaders to help us sail these stormy seas safely. We stopped our habit of turning on the radio in the morning. Instead, we now listen to a general conference talk on our mobile phones every morning as we prepare ourselves for another day."

23 Another element in drawing the Savior's power into our lives is to reach up to Him in faith. Such reaching requires diligent, focused effort.

24 Do you remember the biblical story of the woman who suffered for 12 years with a debilitating problem?^s She exercised great faith in the Savior, exclaiming, "If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole."^t

25 This faithful, focused woman needed to stretch as far as she could to access His power. Her physical stretching was symbolic of her spiritual stretching.

q Jesus Christ taught us the importance of sacred ordinances, such as baptism (see John 3:5), the sacrament (see Doctrine and Covenants 59:9), and the endowment and sealing ordinances of the temple (see Doctrine and Covenants 124:39–42).

r See Doctrine and Covenants 124:29–32.

s See Luke 8:43–44.

t Mark 5:28.

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26 Many of us have cried out from the depths of our hearts a variation of this woman's words: "If I could spiritually stretch enough to draw the Savior's power into my life, I would know how to handle my heart-wrenching situation. I would know what to do. And I would have the power to do it."

27 When you reach up for the Lord's power in your life with the same intensity that a drowning person has when grasping and gasping for air, power from Jesus Christ will be yours. When the Savior knows you truly want to reach up to Him—when He can feel that the greatest desire of your heart is to draw His power into your life—you will be led by the Holy Ghost to know exactly what you should do.^a

28 When you spiritually stretch beyond anything you have ever done before, then His power will flow into you.^b And then you will understand the deep meaning of words we sing in the hymn "The Spirit of God":

29 The Lord is extending the Saints' understanding. ...

30 The knowledge and power of God are expanding;

31 The veil o'er the earth is beginning to burst.^c

32 The gospel of Jesus Christ is filled with His power, which is available to every earnestly seeking daughter or son of God. It is my testimony that when we draw His power into our lives, both He and we will rejoice.^d

33 As one of His special witnesses, I declare that God lives! Jesus is the Christ! His Church has been restored to the earth! God's prophet upon the earth today is President Thomas S. Monson, whom I sustain with all my heart. I so testify, with my expression of love and blessing for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 38

The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It? - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon session of the October 2017 General Conference.

IN 1986, I was invited to give a special lecture at a university in Accra, Ghana. There I met a number of dignitaries, including an African tribal king. As we visited prior to the lecture, the king spoke to me only through his linguist, who then translated for me. I responded to the linguist, and the linguist then translated my responses to the king.

2 After my lecture, the king

a See Doctrine and Covenants 88:63.

b When the faithful woman touched the Savior's clothing, He instantly responded, "I perceive that virtue [from the Greek *dunamis*, meaning "power"] is gone out of me" (Luke 8:46; emphasis added).

c "The Spirit of God," Hymns, no. 2.

d See 3 Nephi 17:20.

made his way directly to me, but this time without his linguist. To my surprise, he spoke in perfect English—the Queen’s English, I might add!

3 The king seemed puzzled. “Just who are you?” he asked.

4 I replied, “I am an ordained Apostle of Jesus Christ.”

5 The king asked, “What can you teach me about Jesus Christ?”

6 I responded with a question: “May I ask what you already know about Him?”

7 The king’s response revealed he was a serious student of the Bible and one who loved the Lord.

8 I then asked if he knew about the ministry of Jesus Christ to the people of ancient America.

9 As I expected, he did not.

10 I explained that after the Savior’s Crucifixion and Resurrection, He came to the people of ancient America, where He taught His gospel. He organized His Church and asked His disciples to keep a record of His ministry among them.

11 “That record,” I continued, “is what we know as the Book of Mormon. It is another testament of Jesus Christ. It is a companion scripture to the Holy Bible.”

12 At this point, the king became

very interested. I turned to the mission president accompanying me and asked if he had an extra copy of the Book of Mormon with him. He pulled one from his briefcase.

13 I opened it to 3 Nephi chapter 11, and together the king and I read the Savior’s sermon to the Nephites. I then presented the copy of the Book of Mormon to him. His response lodged in my mind and heart forever: “You could have given me diamonds or rubies, but nothing is more precious to me than this additional knowledge about the Lord Jesus Christ.”

14 After experiencing the power of the Savior’s words in 3 Nephi, the king proclaimed, “If I am converted and join the Church, I will bring my whole tribe with me.”

15 “Oh, King,” I said, “it doesn’t work that way. Conversion is an individual matter. The Savior ministered to the Nephites one by one. Each individual receives a witness and testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”^e

16 My brothers and sisters, how precious is the Book of Mormon to you? If you were offered diamonds or rubies or the Book of Mormon, which would you choose? Honestly, which is of greater worth to you?

