

# Helaman 11-16

I. Preparing for the Lord: **What will you make room for in your wagon?** Ardeth Kapp, BYU Devotional, 13 November 1990.

II. Helaman 11:

1-23 *Nephi seals the heavens that there might be famine*

“Famine is one of heaven’s most eloquent sermons. When virtually all else has failed to get the attention of the rebellious and turn them to God, famines have succeeded. Famines can strip men of every sense of self-sufficiency and turn their eyes and ears to the voice of heaven” (Millett & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, p. 390).

“Regardless of our age and stage in life, daily obedience to gospel principles is the only sure way to eternal happiness. President Ezra Taft Benson put it most poignantly when he said, ‘When obedience ceases to be an irritant and becomes our quest, in that moment God will endow us with power.’” (Elder Donald L. Staheli, *Ensign*, May 1998, 82).

“the destroying angel will...exercise his tremendous mission upon the children of disobedience; and destroy the workers of iniquity, while the Saints will be gathered out from among them, and stand in holy places ready to meet the Bridegroom when he comes.” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 92)

1-7 Famine ordered instead of war

“Adversity is to human beings what the refiner’s fire is to precious metals; it comes to purify and strengthen them” (Reynolds & Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, p. 282).

“the destroying angel will...exercise his tremendous mission upon the children of disobedience; and destroy the workers of iniquity, while the Saints will be gathered out from among them, and stand in holy places ready to meet the Bridegroom when he comes.” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 92)

8-9 Nephite Cycle

17-22 Nephi gains credibility as a prophet

“But Lehi was scarcely a whit behind him in the power of God that he attained unto and the blessings that were bestowed upon him.

“So it is with us. If we will live for these blessings, there is no limit to them. The only limit is our faith. If we have no faith; if we do not qualify ourselves; if we do not live near unto the Lord and seek unto Him for power and for gifts and graces, He will not bestow these blessings upon us. Every one of you brethren who bear the Holy Priesthood should be in such close communication with the Lord that you will know for yourselves all things pertaining to your duties; that you will not need to be taught, or, if you are taught, that you will understand in a moment what is required of you.” (George Q. Cannon, *Collected Discourses*, Vol.1, March 3rd, 1889).

“You find the spirit of contention only among apostates and those who have denied the faith, those who have turned away from the truth and have become enemies to God and his work. There you will find the spirit of contention, the spirit of strife. There you will find them wanting to ‘argue the question,’ and to dispute with you all the time. Their food, their meat, and their drink is contention which is abominable in the sight of the Lord. We do not contend. We are not contentious, for if we were we would grieve the Spirit of the Lord from us, just as apostates do and have always done.” (Joseph F. Smith, *Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, 4 Nephi – Moroni, p. 177)

23 Knowing and revelation

“There is a definite relationship between knowing the ‘true points of doctrine’ and ‘having many revelations daily.’ Knowledge alone is not a barometer of righteousness, but certain knowledge, when learned and lived, points one toward that redemption which is in Christ and the abundant life that is available to the true disciple” (Millett & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, p.

391).

“There is a definite relationship between knowing the ‘true points of doctrine’ and ‘having many revelations daily’. Knowledge alone is not a barometer of righteousness, but certain knowledge, when learned and lived, points one toward that redemption which is in Christ and the abundant life that is available to the true disciple. In addition, those who know the doctrines of salvation teach the doctrines of salvation. There is strength in their testimony and power in their words. ‘Those who preach by the power of the Holy Ghost,’ **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** has written, ‘use the scriptures as their basic source of knowledge and doctrine. They begin with what the Lord has before revealed to other inspired men. But it is the practice of the Lord to give added knowledge to those upon whose hearts the true meanings and intents of the scriptures have been impressed. Many great doctrinal revelations come to those who preach from the scriptures. When they are in tune with the Infinite, the Lord lets them know, first, the full and complete meaning of the scriptures they are expounding, and then he oftentimes expands their views so that new truths flood in upon them, and they learn added things that those who do not follow such a course can never know.’ (*Promised Messiah*, pp. 515-16.)” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 391).

#### 24-38 *The wickedness of Gadianton Revived*

##### Helaman 12:

“I guess one of the greatest mysteries of mortality is why mankind fails to learn from history” (L. Tom Perry, *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 16).

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (George Santayana, *The Life of Reason; or the Phases of Human Progress*, 5 vols. [1905], 1:284).

##### The Cycle

1. Blessings & Prosperity Helaman 3:25–26, 32; 11:20–21; 3 Nephi 6:1–9
2. Pride & Wickedness Helaman 3:33–36; 4:11–12; 6:16–17; 3 Nephi 6:13–18
3. Destruction & Suffering Helaman 4:1–2, 11, 13; 11:1–6; 3 Nephi 9:1–12
4. Humility & Repentance Helaman 4:14–15, 20–26; 11:7–11, 15; 3 Nephi 5:1–6

“The outlook for the world is not encouraging, but we know what the answer is. There is only one answer, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peace must come from the heart. Men’s hearts must change, and righteousness must rule in the lives of the people of the world before peace can come. May God hasten the day. May the message of the restored gospel go forward in great force, by increasing numbers, that God’s children may escape the calamities which are impending” (Ezra Taft Benson, in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1947, 157).

#### 1-6 *Man’s disobedient nature*

“It is frightening to observe that in places where there is the greater prosperity, there is the unmistakable evidence that, like the peoples of other dispensations, when the people prosper they forget God. They are seemingly rich in things that money can buy, but they are devoid of most of the precious things money cannot buy” (Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye In Holy Places*, p. 82).

“God, as a loving Father, will stretch our souls at times. The soul is like a violin string: it makes music only when it is stretched (Eric Hoffer). God will tutor us by trying us *because* He loves us” (Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, p. 28).

“The adversities which the Lord sends upon His people to bring them to remembrance of Him, come not penally, or, in the last analysis, punishing. The Lord does not delight in punishing His children. Tribulations come as good gifts from Heaven notwithstanding that sometimes they are severe” (Reynolds & Sjodahl, p. 287).

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently, He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He

up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace” (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 174).

“If all the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled and the basic principle of the gospel, free agency, would be ended. No man would have to live by faith.

Should all prayers be immediately answered according to our selfish desires and our limited understanding, then there would be little or no suffering, sorrow, disappointment, or even death, and if these were not, there would also be no joy, success, resurrection, nor eternal life and godhood. Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, Deseret Book Co., 1973, pp. 97–98.)

“Unfortunately, prosperity, abundance, honor, and praise lead some men to the false security of haughty self-assurance and the abandonment of the inclination to pray. Conversely, turmoil, tribulation, sickness, and death crumble the castles of men’s pride and bring them to their knees to plead for power from on High” (Thomas S. Monson, “The Prayer of Faith,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1995, 4–5).

“When I held my little son in my arms, knowing that he may be sentenced to life in a defective body, I suffered anguish of soul. We had not prepared ourselves to deal with this... Our pain was founded in a deep concern for the welfare of our son. I felt confident with the Lord’s help my son would be healed. I fasted and prayed for the Lord’s direction in giving Boyd a blessing. As I laid my hands on his head, everything I desired made me anxious for his body to be made whole. But, even in my overzealous state, I had to admit I could feel no spiritual promptings in blessing him to recover from Cystic Fibrosis... This caused me more pain than I had first discovered his illness! I felt personally responsible for Boyd’s disease. As I searched for an explanation I read these words of Brigham Young, ‘In many instances our anxiety is so great that we do not pause to know the spirit of revelation.... We have anxiety instead of faith. He lays his hands upon the sick, but they are not healed. It is in this consequence of not being completely molded to the will of God’ (*Journal of Discourses* 12:125). I had prayed for a miracle and... in God’s own time the miracles came, but not the way that I had expected. There is a God in Heaven who understands the destiny of each of his children. He also understands the pathway of challenges each will be confronted with in order to teach their destiny (See Acts 17:26; Ether 12:27). Without this insight I could not hope to see the reason for this particular challenge in Boyd’s life. As his life unfolded, I grew to understand it better” (K. Douglas Bassett, *Kisses at the Window*, pp. 15-16).

“You and I need to be patient, and for a reason. A quick reading of the Book of Mormon, a few prayers, a shallow attempt at repentance, a casual regard for the covenants we’ve made—of course, that is not enough. The scriptures use over and over again the word ‘steadiness’ to describe faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. When faith and repentance and diligent efforts to live the commandments have gone on long enough that virtue garnishes our thoughts unceasingly, then the doctrine of the priesthood, the truthful answers to the questions that really matter, will distill upon us as the dews from heaven.

