**DC 38                                                             Historical Background**

Church conferences were not always held on a semi-annual basis. The little flock required more direction. The first conference of the Church was held June 9, 1830, the second conference was held in late September 1830, and the third conference was held January 2, 1831. One of the topics of discussion was the recent revelation instructing the church to move to Kirtland (see D&C 37). The literal gathering of Israel was to begin.

“During the third conference of the Church, the Prophet received Doctrine and Covenants 38… This revelation was the Lord’s answer to those who wondered why they should move three hundred miles to the west in the dead of winter.” (*Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual*, [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981], 75)

**John Whitmer**

The time had now come for the general conference to be held. Which was the first [part] of January 1831, and according to this appointment the Saints assembled themselves together. After transacting the necessary business, Joseph the Seer addressed the congregation and exhorted them to stand fast, looking forward considering the end of their salvation. The solemnities of eternity rested on the congregation and having previously received a revelation to go to Ohio, they desired to know somewhat more concerning this matter. Therefore, the Seer enquired of the Lord *in the presence of the whole congregation*, and thus came the word of the Lord saying: (see D&C 38.)

After the Lord had manifested the above words, through Joseph the Seer, there were some divisions among the congregations, some would not receive the above as the word of the Lord: but that Joseph had invented it himself to deceive the people that in the end he might get gain. Now this was because, their hearts were not right in the sight of the Lord, for they wanted to serve God and man; but our Savior has declared that it was impossible to do so.

The conference was now closed, and the Lord had manifested his will to his people. Therefore they made preparations to journey to the Ohio, with their wives, and children and all that they possessed, to obey the commandment of the Lord. (*The Book of John Whitmer,* typescript, [Provo: BYU Archives and Manuscripts], chap. 1, italics added)

**Newel Knight**

It was at this conference that we were instructed as a people, to begin the gathering of Israel, and a Revelation was given to the prophet on this subject.

 Having returned home from conference, in obedience to the commandment which had been given, I, together with the Colesville Branch, began to make preparations to go to Ohio. . .As might be expected, we were obliged to make great sacrifices of our property. The most of my time was occupied in visiting the brethren, and helping to arrange their affairs, so that we might travel together in one company. (The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of  Mormon  by Larry C. Porter Fn, *BYU Studies*, vol. 10 (1969-1970), Number 3 - Spring 1970, p.379)

**DC 38:1 the seraphic hosts of heaven**

The term “seraphic hosts” refers to angelic beings (see *Mormon Doctrine*, 702-703). Those spirits who dwelt with God “before the world was made” are likely the same as the seraphic hosts; they are “the morning stars [who] sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” (Job 38:7)

**DC 38:2 all things are present before mine eyes**

**Neal A. Maxwell**

One of the most helpful—indeed, very necessary—parallel truths to be pondered when studying this powerful doctrine of foreordination is given in the revelation of the Lord to Moses in which the Lord says, “And all things are present with me, for I know them all” (Moses 1:6). God does not live in the dimension of time as do we. Moreover, since “all things are present with” God, his is not simply a predicting based solely upon the past. In ways which are not clear to us, he actually *sees*, rather than *foresees*, the future—because all things are, at once, present, before him!

In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord describes himself as “the same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes” (D&C 38:2). From the prophet Nephi we receive the same basic insight in which we likewise must trust: “But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men” (1 Ne. 9:6).

It was by divine design that the marvelous Mary became the mother of Jesus. Further, Lucy Mack Smith, who played such a crucial role in the rearing of Joseph Smith, did not come to that assignment by chance.

One of the dimensions of worshipping a living God is to know that he is alive and living in the sense of seeing and acting. He is not a retired God whose best years are past—to whom we should pay a retroactive obeisance, worshipping him for what he has already done. He is the living God who is, at once, in the dimensions of the past and present and future, while we labor constrained by the limitations of time itself. (“A More Determined Discipleship,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1979, 72-73)

**DC 38: 3 I am the same which spake, and the world was made**

How did God create the world? Some think we don’t know very much about the creation process. One of the great doctrinal legacies of Joseph Smith is that the Lord organizes matter rather than creates it out of nothing. But then, we might ask, “How does the Lord organize matter, does he make mountains by scooping up piles of dirt with his hands?”

The scriptures tell us that the elements respond to the command of Jehovah. He commands and the elements obey. This concept is clearly taught in Abraham, wherein we read, “the Gods watched those things which they had ordered until they obeyed.” (Abr. 4:18) Jehovah and Adam would command the elements to conform to the shapes of mountains and valleys, “great rivers and small streams,” then wait for the elements to organize themselves in perfect obedience to the command. Hereby we see how accurate are the words of the Lord, “I am the same which spake, and the world was made.” That simple phrase tells us a lot more about the process of creation than we might think.