17 Remember in the Sunday morning session of the April 2017 general conference, Presi-

^e See 3 Nephi 17:9–12.

dent Thomas S. Monson pleaded with “each of us to prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day.”^f Many have responded to our prophet’s plea.

18 Let me say that neither I nor eight-year-old Riley knew anyone was taking our pictures. Notice that Riley is reading his Book of Mormon with the help of an “I Am a Child of God” bookmark.

19 Something powerful happens when a child of God seeks to know more about Him and His Beloved Son. Nowhere are those truths taught more clearly and powerfully than in the Book of Mormon.

20 Since President Monson’s challenge six months ago, I have tried to follow his counsel. Among other things, I’ve made lists of what the Book of Mormon is, what it affirms, what it refutes, what it fulfills, what it clarifies, and what it reveals. Looking at the Book of Mormon through these lenses has been an insightful and inspiring exercise! I recommend it to each of you.

21 During these six months, I have invited various groups—including my Brethren in the Quorum of the Twelve, missionaries in Chile, and mission presidents and their wives gathered in Argentina—to consider three related questions that I urge you to think about today:

22 First, what would your life be like without the Book of Mormon? Second, what would you not know? And third, what would you not have?

23 Enthusiastic answers from these groups came straight from their hearts. Here are just a few of their comments:

24 “Without the Book of Mormon, I would be confused about the conflicting teachings and opinions about so many things. I would be just like I was before I found the Church, when I was searching for knowledge, faith, and hope.”

25 Another said: “I would not know about the role the Holy Ghost can play in my life.”

26 Another: “I would not clearly understand my purpose here on earth!”

27 Another respondent said: “I would not know that there is continuing progress after this life. Because of the Book of Mormon, I know that there really is life after death. That is the ultimate goal for which we are working.”

28 This last comment made me reflect on my life decades ago as a young surgical resident. One of the sobering responsibilities a surgeon bears, on occasion, is to inform the family when a loved one passes away. In one hospital where I worked, a special room

f Thomas S. Monson, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 87.

pose to life by urging us to ponder the potential of eternal life and “never-ending happiness.”^m The Book of Mormon shatters the false beliefs that happiness can be found in wickednessⁿ and that individual goodness is all that is required to return to the presence of God.^o It abolishes forever the false concepts that revelation ended with the Bible and that the heavens are sealed today.

36 When I think of the Book of Mormon, I think of the word power. The truths of the Book of Mormon have the power to heal, comfort, restore, succor, strengthen, console, and cheer our souls.

37 My dear brothers and sisters, I promise that as you prayerfully study the Book of Mormon every day, you will make better decisions—every day. I promise that as you ponder what you study, the windows of heaven will open, and you will receive answers to your own questions and direction for your own life. I promise that as you daily immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon, you can be immunized against the evils of the day, even the gripping plague of pornography and other mind-numbing addictions.

38 Whenever I hear anyone, including myself, say, “I know the Book of Mormon is true,” I want to exclaim, “That’s nice, but it is not enough!” We need to feel, deep in “the inmost part” of our hearts,^p that the Book of Mormon is unequivocally the word of God. We must feel it so deeply that we would never want to live even one day without it. I might paraphrase President Brigham Young in saying, “I wish I had the voice of seven thunders to wake up the people”^q to the truth and power of the Book of Mormon.

39 We need to be like this young missionary serving in Europe who felt so deeply about the truth of the Book of Mormon that he literally ran with a copy of this sacred record to the man in a park he and his companion had just found.

40 I testify that Joseph Smith was and is the prophet of this last dispensation. It was he who, through the gift and power of God, translated this holy book. This is the book that will help to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord.

41 I testify that Jesus Christ is the literal and living Son of our living God. He is our Savior, our Redeemer, our great Exemplar,

m Mosiah 2:41; see also Alma 28:12.

n See Alma 41:10–11.

o Special sacred ordinances and covenants are also required.

p See Alma 13:27.

q See Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young (1997), 299. He was referring to the importance of temple and family history work.

- How human behavior is influenced more by the power of the word than the power of the sword.

48 The Book of Mormon reveals information previously unknown:

- Baptisms were performed before Jesus Christ was born.
- Temples were built and used by people in ancient America.
- Joseph, 11th son of Israel, foresaw the prophetic role of Joseph Smith.
- Nephi (in 600–592 BC) foresaw the discovery and colonizing of America.
- Plain and precious parts of the Bible have been lost.
- The Light of Christ is given to each person.
- The importance of individual agency and the need for opposition in all things.
- Warnings about “secret combinations.”