“That’s been my experience with seeking the confirmation of truth by the Spirit of God. I have at times sought it by singular effort, in times of great need, and it has come. Investigators have that experience when they reach the point where they must know if the Book of Mormon is true.

“But far more often for me, I notice the Spirit’s presence in quiet confirmations at times when all I seem to have done is plod on in diligence, doing the simple things—searching the scriptures with a prayer in my heart and with more concern for others, and therefore less time for pursuits that let Satan, the father of lies, entice me. It’s in periods of that steadiness that I notice the Holy Ghost, almost in the way you’re surprised to discover that your shoes are wet from the dew formed on the grass overnight, and I look up and realize that my mind has been enlightened and my heart has been enlarged.” (Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God*, p. 120).

‘We need to remember, however, that people whose hearts are hardened will have to experience something sufficiently strong to break their hearts and bring them to their senses. If it is true (as it is) that the Lord chasteneth those whom He loves, we would not really want immunity from the chastening of either circumstance or other things.

“Because God loves us, He will do what is necessary in order to teach us what we need to know. ‘Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you whom I love, and whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven, for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance in all things out of temptation, and I have loved you.’ (D&C 95:1.)

“In further modern revelation, the Lord says, ‘Therefore, 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.’ (D&C 101:4-5.)” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, p. 55).

“‘And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, they will not remember him.’ (Helaman 12:2-3.) Isn't that a terrible indictment, and yet that is happening before us today. We are seeing that affluence. Never was there such prosperity in this country. We have been forgetting God, and we have turned aside from His teachings, and we are paying a terrible price. It is the test that, if we survive, will perhaps take some of the punishments that this prophet said would be necessary to bring us back to our knees and seek for the Lord to guide and direct us.” (Harold B. Lee, *Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 330).

“Afflictions can soften us and sweeten us, and can be a chastening influence. (Alma 62:41.) We often think of chastening as something being done to punish us, such as by a mortal tutor who is angry and peevish with us. Divine chastening, however, is a form of learning as it is administered at the hands of a loving Father. (Helaman 12:3.)” (Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, p. 39).

“Yet it is wise to recall that sometimes, in our own human weakness, we become neglectful even of our supreme obligations. As told in Bible history, the Israel of olden time did this on different occasions, and called forth reprimands therefor. Our knowledge of such instances may serve as warnings to us, to avoid similar mistakes, and to keep the Gospel light shining within our hearts. The Israel of the Book of Mormon record also had occasions of neglect. The book of Helaman in the Book of Mormon makes record of such event, wherein the words of that writer present a timely lesson to us, were we to become neglectful of God's word... When in their situation of ease, they began to forget God, they fell under affliction arising from their own neglect of responsibility to the divine word. The historian then goes on to say of them:

‘Behold, they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath created them, should rule and reign over them; notwithstanding his great goodness and his mercy towards them, they do set at naught his counsels, and they will not that he should be their guide.’ (Helaman 12:6.)

“In these days of distorting the plain words of scripture, of atheistic teachings, of chaotic social propaganda, and of general economic uncertainty, it may be well for us, in our private contemplation, to give at least a passing heed to the conditions cited in the Book of Mormon, and for us to seek more earnestly than ever to remember God, that his blessings and protecting care may come to us still more abundantly in our time of special need, such as seems to be upon us today. Though the efforts of men may be frustrated, God's promise does not fail wherein he says to those who draw near to him: ‘I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.’ (Leviticus 26:9.) It is our own responsibility, individually as well as collectively, to thereby gain our own welfare, and the welfare of others, under our divine call in this age.” (Reed Smoot, Conference Report, Apr. 1934, p. 39).

“The age-old problem described so well by prophets in the Book of Mormon and reiterated by modern prophets seems to be one of pride. Pride in its many forms is the great challenge from within. Mormon expressed it so well when he said, ‘Behold, they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath created them, should rule and reign over them’ (Hel. 12:6). Once rooted in a person's heart, pride sets the stage for spiritual downfall: unrighteous thoughts that spring up from within can lead to an unwillingness to be submissive or to follow counsel. For some, personal prosperity reinforces the notion that they are doing fine on their own. Others begin to feel that rules can be tailored a little to meet their personal desires. Sound teachings become old-fashioned, and leaders start to seem out of touch, unfeeling, or too old. None of these thoughts happen overnight but come gradually as humility and meekness are eroded by possessions, status, and prosperity. Pride causes a hardened heart and spiritual deafness, both of which can ultimately lead to a host of more serious sins. In the worst case, a person may go beyond self-destructive behavior and become an enemy to God, desiring to fight openly against His teachings.” (Steven D. Naddauld, *Ensign*, July 1996, p. 16).

“...when God adds our goods and blesses us so with education, success and comfort; what do we [do]? We would naturally think that we would respond in kind, that we would be obedient, faithful, humble and grateful. But that is not always what happens. Sometimes in response to an accumulation of blessings, we become arrogant and proud and turn away from the Lord. When God adds peace and prosperity we frequently respond with an increase in our crime wave and a sharp uptrend in our delinquency curve. At least the Prophet said, ‘Yea, 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 [of Israel]-. And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they Will not remember him.’ (Helaman 12: 2-3.)

“When we won’t respond to the Lord’s addition, we force him to resort to subtraction and to take our blessings away from us in our own interest.” (Sterling W. Sill, *BYU Speeches*, March 3, 1964, p. 3)

“**President Lee**... commented on the ‘unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men,’ which has so often meant that at the very time when people are being blessed, the softening of their situation causes them to harden their hearts. (Helaman 12:1-2.)” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, p. 50).

7-26 *The power of God’s word*  
7-17 At least the dust obeys

“The point he is making is that the dust of the earth is obedient.... Everything in the universe obeys the law given unto it, so far as I know, except man. Everywhere you look you find law and order, the elements obeying the law given to them, true to their calling. But man rebels, and in this thing man is less than the dust of the earth because he rejects the counsels of the Lord...” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *CR*, April 1929, pp. 54-55).

“When we consider the condition of the Latter-day Saints, and see how many there are who seem to have their eyes fixed upon the things of this world, things that are not lasting, but that perish in the handling, and how anxious they are to obtain them, how do you think I feel about it? We see many of the Elders of Israel desirous of becoming wealthy, and they adopt any course that they think will bring them riches, which to me is as unwise as anything can be— to see men of wisdom, men that seem to have an understanding of the world and of the things of God, searching after minerals throughout these mountains... These treasures that are in the earth are carefully watched, they can be removed from place to place according to the good pleasure of Him who made them and owns them. He has his messengers at his service, and it is just as easy for an angel to remove the minerals from any part of one of these mountains to another, as it is for you and me to walk up and down this hall.... People do not know it, but I know there is a seal set upon the treasures of the earth; men are allowed to go so far and no farther. I have known places where there were treasures in abundance; but could men get them? No. You can read in the Book of Mormon of the ancient Nephites holding their treasures, and of their becoming slippery; so that after they had privately hid their money, on going to the place again, lo and behold it was not there, but was somewhere else, but they knew not where. The people do not understand this; I wish they did, for they would then do as I do, pay attention to the legitimate business that God has given them to perform” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 19:36-39).

“Now [Mormon] did not mean to say that the Lord has greater concern for and loves the dust of the earth more than he does his children. He did not mean to say that we, the children of the Lord, in his sight are considered less than the dust of the earth. The point he is making is that the dust of the earth is obedient. It moveth hither and thither at the command of the Lord. All things are in, harmony with his laws. Everything in the universe obeys the law given unto it, so far as I know, except man. Everywhere you look you find law and order, the elements obeying the law given to them, true to, their calling. But man rebels, and in this thing man is less than the dust of the earth because he rejects the counsels of the Lord, and the greater the blessings he receives, (this because of his agency), the more willingly does he turn from the source of those blessings, feeling self-sufficient, and puts his faith and his trust in the arm of flesh rather than in God.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1929, p. 55).

“The animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms abide the law of their Creator; the whole earth and all things pertaining to it, except man, abide the law of their creation.... We tame the animals and make them do our drudgery and administer to our wants in many ways, yet man alone is not tamed—he is not

subject to his Great Creator. Our ignorant animals are faithful to us, and will do our bidding as long as they have any strength; yet man who is the offspring of the Gods, will not become subject to the most reasonable and self-exalting principles. How often have we witnessed a faithful animal conveying his master home so drunk that he could not see his way or sit up; yet his faithful animal will plod through mud, shun stumps, trees, and bad places, and land him safely at home.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, pp. 246-7 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 205).

“We see many of the Elders of Israel desirous of becoming wealthy, and they adopt any course that they think will bring them riches, which to me is as unwise as anything can be—to see men of wisdom, men that seem to have an understanding of the world and of the things of God, searching after minerals throughout these mountains; they traverse the hills, and they dig here and there, and keep digging and picking, and rolling the rocks from morning till night. This chain of mountains has been followed from the north to the south, and its various spurs have been prospected, and what do they find? Just enough to allure them, and to finally lead them from the faith, and at last to make them miserable and poor. Ask the brethren why they do this, and the ready reply will be, ‘Is it not my privilege to find a gold mine, or a silver mine, as well as others?’ As far as I am concerned I would say, ‘Yes, certainly it is your privilege, if you can find one.’ But do you know how to find such a mine? No, you do not. These treasures that are in the earth are carefully watched, they can be removed from place to place according to the good pleasure of Him who made them and owns them. He has his messengers at his service, and it is just as easy for an angel to remove the minerals from any part of one of these mountains to another, as it is for you and me to walk up and down this hall...

“People do not know it, but I know there is a seal set upon the treasures of earth; men are allowed to go so far and no farther. I have known places where there were treasures in abundance; but could men get them? No. You can read in the Book of Mormon of the ancient Nephites holding their treasures, and of their becoming slippery; so that after they had privately hid their money, on going to the place again, lo and behold it was not there, but was somewhere else, but they knew not where. The people do not understand this; I wish they did, for they would then do as I do, pay attention to the legitimate business that God has given them to perform.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, p. 36-39)

### **Helaman 13:**

“The degree to which social and religious disorder had come to the Nephites is evidenced by the appearance of a Lamanite . . . to call the Nephite people to repentance. Openly rejected in the land of Zarahemla, Samuel responded to the voice of the Lord, climbed upon the wall surrounding the city, and ‘prophesied unto the people whatsoever things the Lord put into his heart’ [Helaman 13:4].

“One of the things the Lord put into his heart was to warn the people of a ‘heavy destruction’ that awaited them if they did not change their ways. ‘Nothing can save this people,’ Samuel shouted from his place upon the wall, ‘save it be repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, who surely shall come into the world, and shall suffer many things and shall be slain for his people’ [Helaman 13:6].

“Of this coming—then just five years away—Samuel prophesied of signs and wonders to attend the event, signs and wonders that would be a matter of life and death for the faithful Nephites who would, at the peril of their life, watch for the fulfillment of these promises” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 131).

“The condition of society in the days of Samuel was somewhat peculiar (6 B.C.). The Nephites and the Lamanites had, in so far as righteousness was concerned, to a great extent, changed places... The majority of the Lamanites... walked circumspectly before God; they were full of faith and integrity, were zealous in the work of converting their fellows, and in keeping the commandments of God according to the Law of Moses.

“Such was the condition of affairs when the Lamanite prophet, Samuel, appeared among the citizens of Zarahemla... [After he prophesied in Zarahemla], the voice of Samuel was never heard again among the people of Nephi, but in later years, Jesus, Nephi, Mormon, and others quoted his prophecies or referred to his testimony.

“Nearly all the events, great and glorious, terrible and heart-rending, of which Samuel prophesied were fulfilled before the inspired historians of the Book of Mormon sealed up the Record. Prominent among these predictions were the signs that should occur at the advent of our Savior; the two days and a night of continued light and the appearance of a new star in the heavens that should mark His birth at Bethlehem. He even told the exact year when these things should take place; also he told of the

convulsions, the storms, the earthquakes that should attend His crucifixion, and the resurrection of many of the Saints that would follow His own resurrection. He also foretold, with great clearness and minuteness, that in subsequent years, the Nephites should grow in iniquity and because of their wickedness, their treasures, their tools, their swords, etc., should become slippery, and that within four hundred years the Nephite race should be destroyed. To the fulfillment of these predictions, Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni, bear record.” (Reynolds and Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 5, p. 304-6)

#### 1-9 *Samuel predicts the destruction of the Nephites*

“There are daily walls to climb in our own lives. They present themselves most often as invitations for growth: the daily challenges of parenting, a difficult assignment at work, a new calling in the Church, a sacrament meeting or stake conference talk to present, a lesson to be given in priesthood meeting or Relief Society.

“I well remember my first morning of tracting as a new missionary in Cordoba, Argentina. My senior companion knocked on the first door and presented, what seemed to me, a very impressive door approach in fluent Spanish. The next door was mine! The walls of Zarahemla could not have seemed any higher than the short distance from the sidewalk to the front door. In spite of my limited Spanish, my faith, prayers, and a desire to learn and obey sustained me as I ‘climbed upon my wall’ that morning.

“When temptations present themselves, as surely they do, we must climb upon the daily walls of life and learn to say no.” (Andrew W. Peterson, *Heroes From The Book of Mormon*, p. 160-1).

“The President of the Church is sustained by the people as ‘Prophet, Seer, and Revelator.’ . . .

“A prophet is a teacher. That is the essential meaning of the word. He teaches the body of truth, the gospel, revealed by the Lord to man; and under inspiration explains it to the understanding of the people. . . .

“A seer is one who sees with spiritual eyes. He perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. He foresees the future from the past and the present. . . .

“A revelator makes known, with the Lord’s help, something before unknown. It may be new or forgotten truth, or a new or forgotten application of known truth to man’s need. Always, the revelator deals with truth, certain truth (D. & C. 100:11) and always it comes with the divine stamp of approval” (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. in 1 [1960], 256–58).

“Our success, individually and as a church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home...We will move faster if we hurry less. We will make more real progress if we focus on the fundamentals” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, May, 1979, p. 83).

“Our artificial wants, and not our real wants, and the following of senseless customs subject our sisters to an excess of labor...Work less, wear less, eat less, and we shall be a great deal wiser, healthier, and wealthier people than by taking the course we do now” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:122).

“Joseph Smith visited me a great deal after his death, and taught me many important principles.... Among other things, he told me to get the Spirit of God; that all of us needed it.... He said, ‘I want you to teach the people to get the Spirit of God. You cannot build up the Kingdom of God without that’.... But how is it with the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost does not leave me if I do my duty. If does not leave any man who does his duty” (Wilford Woodruff, *Deseret News Weekly*, 7 November 1896).

President Brigham Young once received a message from the Prophet Joseph Smith after the Prophet’s Martyrdom that illustrates the importance of having the Holy Ghost with us: “Tell the brethren to be humble and faithful and be sure to keep the Spirit of the Lord, and it will lead them aright. Be careful and not turn away the small, still voice; it will teach them what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the kingdom. Tell the brethren to keep their heart open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them their hearts will be ready to receive it. They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits—it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from their hearts, and their whole desire will be to do good” (quoted in *Juvenile Instructor*, 19 July 1873, 114).

“It is possible for people to get so far in the dark through rebellion and wickedness that the spirit of

repentance leaves them. . . . [The Nephites and Lamanites who left the Church after Christ's coming] sinned wilfully, and therefore salvation cannot come to them. It was offered to them, and they would not have it. They rejected it. They fought it and preferred to take the course of rebellion" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:194–95).

10-14 *Because of the righteous, the wicked are temporarily spared*

"There are no private sins. All sin has the effect of weakening the fabric of society. Because of this, it is inevitable that the righteous will suffer because of the transgressions of others. Nevertheless, the Lord goes to great lengths to protect and spare the righteous" (Millett & McConkie, p. 401).

"I do not know what degree of repentance would be required of us to avert some of the things that might be imminent or at least remote possibilities. You recall Abraham's bargaining concerning the destruction of Sodom, how he pleaded that the city would be spared if there were fifty righteous souls, then forty-five, and so on down to ten. I doubt that we shall realize terms as favorable as Abraham was able to secure for Sodom. Apparently he was an astute bargainer, but the ten weren't found, and Sodom wasn't saved. I don't know that ten of a city would be enough to save us today, but I am sure that the degree of our repentance will be taken into consideration. And I earnestly hope and pray that we may give full repentance, and others with us, to the end that our Father in heaven in his mercy and in his patience and in his love for his children, which he has declared, and in whose immortality and eternal life he has stated his earnest interest, will revise his timetables, whatever they may be, according to the degree of our repentance. If he would agree to save a city for ten repentant souls, think what he would do for a whole nation or people who repented!" (Richard L. Evans, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1950, p. 104).