CHAPTER 39

We Are Better Because of Him - Delivered at Thomas S Monson’s funeral services on January 12, 2018. Printed in the February 2018 Ensign Magazine

DEAR family, brothers, sisters, and friends, I am honored to speak at the funeral of my leader, mentor, and dear friend, President Thomas S. Monson.

2 My feelings are tender for this man I have known and loved for more than 50 years. On behalf of all General Authorities and General Officers, we proclaim

our love and gratitude for President Monson. To his family—Thomas, Ann, and Clark, along with their spouses, children, and grandchildren—we also express our deepest love and sympathy. We greatly appreciate the heartfelt messages spoken by Ann M. Dibb, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, and President Henry B. Eyring and beautifully sung by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

3 President Monson lived a remarkable life. There will never be another like him! There have been and will yet be many tears of separation shed by each of us. We will really miss him! But our sorrow is assuaged by the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. His bitter cup makes our bereavement bearable. His Atonement makes the Resurrection a reality. His Atonement makes it possible for families to be together forever in Heavenly Father’s plan. We rejoice in knowing that President Monson is reunited with his dear Frances and that one day we may also resume our associations with them.

4 Since President Monson’s passing, memories of his life have been so very well prepared and presented by the media. These have been thrilling to me. In addition, dignitaries and friends throughout the world have sent their condolences and expressed profound admiration.

5 This is to be expected in behalf of a man who influenced the lives and shaped the destiny of millions of people around the

world. We are all better because of him. And the Church is better because of him. He leaves a legacy of growth. Since his ordination as an Apostle in 1963, Church membership has risen from 2.1 million to nearly 16 million. The number of currently serving missionaries has grown from 5,700 to more than 70,000. And temples—then only 12 in number—now number 159, and more are coming.

6 But with all of this, President Monson constantly focused on the individual. He reminded us with expressions such as “Send a note to the friend you’ve been neglecting,” “Give your child a hug,” “Say ‘I love you’ more often,” “Always express your thanks,” and “Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved.”

7 President Monson never sought the limelight. In a world saturated with “selfies,” he modeled selflessness. He personified the statement of the Lord, who said, “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.”^a He gave his own time to visit, bless, and love others. Even in his waning season, he continued to minister, making frequent visits to hospitals and senior centers.

8 Throughout the years, I shared many cherished experiences with President Monson. May I relate just one that shows how he used persuasion, long-suffer-

ing, gentleness, meekness, and love unfeigned to achieve tremendous goals.^b

9 In 1985, I was given responsibility for the Church in Europe, an assignment President Monson held for many years. I was his junior companion in much of that challenging work. Behind the Iron Curtain, President Monson had worked for nearly two decades to establish trust with government leaders of the German Democratic Republic.

10 In 1988, he and I traveled with a small delegation of our local Church leaders to its capital city of East Berlin. In this country that had been closed to missionary work for more than 50 years, we felt impressed to ask permission for missionaries to serve there. We also asked for permission for worthy elders from that country to have opportunity to serve the Lord as missionaries elsewhere.

11 This critical meeting was held on the gray and dreary day of October 28, 1988. We met with Erich Honecker, chairman of the state council for the German Democratic Republic, and his staff. He started with a long speech about the merits of communism. (All we could do was listen.)

12 Then, under the flashing of countless cameras, President Monson was invited to speak. He boldly but kindly presented

a Matthew 23:11.

b See Doctrine and Covenants 121:41.

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his message of how and why our missionaries would be good for that country.

13 After President Monson’s plea, all awaited Chairman Honecker’s response with breathless anxiety. I will never forget his reply: “President Monson, we know you! We have watched you for many years! We trust you! Your request regarding missionaries is approved!”

14 As we left that meeting, clouds parted for a moment and the sun shone brightly upon us. It seemed that heaven was signaling approval upon what had just transpired.

15 Now, as President Monson’s mortal life has come to a close, we feel that the Lord’s blessings to His prophet Nephi apply equally to our beloved, departed leader:

16 “Blessed art thou, [President Thomas S. Monson], for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unwearyingness declared

the word, which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments.

17 “And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee [and thy family] forever.”^c

18 I solemnly proclaim that President Thomas S. Monson was a prophet of God. He taught as a prophet and testified as a prophet. He had the courage of a prophet and the kindness of a prophet. He received revelation as a prophet and responded as a prophet. He lived as a prophet and died as a prophet, sealing with his life his testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that His Church has been restored to the earth, and that this sacred work is true. To the testimony he bore so many times from this pulpit, I humbly add mine, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

c Helaman 10:4–5.