15-23 *The earth is cursed to the Nephites*

"When I think of life hereafter, I am reminded of the story of an army chaplain who comforted an LDS boy who had been caught in a crossfire in the Battle of the Bulge. This soldier was near death. By looking at this soldier's dog tag, the chaplain discovered that he was a member of the Church. The chaplain [said], 'Son, I'm not a member of your church, but would you want me to pray for you?' This young man replied, 'Yes, I would like you to pray for me.' So this chaplain knelt down, and two men of God prayed. The soldier [later] said, 'I distinctly remember these words of the chaplain: "Oh, God, help us to so live that when the time comes for us to die we shall not be afraid to die, and that after we die we shall not be afraid to live again."'" (Stan H. Watts, *The Blessings of This Day*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [23 Nov. 1971], 2).

"There are many people in this Church today who think they live, but they are dead to the spiritual things. And I believe even many who are making pretenses of being active are also spiritually dead. Their service is much of the letter and less of the spirit" (Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1951, 105).

"What is *con-secrated* is then made sacred, withdrawn from the ordinary economy, dedicated to a particular purpose and to that purpose only. It can never be recalled or used for any other purpose without being *de-secrated*. A striking passage in Helaman brings this out while providing a powerful bit of evidence for the bona fides of the Book of Mormon. Samuel the Lamanite tells the people that their riches will be cursed because they have set their hearts upon them; and that when they flee before their enemies and bury their treasures, if they bury them not unto the Lord, they will become slippery and can never be found again. In the Copper Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls we learn that when the Jews fled from Jerusalem before their enemies, they also buried their treasures; and they also buried them up unto the Lord so that they could never again be used in profane negotiations. All such buried treasures had to be used for the temple and nothing else. It would be hard to find a more convincing parallel. It is a reminder that when I *consecrate*, it cannot be with limitations or qualifications." (Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, p. 389)

24-29 *The world reverences dead prophets while rejecting living prophets*

"Samuel the Lamanite strongly reminded the Nephites that they had become casual and neglectful in living basic principles of the gospel. Living prophets of our dispensation have likewise reminded us to be firm and steady in the faith (see Helaman 6:1).

"Samuel said, 'Ye do not remember the Lord your God in the things with which he hath blessed



you' (Helaman 13:22). **President John Taylor** said, 'Do you have prayers in your family? ... And when you do, do you go through the operation like the grinding of a piece of machinery, or do you bow in meekness and with a sincere desire to seek the blessing of God upon you and your household? That is the way that we ought to do, and cultivate a spirit of devotion and trust in God, dedicating ourselves to him, and seeking his blessings.' (John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1943], p. 284.)

"Samuel said, 'Ye do always remember your riches' (Helaman 13:22). **President Marion G. Romney** said, 'Tithing is a debt which everyone owes to the Lord for his use of the things that the Lord has made and given to him to use. It is a debt just as literally as the grocery bill, or a light bill, or any other duly incurred obligation. As a matter of fact, the Lord, to whom one owes tithing, is in a position of a preferred creditor. If there is not enough to pay all creditors, he should be paid first. Now I am sure you will have a little shock at that, but that is the truth. Other creditors of tithe-payers, however, need to have no cause to worry, for the Lord always blesses the person who has faith enough to pay his tithing so that his ability to pay his other creditors is not thereby reduced.' (Marion G. Romney, *The Blessings of an Honest Tithe*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Provo, Utah, 5 November 1968], p. 4.)" (Andrew Peterson, *Heroes From The Book of Mormon*, p. 164-5)

"There is, of course, no salvation in believing in a dead prophet and stopping there. A living prophet must be found, first, to interpret God's word in terms of today, and, then, to serve as the legal administrator who can perform God's ordinances so as to make them binding on earth and in heaven.

"Nothing ever happens on earth as important as the sending of prophets among men. Their messages involve the very purpose of life and creation. And there is nothing more important in the lives of mortals than to determine whether those claiming to represent Deity do in fact hold divine authority and have a legal commission to speak for him.

"What pure, unadulterated hypocrisy it is for those who reject the living prophets to say: 'If we had lived in former days, we would have accepted the prophets whom others rejected.' Prophets are prophets, truth is truth, and rebellion is rebellion. The spirit which leads men to fight God in one age is the same that operates in every age. Those who reject the Lord's anointed today would have done so anciently. Compare Luke 16:27-31." (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, p. 621-2).

"You folk in the Church and out of the Church heard a prophet of God bear testimony that this was the only true and living Church upon the earth. Did you listen, or do you also build sepulchres for the dead prophets and tombs for those who have passed away long ago and disregard the living ones? I bear witness to you that the Prophet of God who bore testimony to you on Friday morning is the recognized head of God's kingdom here upon this earth, and you would do well to listen and to accept it in your hearts." (Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1949, p. 123).

"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.' (DC 21:6)" (Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1970, p. 152).

**Elder George F. Richards**, President of the Council of the Twelve, said in a conference address in April 1947, 'When we say anything bad about the leaders of the Church, whether true or false, we tend to impair their influence and their usefulness and are thus working against the Lord and his cause.' (In *Conference Report*, Apr. 1947, p. 24.)"

**See Ezra Taft Benson, "14 Fundamentals for Following the Prophet"**

### 30-39 *A day of lamentation to come to the wicked*

"Any person that he can find that will yield to him, he will bind him, and take possession of the body and reign there, glorying in it mightily, not caring that he had got merely a stolen body; and by and by some one having authority will come along and cast him out and restore the tabernacle to its rightful owner. The devil steals a tabernacle because he has not one of his own: but if he steals one, he is always liable to be turned out of doors" (Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, p. 298).

"Brother Joseph Smith gave an explanation of [evil influences]. There are places in the Mississippi

Valley where the influence or the presence of invisible spirits are very perceptibly felt. He said that numbers had been slain there in a war and that there were evil influences or spirits which affect the spirits of those who have tabernacles on the earth. I myself have felt those influences in other places besides the continent of America; I have felt them on the old battle grounds on the Sandwich Islands. I have come to the conclusion that if our eyes were open to see the spirit world around us, we should feel differently on this subject than we do; we would not be so unguarded and careless and so indifferent whether we had the spirit and power of God with us or not; but we would be continually watchful and prayerful to our Heavenly Father for His Holy Spirit and His holy angels to be around about us to strengthen us to overcome every evil influence” (George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth*, 1:82).

“Upon hearing President Kimball's description of the effort repentance requires, those who are now in serious sin will have a thought delivered to their minds that goes something like this: ‘Well, if it is that difficult to repent, I might as well go on in sin. Later, when I need forgiveness, I'll just go through that once.’

“That is so unwise. Let me tell you why. First, people who postpone repentance may run out of time. And second, they will find more misery in more sin, not the happiness they hope for but can't find. Remember the warning from Samuel the Lamanite: (Helaman 13:38).” (Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God*, p. 65)

“Some people intend to make a decision and then never get around to it... They intend to paint the barn, to fix the fence, to haul away that old machinery or remove that old shed, but the time of decision just never arrives.

“Some of us face a similar situation in our personal lives... We intend to pay a full tithing, to begin keeping the Word of Wisdom, to make our initial home teaching visits early in the month. However, without actual decision followed by implementation, the weeks and months go by and nothing is accomplished. We could drift into eternity on these kinds of good intentions. The Lord apparently sensed this weakness in His children, for He said: ‘Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today.’ (DC 64:25)” (Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country*, p. 389.)

“It sometimes seems that we live as if we wonder when life is going to begin. It isn't always clear just what we are waiting for, but some of us sometimes persist in waiting so long that life slips by—finding us still waiting for something that has been going on all the time. ... This is the life in which the work of this life is to be done. Today is as much a part of eternity as any day a thousand years ago or as will be any day a thousand years hence. This is it, whether we are thrilled or disappointed, busy or bored! This is life, and it is passing.” (Richard L. Evans, *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1967, p. 65.)

“Again, observe the emphasis in the words italicized. And let us not suppose that in calling people to repentance the prophets are concerned only with the more grievous sins such as murder, adultery, stealing, and so on, nor only with those persons who have not accepted the gospel ordinances. All transgressions must be cleansed, all weaknesses must be overcome, before a person can attain perfection and godhood. Accordingly the intent of this book is to stress the vital importance of each of us transforming his life through repentance and forgiveness. Future chapters will deal with the various aspects of this subject in greater detail.

“Oliver Wendell Holmes said: ‘Many people die with their music still in them. Why is this so? Too often it is because they are always getting ready to live. Before they know it, time runs out.’ Tagore expressed a similar thought in these words: ‘I have spent my days stringing and unstringing my instrument, while the song I came to sing remains unsung.’

“My plea therefore is this: Let us get our instruments tightly strung and our melodies sweetly sung. Let us not die with our music still in us. Let us rather use this precious mortal probation to move confidently and gloriously upward toward the eternal life which God our Father gives to those who keep his commandments.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 16-7).

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“Some people intend to make a decision and then never get around to it... They intend to paint the barn, to fix the fence, to haul away that old machinery or remove that old shed, but the time of decision just never arrives.

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#### **Helaman 14:**

##### 1-7 *Signs promised to announce the birth of Christ*

“In listing the signs to attend the birth of Jesus, Samuel the Lamanite prophesied: ‘There shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld.’ (Hela. 14:5.) That this new star was seen by the whole Nephite nation at the actual time of the heavenly birth, is also recorded in the Book of Mormon. (3 Ne. 1:21.) There is, however, no comparable Messianic prophecy in the Bible as we now have it. The nearest allusion to such is found in the prophecy of Balaam who, speaking of Messiah himself, said: ‘There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.’ (Num. 24:17.)

“But there can be little doubt that others besides the Nephites knew by revelation that great signs and wonders, including the rise of a new star, were to attend Messiah’s birth. The language of the wise men, upon reaching Jerusalem, clearly assumes that the Jews were just as aware that a new star would bear record of the holy birth as they were that the birth itself should take place in Bethlehem.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, p. 103-4).

##### 8-13 *Believing on the Son of God*

“Belief brings salvation and belief brings damnation. Men are saved or damned, depending upon what they believe. If they believe in Christ and his saving truths, they are heirs of salvation. If they believe in a false system of salvation, they will be damned” (Bruce R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 23).

##### 14-19 *Christ raises man from death*

“While our Lord’s body lay in the tomb, while his eternal Spirit preached among the righteous dead, darkness enshrouded the Americas. Far removed though they were from the criminal events, no Nephite and no Lamanite would be unaware that their prophets had foretold the death of their Messiah and said that it would be known by three days of dooming darkness. Where else in all the history of the earth have continents been enveloped in darkness for three days? How could such an event do aught but witness the truth of the promised event?” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 540).

“But I want to speak a word or two in relation to another death, which is a more terrible death than that of the body. When Adam, our first parent, partook of the forbidden fruit, transgressed the law of God, and became subject unto Satan, he was banished from the presence of God and was thrust out into outer spiritual darkness. This was the first death. Yet living, he was dead--dead to God, dead to light and truth, dead spiritually; cast out from the presence of God; communication between the Father and the son cut off. He was as absolutely thrust out from the presence of God as was Satan and the hosts that followed him. That was spiritual death. But the Lord said that He would not suffer Adam nor his posterity to come to the temporal death until they should have the means by which they might be redeemed from the first death, which is spiritual. Therefore angels were sent unto Adam, who taught him the Gospel and revealed to him the principle by which he could be redeemed from the first death, and be brought back from banishment and outer darkness into the marvelous light of the Gospel. He was taught faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, in the name of Jesus Christ, who should come in the

meridian of time and take away the sin of the world, and was thus given a chance to be redeemed from the spiritual death before he should die the temporal death.” (Joseph F. Smith, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1899, p. 72)

20-29 *Signs that will announce Christ's death*

“While our Lord's body lay in the tomb, while his eternal Spirit preached among the righteous dead, darkness enshrouded the Americas. Far removed though they were from the criminal events, no Nephite and no Lamanite would be unaware that their prophets had foretold the death of their Messiah and said that it would be known by three days of dooming darkness. Where else in all the history of the earth have continents been enveloped in darkness for three days? How could such an event do aught but witness the truth of the promised event?” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 540)

“Surely no one who believes in the scriptures and is acquainted with the great and varied miracles performed by Jesus when on the earth, can consistently feel that he could give eyesight to the blind, cleanse lepers, command the storms to cease, and raise the dead, and would be unable to control the light and the darkness on any part of the earth. It would be just as easy for him to cause darkness on one hemisphere for three days as it would on the other for three hours.” (Joseph F. Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 3, p. 45).

“It is perfectly clear that these destructions came as a just judgment upon the wicked, and that they are in similitude of the outpourings of wrath that shall come upon the whole world at the Second Coming, but they also came as a sign and a witness to the righteous who remained and who were not destroyed.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 541).

30-31 *Agency is granted unto all/Get ready*

“Parents, don’t make the mistake of purposefully intervening to soften or eliminate the natural consequences of your child’s deliberate decisions to violate the commandments. Such acts reinforce false principles, open the door for more serious sin, and lessen the likelihood of repentance.

“Some of you have children that do not respond to you, choosing entirely different paths. Father in Heaven has repeatedly had that same experience. While some of His children have used His gift of agency to make choices against His counsel, He continues to love them. Yet, I am sure, He has never blamed Himself for their unwise choices” (Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Correct Principles,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 34).

“Remember, my brethren...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.” (Helaman 14:30.)

“If you feel pressed in and pressured and not free, it may be for one of two reasons. One, if you have lost freedom, possibly it has been through some irresponsible act of your own. Now you must regain it. You may be indentured-indentured to some habits of laziness or indolence; some even become slaves to addiction. The other reason is that maybe if you are not free you have not earned it. Freedom is not a self-preserving gift. It has to be earned, and it has to be protected.

“For instance, I am not free to play the piano, for I do not know how. I cannot play the piano... The ability to play the piano, the freedom to do that, has to be earned. It is a relatively expensive freedom. It takes an investment of time and of discipline. This discipline begins, as discipline usually does, from without. I hope that you do not have contempt for discipline that originates from without. That is the beginning. A parent usually presses a youngster to practice the piano. But somewhere, it is hoped, practice grows into self-discipline, which is really the only kind of discipline. The discipline that comes from within is that which makes a young person decide that he wants to be free to play the piano and play it well. Therefore, he is willing to pay the price. Then he can be free from supervision, from pressure, from whatever forms of persuasion parents use.” (Boyd K. Packer, *That All May Be Edified*, p. 254)

“These words taken from the Book of Helaman indicate the purport of what I should like to say this afternoon... Among the immediate obligations and duties resting upon members of the Church today, and one of the most urgent and pressing for attention and action of all liberty loving people, is the preservation of individual liberty. Freedom of choice is more to be treasured than any possession earth can give. It is inherent in the spirit of man. It is a divine gift to every normal being. Whether born in

abject poverty or shackled at birth by inherited riches, everyone has this most precious of all life's endowments -- the gift of free agency; man's inherited and inalienable right.

"Free agency is the impelling source of the soul's progress. It is the purpose of the Lord that man become like him. In order for man to achieve this it was necessary for the Creator first to make him free. 'Personal liberty,' says Bulwer Lytton, 'is the paramount essential to human dignity and human happiness.'" (President David O. McKay, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1950, p. 32).

"Another scripture is very important for a teacher to understand: 'All men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil.' (2 Nephi 2:5; Helaman 14:31.)

"Parents and teachers need to know that a youngster can tell right from wrong. This knowledge may be distorted or perverted or covered up in unfortunate life experiences, but intuitively, as a part of the spiritual endowment of all humanity, there is a knowledge of right from wrong.

"That gives me great hope, for then I understand that every child of God, however reprobate he may have become, however degenerate he may seem to be, has hidden within him the spark of divinity and a sensitivity to that which is wrong as compared to that which is right." (Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently*, p. 99-100).

### **Helaman 15:**

1-4      *God chastens those he loves* XR Revelation 3:19

"We all have our difficulties, our problems, our reversals. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth' (Heb. 12:6). It is in the depths than men and women learn the lessons that help to build strong men and women, not at the pinnacle of success. In the hour of a man's success is his greatest danger. It sometimes takes a reversal to make us appreciate our blessings and to develop us into strong, courageous characters. We can meet every reversal that can possibly come with the help of the Lord. Every reversal can be turned to our benefit and blessing and can make us stronger, more courageous, more godlike" (Ezra Taft Benson, *Manilla Phillippines Area Conference*, 1975, p. 11).

"It is an inspiration to look into the eyes of young men and women who love the Lord, who want to do the right thing, who want to build lives that are productive and fruitful of great good. They are working hard to develop skills that will bless them and the society of which they will become a part. They are serving missions for the Church in unprecedented numbers. They are clean, bright, able, and happy. Surely the Lord must love those of this choice generation of youth who learn and serve in His Church. I love them, and I want them to know that" (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1996, 66).

"There are several here who will address you, and suppose that they should chastise us a little, do we not deserve it? Still, perhaps some will complain of the speaker for chastising them, when perhaps the first sentences which meet their eyes upon opening the Bible, will convey the idea that every son and daughter whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, but those who are not chastened are bastards and not sons. (Heb 12:8)

"Says one, 'I am willing to be chastened, but I am not willing to have that brother who has just come from England, or some other country, chasten me, but if some one high in authority should do it, I would kiss the rod and reverence the hand that gave it;' but the man who will only receive chastening from the Lord Himself is not in a proper state of mind before Him.

"The Latter-day Saints have been chastened much and often. Many in this congregation have had their corn and wheat stacks burned in consequence of their religion, and have often been called to part with their fathers and mothers, their wives and children, in consequence of their religion. They have been chastened here and there, and perhaps some may think we are being chastened now by the drought and insects. I am willing to take it as a chastisement, and to learn that wisdom and knowledge which I had not before it happened; and if every man could realize and understand it, they would receive it as a prize and as lesson that would qualify them for future duties. Though our chastisements are often hard to be borne, those who bear them patiently, willingly, and submissively, will find that they yield the Gospel fruits of righteousness insomuch that they will know how to be Saints indeed." (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, p. 54).

"I saw (in vision) Brigham Young standing in a strange land, in the far south and west, in a desert place, upon a rock in the midst of about a dozen men of color, who appeared hostile. He was preaching to them in their own tongue, and the angel of God standing above his head, with a drawn sword in his hand, protecting him, but he did not see it." (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 108).

“We have nothing to fear. God is at the helm. He will overrule for the good of this work. He will shower down blessings upon those who walk in obedience to His commandments. Such has been His promise. Of His ability to keep that promise none of us can doubt.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 71.)

5-10 *Converted Lamanites are true to the faith*

“...social, ethical, cultural, or educational converts will not survive under the heat of the day unless their taproots go down to the fullness of the gospel which the Book of Mormon contains” (Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning*, p. 6).

“The Lord chose to call them Lamanites. They are fulfilling prophecies. They are a chosen people with rich blood in their veins. They are casting off the fetters of superstition, fear, ignorance, and prejudice and are clothing themselves with knowledge, good works, and righteousness. And this Church is elated to have an important part in bringing about this transformation. . . .

“Yesterday they were deprived, weakening, vanishing; today thousands are . . . in regular seminaries and institutes. . . . Numerous are receiving secular as well as spiritual training in Mexico, South America, and Hawaii and the isles of the sea. Many are now in college and large numbers in full-time mission service. Tens of thousands are now eligible for superior training and service through church organizations in all the Americas and in the Pacific. Lamanite-Nephite leaders are now standing forth to direct and inspire their people. The day of the Lamanite is come, and tomorrow will be even better” (Spencer W. Kimball, in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1965, 70–71).

**William A. Wait: Punch and Cookie Testimonies**

11-17 *Latter-day Lamanites blessed by the faith of their fathers*

**Helaman 16:**

1-8 *The conclusion of Samuel’s ministry among the Nephites*

“...many are prone to garnish the sepulchers of yesterday’s prophets and mentally stone the living ones” (Spencer W. Kimball, *CR*, 1949, p. 121).

“Many men will say I will never forsake you, but will stand by you at all times. But the moment you teach them some of the mysteries of the kingdom of God that are retained in the heavens, and are to be revealed to the children of men when they are prepared for them, they will be the first to stone you and put you to death. It was the same principle that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, and will cause the people to kill the prophets in this generation.... If the Church knew all the commandments, one-half they would reject through prejudice and ignorance” (Joseph Smith, as quoted in *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, Whitney, p. 322).

“The story is told in the early days of the Church— particularly, I think, at Kirtland— where some of the leading brethren in the presiding councils of the Church met secretly and tried to scheme as to how they could get rid of the Prophet Joseph’s leadership. They made the mistake of inviting Brigham Young to one of these secret meetings. He rebuked them, after he had heard the purpose of their meeting. This is part of what he said: ‘You cannot destroy the appointment of a prophet of God, but you can cut the thread that binds you to the prophet of God and sink yourselves to hell’” (Harold B. Lee, *CR*, April 1963, p. 81).

“How we respond to the words of a living prophet when he tells us what we need to know, but would rather not hear, is a test of our faithfulness” (Ezra Taft Benson, *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1980, p. 28).

“There seems to be no end to the Savior’s desire to lead us to safety. And there is constancy in the way He shows us the path. He calls by more than one means so that His message will reach those willing to accept it. And those means always include sending the message by the mouths of His prophets whenever people have qualified to have the prophets of God among them. Those authorized servants are always charged with warning the people, telling them the way to safety” (Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, May 1997, 24).

"I saw (in vision) Brigham Young standing in a strange land, in the far south and west, in a desert place, upon a rock in the midst of about a dozen men of color, who appeared hostile. He was preaching to them in their own tongue, and the angel of God standing above his head, with a drawn sword in his hand, protecting him, but he did not see it." (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 108).

"And, therefore, a prophet is seldom popular, and the cost of being a prophet is always great, for he may be called upon to say those things which are not pleasing,...and he may find himself fighting against a tide of mass-misconception, and, as history records, be stoned, crucified, banished, ridiculed, shunned, or rejected. For the truth is not pleasing unto all men, and time has proved that majorities are not always right....

"It is not important that a prophet should say those things with which you and I are in full accord. But it is important that you and I should bring ourselves into full accord with those things which a prophet speaks by virtue of his office and calling." (Richard L. Evans, *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1939, p. 672).

## 9-25 *Trusting in human reason alone leads to destruction*

"(quoting Hel 16:22) This account of wickedness and contentions among the Nephites prior to the Lord's birth in the meridian of time is duplicated in the wickedness, contentions, and deceptions of our day as we approach the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Prophecies concerning these days are also being fulfilled and Satan is stirring up the hearts of men to do iniquity continually; and to thwart, if possible, faith in the great event of Christ's second coming to earth, which I testify is sure to come to pass. Satan is alert and active. We must be more alert and perceptive of the false and insincere schemes of his agents among us." (Delbert L. Stapeley, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1961, p. 21-22).

"The Book of Mormon describes that attitude among a people who depended solely 'upon their own strength and upon their own wisdom' and upon what they could 'witness with [their] own eyes.' (Hel. 16:15, 20.) Upon the basis of reason, these persons rejected the prophecies, saying, 'It is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come.' (vs. 18.) Applying that same attitude, a prominent professor dismissed the Book of Mormon with the assertion, 'You don't get books from angels. It is just that simple.'

"Those who seek gospel knowledge only by study and reason are particularly susceptible to the self-sufficiency and self-importance that sometimes characterize academic pursuits. As the apostle Paul observed in his day, 'Knowledge puffeth up.' He cautioned the learned: 'Take heed lest by any means this liberty [knowledge] of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. . . . And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?' (1 Cor. 8:1, 9, 11.)

"The apostle Peter foresaw that attitude in our time: 'There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' (2 Pet. 3:3-4.)

"A Book of Mormon prophet described the origin and consequences of this attitude: '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.' (2 Ne. 9:28.)

"The fulfillment of these prophecies is evident in our day." (Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord's Way*, p. 47).

"The demands of discipleship should be our focus, not what we unsubmissively demand of God.

The demands disbelievers make of God would be comedy if they were not tragedy, some of those living in the Western Hemisphere before the birth of Jesus demanding, 'Why will he not show himself in this land as well as in the land of Jerusalem?' (Helaman 16:19.) Elsewhere some taunted Jesus while He hung on the cross, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ' (Luke 23:35)

"No divine demonstration followed these queries or taunts. The mortal desire for manifestations, but on our terms, is clearly inconsistent with the plan of the Lord. In times of stress He relies on the steadiness of our discipleship, not on an abundance of showmanship; on persuasion, not intimidation." (Neal A. Maxwell, *Not My Will But Thine*, p. 91).

"Solemnly, people began to gather outside the mission president's office. Exchanging astonished glances, many could still not believe that they had been summoned to a church court. The officers of the court were full of love and understanding, but very serious in their investigation of the

charges; those present could lose their membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The charge was not immorality or apostasy; they were accused of speaking evil of a neighbor.

“A fine brother had been slandered by those gathered together that evening, accused of the serious charge of immorality. He was completely innocent, but the great damage that had been done by ‘those whom he counted as his friends’ would not be easily repaired. Who could measure the near destruction of this good soul? Who could measure the impact on the branch, as its fellowship was eroded? And what about the effect on those nonmembers who also became involved? Who could ever undo the evil that had affected hundreds of lives?

“It had happened so easily. It began with simple words like—

“Did you hear. ... ?

“Sister Joan said. ...”

“I have heard that he told her. ...”

“I am not sure about this, but. ...”

“Mr. Sanchez’s cousin said that he thought. ...”

“I don’t want to say anything bad, but. ...”

“If you won’t repeat this, I guess I could tell you that. ...”

“Sin has many tools, the saying goes, but a lie is the handle that fits them all. If you are one of those who think it permissible to tell white lies, you may soon find yourself color-blind.

“Those conducting the court turned to the Lord’s explicit instructions on the subject. Through Moses, he told the people: ‘Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people’ (Lev. 19:16). The book of Proverbs describes the effects of evil speaking: ‘A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly’ (Prov. 18:7-8).

“Some may think they build their self-esteem and gain the attention and respect of others by bearing false tales, but they actually become Satan’s agents. The Book of Mormon records that before the coming of the Savior to the Americas, ‘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’ (Hel. 16:22).

“Satan succeeded in hardening the hearts of the people, and some thirty years later, after the great destruction of the wicked, the prophet Nephi recorded that ‘the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain ... of my people’ (3 Ne. 9:2).

“Divine cautions to guard our words are no less emphasized in modern-day scripture. The Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith: ‘And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking’ (D&C 20:54). ‘Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm’ (D&C 42:27). ‘Cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one to another’ (D&C 136:23).

“The Lord loves us and desires that we love one another. May we follow this further counsel given to the prophet Joseph Smith: ‘Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversations’ (D&C 108:7), and ‘Let your words tend to edify one another’ (D&C 136:24).

“Let each of us be careful that we do not contribute in any way to what the prophet Enoch saw in a vision thousands of years ago, when he recorded: ‘And he beheld Satan; and he had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced’ (Moses 7:26).

“May the continual cultivation of the Holy Spirit drive out evil thoughts and inappropriate words, so that spirituality will grow and prevail, for as we bridle our tongues we are able to bridle our whole beings.” (Gene R. Cook, “Gossip: Satan’s Snare,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1981, p. 27).

### III. **Preparing for the Second Coming: Waiting on the Lord: Henry Eyring, BYU Devotional, 30 September 1990.**

“In 1787 Edward Gibbon completed his noble work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Here is the way he accounted for the fall.

1. The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.
2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace.
3. The mad craze for pleasure, sports becoming every year more and more exciting and brutal.
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within the decadence of the people.
5. The decay of religion—faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people.



“Is there a parallel for us in America today? Could the same reasons that destroyed Rome destroy America?... The lessons of history, many of them very sobering, ought to be turned to during this hour of our great achievements, because during the hour of our success is our greatest danger. Even during the hour of our great prosperity, a nation may sow the seeds of its own destruction. History reveals that rarely is a great civilization conquered from without unless it has weakened or destroyed itself within” (Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country*, pp. 363-364).

“A democracy cannot survive as a permanent form of government. It can last only until its citizens discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority (who vote) will vote for the candidates promising the greatest benefits from the public purse, with the result that a democracy will always collapse from loose fiscal policies, always followed by a dictatorship.

“The average age of the worlds greatest democratic nations has been 200 years. Each has been through the following sequence:

From bondage to spiritual faith.

From faith to great courage.

From courage to liberty.

From liberty to abundance.

From abundance to complacency.

From complacency to selfishness.

From selfishness to apathy.

From apathy to dependency.

And from dependency back again into bondage.

“Can we escape this fate? Lord Macaulay wrote the above words approximately 75 years after our nation was founded. How prophetic his words were! Now after 200 years, where are we?” (From Lord Macaulay in 1857, as cited by Dr. Dixie Lee Ray in her book *Environmental Overkill*, as cited in *Livestock Digest*, October 4, 1993, Vol. 33, No. 38, p. 8).

## **The Glass Is Half Full: The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ**

### **RICHARD NEITZEL HOLZAPFEL**

*Richard Neitzel Holzapfel was a BYU associate professor of Church history and doctrine when this devotional address was given on 10 July 2001.*

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#### **Some Excepts from His Talk:**

1. “Through more than 25 years of personal study--beginning during my undergraduate training here at BYU and continuing on through graduate school and the present--I have come to realize that even during our glorious dispensation of the fulness of times, many Latter-day Saints believe they might witness the Second Coming. For example, some Saints living in the 1860s believed that the great American Civil War was the beginning of the end. Another group of Saints thought that 1890 would be a decisive year, and still another generation of members of the Church were sure that the Great War that we now call World War I was the foretold destruction that would immediately precede the coming of Christ. Some of my parents' generation, the so-called "Greatest Generation," believed that World War II was nothing more nor less than the beginning of the destruction that would be poured out upon all nations before the Second Coming and of almost every major conflict or development in the Middle East. From my personal observation today, nothing has really changed since the days of Paul: for generation after generation some people have become anxious about the timing of the Second Coming and have misread many of the prophecies found in sacred scriptures.

“The proliferation of popular books, tapes, and firesides among the Latter-day Saints during the last 25 years of my adult experience demonstrates how fruitful our imaginations have been when we have attempted to interpret current affairs in light of ancient and modern prophecy without proper historical context and the prophetic and ordained authority to do so.

“The Internet brought a whole new way to stir the waters. Rumors abound about a friend whose uncle knew a woman who worked in the temple who had met a young missionary who was told by his patriarch that the elder would not finish his mission before the Second Coming! Certainly the Internet has blessed our lives, but what a curse it has been as far as rumormongering is concerned--even among Latter-day Saints.

"My generation was not immune either from the effects of what I call Second-Coming fever. As young missionaries, some of us serving in the Italy Milan Mission speculated that 1974 would be a critical year--and possibly the very year of the Second Coming. We were highly imaginative as we wove together a tapestry of various bits of data, including the facts that the April annual general conference that year was to be the 144th annual conference of the Church and President Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth president of the Church, would be sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator in a special solemn assembly to be held on April 6. What better day than this, a day filled with historical tradition and scripturally significant numbers such as 12 and 144, for the Lord to return to earth to begin His millennial reign? You may laugh, but we took our wild speculation very seriously. Of course that historic and spiritually uplifting conference has come and gone, and we are still here. (See *CR*, April 1974, or *Ensign*, May 1974.)

2. "Even today I encounter scores of people who believe they will witness the Second Coming in their lifetime. For my part, I am now somewhat reserved and wiser. I teach my students these guiding principles: prepare a will, buy life insurance, put funds away in a retirement program, and, if they really want to be nice to their family, purchase a pre-need funeral program that includes a cemetery plot! For many of my students, this last bit of advice is a little morbid, but it makes my point. Live today as if you will meet Jesus this evening, but plan your life as though you will live to be 100 years old.

"A bright friend of mine always dreamed of becoming a medical doctor. However, during our undergraduate training here at BYU he fell prey to Second-Coming fever and made a decision in his life not to continue his education and apply to medical school. He reasoned that if the Second Coming was close, then he probably wouldn't even have time to finish paying off his college loans, and in the Millennium he wouldn't even have a job! Needless to say, my dear friend made a terrible mistake on two accounts.

3. "I recall a reported statement, attributed, as I remember it, to President Wilford Woodruff. Some of the brethren of his time are said to have approached him (they had their troubles also) and to have inquired of him as to when he felt the end would be--when would be the coming of the Master? These, I think, are not his exact words, but they convey the spirit of his reported reply: "I would live as if it were to be tomorrow--but I am still planting cherry trees!" I think we may well take this as a page for our own book and live as if the end might be tomorrow--and still plant cherry trees!" [Richard L. Evans, *CR*, April 1950, 105–6].

4. "In Jewish and Christian thought there are two basic ways of viewing the coming of the Messiah. Some consider promises of a Messiah and a millennial era symbolic of a time when men [and women] *will finally learn to live in peace and harmony and the world will enter a new age of enlightenment and progress; no one individual nor any one specific event will usher in this age. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints opposes this view and agrees with the many other Jewish and Christian groups who affirm that there is an actual Messiah, that he will come at some future time to the earth, and that only through his coming and the events associated therewith will a millennial age of peace, harmony, and joy begin.* [Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism: The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), s.v. "Jesus Christ: Second Coming," 2:737–38]

"The author continues: The scriptures, both biblical and modern, abundantly testify that the era just preceding the second advent of the Savior will be "perilous" (2 Tim. 3:1) and filled with "tribulation" (Matt. 24:29). At that time "the devil shall have power over his own dominion" (D&C 1:35). The resulting judgments upon the wicked are part of the preparations for the Millennium. [*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 738]

"Although this description in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* is certainly accurate in placing our doctrine of the Second Coming in context with what other Jews and Christians think about the coming of the Messiah, such a view without the proper context often provides fertile ground for a growing pessimism regarding the time in which we live and the future.

"I am no Pollyanna. I know something has gone terribly wrong with our planet, and I believe that the only ultimate hope for humankind is Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, I believe we need to be optimistic about the present and what lies beyond the horizon. A bright future still awaits all of us as we approach the Second Coming. Remember our earlier quote from Paul found in 1 Thessalonians? "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). The Lord certainly expects that the proper teaching about events surrounding the Second Coming should provide comfort to us.

"I have fallen prey to this pessimism from time to time and have wondered whether the future holds any real promises in light of prophetic scriptures about "the great and dreadful day of the Lord"

(Malachi 4:5).

"I am almost certain we could fill one of the largest lecture halls here on campus if we chose a speaker willing to focus on the blood, fire, carcasses, flies, immorality, wickedness, natural and political upheavals of the time, and, finally, the death and destruction usually associated with Second Coming discussions. I am also certain that if we had someone address the basic doctrines of Christ--such as faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost--we most likely would have a rather small showing in the lecture hall. The Second Coming is an exciting topic, with sex, violence, and intrigue all part of the main story line.

"My generation and the one that has followed--your generation--I call 'the Fast-Food Generations.' We need stimulation about every two minutes or we lose interest. (I believe that is about the pace of *Sesame Street*.) So the exciting and highly violent nature of certain prophecies regarding the Second Coming tends to capture our imagination, whereas other topics seem boring. Speakers and teachers who desperately want to keep the attention of their students often resort to Second Coming themes as a way to hold their audience. In this I believe we do ourselves a great disservice.

"In the past I have focused on the 'blood-and-gore' prophecies and provided my own students a glass that is half empty. I am sorry for those failings and apologize to my students for providing an environment of anxiety, fear, and stress.

5. *"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 [bearing testimonies] 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." I was rather surprised. He said, "It is only a little handfull of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America--it will fill the world." [Wilford Woodruff, CR, April 1898, 57]*

"It may be that some of us are still like these early Saints--we know no more concerning the destiny of the Lord's church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. We don't comprehend it. I certainly do not, but I am beginning to get the picture. I started to expand my vision when I was a young missionary serving in Italian-speaking Switzerland and in northern Italy. The food in Italy was wonderful, but the work was difficult, and rejection was common. Certainly larger numbers of people were joining the Church in Italy at the time in comparison to some other European countries, but it was not uncommon for missionaries to labor months upon months without witnessing the marvelous miracle of conversion. I was very pessimistic about the Church's future in Italy. I knew, of course, of the phenomenal success of the Church in Mexico and in Central and South America, but I was deeply concerned about Europe. At the time the Eastern Bloc--the former Soviet Union and other eastern European countries--was closed to active missionary efforts.

"In my lifetime I never imagined that China, Africa, and Greece would ever have congregations of Saints worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, ironically, we still believed that the Second Coming was imminent. We simply did not comprehend the Lord's timetable in this matter or the scope of His intended work during the time preceding the Second Coming.

"Sometimes, in rather dramatic fashion, things change. The revelation on priesthood in 1978 and the demise of the Soviet Union dramatically changed the boundaries of our missionary fields of labor. Who has not been grateful for the expansion of the work among our brothers and sisters across Africa, eastern Europe, and elsewhere? Thrilling stories of a new generation of Mormon pioneers living in such places as Mongolia and India and in nations unfamiliar to myself such as the island chain of Kiribati are just as spiritually exciting and stimulating as almost any story from the first 100 years of the Restoration.

"In 1997 I began a year of service at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. During the following year we met with members of the Church from various nations of the earth and from various ethnicities living, working, and worshipping in the Holy Land. A real surprise to me was a branch composed of native members of the Church in Jordan and Israel--some returned missionaries and endowed in the temple. Since then, along with other professors--David Seely, Jim Toronto, and Paul Hoskisson--I have spoken to members of the Church who gather together weekly to worship the Lord in Lebanon and Cyprus.

"It was in Cyprus that my story comes full circle. One of my assignments during my mission was in Lugano, a beautiful city by a lake in the mountains of southern Switzerland. It was a paradise: Swiss yogurt, Swiss chocolate, and heated buses in the winter! While there I became friends with

Trafford and Fernanda Cole, members who lived in Italy. My companion, Elder Chris Meacham, and I spent long hours with them when they visited Lugano. Nearly a year later I was transferred to Padova, Italy, near Venice. There my companion Elder Steve Smoot and I worked closely with the Coles. Young and enthusiastic about the gospel, they both played important roles in the small branch of the Church. If they were ever pessimistic about the Church's future in Italy, they never showed it.

"Recently, some 25 years later, I rushed to a small, rented hall in Cyprus where Professor Seely and I were to speak at a missionary fireside. The missionaries had placed an ad in the local paper announcing the meeting: "Two American University Professors Will Speak on Paul's Life and Labors." Paul had visited the island nearly 2,000 years ago, and now we were there to talk to members and nonmembers of the Church about his life and ministry.

"As we made our way into the building, we were introduced to some of the local members, visitors, guests, and missionaries serving on the island. I was impressed with the group of young elders and sisters. They were assigned to the Athens Greece Mission and were serving at this time on the island of Cyprus. They came from many lands, including Canada, England, Sweden, Germany, and France. But as the group opened up, there he was: Elder Cole. Yes, it was the son of Trafford and Fernanda Cole--the young couple I had known previously in Italy. Elder Cole was a second-generation Italian speaking modern Greek as a Latter-day Saint missionary in Cyprus!

"Of course my story can be duplicated dozens of times by many of you here today. My students are returned missionaries from California, Montana, Chile, France, Russia, Mongolia, India, Korea, etcetera. My colleagues serve as mission presidents throughout the world--in places that seemed closed forever but that have now been opened by the hand of the Lord. The gospel is spreading across the nations of the earth. Although we are relatively few in number, nevertheless the destiny of this Church is such that before the Lord's coming there shall be Saints upon *all* the face of the earth.

"In addition I have come to appreciate the fact that people of goodwill from various nations and various religious traditions can and do make a difference in the world today. We must see these people as allies and friends, working together to fulfill God's plan of a just and safe world for men and women, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, and educated and noneducated. Surely there are many good people to be found on the earth--not just among the Latter-day Saints. We are not alone, and the numbers of good, honest people will increase upon the earth.

6. "Certainly we are mortal. We do face challenges. We need to be realistic about the effects of a fallen world; nevertheless, we need to see the glass as being half full. Recalling the words of Elder Neal A. Maxwell might help us put future events in context:

*Yes, there will be wrenching polarization on this planet, but also the remarkable reunion with our colleagues in Christ from the city of Enoch. Yes, nation after nation will become a house divided, but more and more unifying Houses of the Lord will grace this planet. Yes, Armageddon lies ahead--but so does Adam-ondi-Ahman!* [Neal A. Maxwell, *Even As I Am* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 121]

Elder Maxwell added, "His work proceeds forward almost as if in the comparative calmness of the eye of a storm. First, He reigns in the midst of His saints; soon, in all the world" (*Even As I Am*, 121). Truly in Christ Jesus we find hope and pray for His return, when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17). I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

7. From Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

"What if the day of His coming were tomorrow? If we knew that we would meet the Lord tomorrow--through our premature death or through His unexpected coming--what would we do today? What confessions would we make? What practices would we discontinue? What accounts would we settle? What forgivenesses would we extend? What testimonies would we bear?

"If we would do those things then, why not now? Why not seek peace while peace can be obtained? If our lamps of preparation are drawn down, let us start immediately to replenish them.

"We need to make both temporal and spiritual preparation for the events prophesied at the time of the Second Coming. And the preparation most likely to be neglected is the one less visible and more difficult--the spiritual. A 72-hour kit of temporal supplies may prove valuable for earthly challenges, but, as the foolish virgins learned to their sorrow, a 24-hour kit of spiritual preparation is of greater and more enduring value" (General Conference, April 2004).