**DC 38:4 the same which have taken the Zion of Enoch into mine own bosom**

The historical context is important to understand why the Lord would make a reference to the city of Enoch. While translating the Bible the preceding month, Joseph, with Sidney Rigdon acting as scribe, received revelation regarding Enoch’s people (See Moses 6-7). The idea of building a latter-day Zion was upon the minds of the saints. The revelations were just beginning to show the saints what it would take to build a city like Enoch’s.

**Orson Pratt**

It was called a city of holiness, for God came down and dwelt with that people; he was in their midst, they beheld his glory, they saw his face, and he condescended to dwell among them for many long years, during which time they were instructed and taught in all of his ways … [and] when they were fully prepared, having learned the doctrine of translation, were caught up into the heavens, the whole city. (JD 17:147.) (Hoyt W. Brewster, Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], “Zion of Enoch”)

**DC 38:7 I am in your midst and ye cannot see me**

See commentary for D&C 6:32.

**Bruce R. McConkie**

[The Lord] is in our midst from time to time, and we as a people do not see him nearly as often as we should. We are not speaking of him being in our midst in the spiritual sense that he is here by the power of his Spirit. We are speaking of his personal literal presence. (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 611.)

**Bruce C. Hafen**

[**Neal A. Maxwell**] said that in recent years, on perhaps a half dozen occasions, he had the experience of sensing that “the Spirit of our Heavenly Father was especially present” in a conference or other meeting where he had spoken…He believed…”that the Lord was with us and approved” what was happening… (*A Disciple’s Life: The Biography of Neal A. Maxwell*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2002], 448)

**Harold B. Lee**

There has come to me in these last few days a deepening and reassuring faith. I can't leave this conference without saying to you that I have a conviction that the Master hasn't been absent from us on these occasions. This is his church. Where else would he rather be than right here at the headquarters of his church? He isn't an absentee master; he is concerned about us. He wants us to follow where he leads. (*Conference Report*, *October 1972,* p. 176.)

**Harold B. Lee**

He's in our midst; we can't always see Him, but we can feel His presence, if we're only living as we ought to live and keeping His commandments. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee,*edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 5.)

**DC 38:9 Behold, the kingdom is yours, and the enemy shall not overcome**

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

I have faith in that. He has given to us the kingdom. He has made us the promise that the enemy of the kingdom shall not overcome. We may have trouble. We have find trouble. We may meet with opposition, but that opposition shall fail in its endeavor to destroy the work of God. (*Conference Report, April 1927*, Afternoon Meeting 109.)

**DC 38:10 ye are clean, but not all**

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

The Lord could not say he was well pleased with all the members of the Church. For, even then, as now, there were some in the Church who were not clean. Nevertheless he did declare this Church was the only one with which he was well pleased… It is only natural, since he did establish his Church, to speak of it in the terms which he did and while expressing satisfaction with the organization as a whole yet point out forcibly the fact that there were in the Church some tares guilty of sin. (*Conference Report, April 1927*, Afternoon Meeting 109.)

**Neal A. Maxwell**

The cleaner we become, the more conscious we are of the remaining dirt… Cleansing circumstances are to be welcomed even if the scrubbing is painful. (*A Wonderful Flood of Light*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990], 94.)

**DC 38:12 angels are waiting the great command to reap down the earth**

**Wilford Woodruff**

The angels of God are waiting to fulfill the great commandment given forty-five years ago, to go forth and reap down the earth because of the wickedness of men. How do you think eternity feels today? Why there is more wickedness, a thousand times over, in the United States now, than when that revelation was given. The whole earth is ripe in iniquity; and these inspired men, these Elders of Israel, have been commanded of the Almighty to go forth and warn the world, that their garments may be clear of the blood of all men.

I tell you that God will not disappoint Zion or Babylon, the heavens or the earth, in regard to the judgment which he has promised in these last days, but every one of them will have its fulfillment upon the heads of the children of men; and when they are fully ripened in iniquity the nations of the earth will be swept away as with the besom of destruction. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 18: 128.)

**Marion G. Romney**

[In 1896], **President Woodruff,** then the mouthpiece of the Almighty on the earth, said:

I want to bear testimony...that the day is come when those angels are privileged to go forth and commence their work. They are laboring in the United States of America; they are laboring among the nations of the earth; and they will continue.... We need not marvel or wonder at anything that is transpiring in the earth... We cannot draw a veil over the events that await this generation. No man that is inspired by the spirit and power of God can close his ears, his eyes or his lips to these things. (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 58, pp. 738-9, Nov. 10, 1896.)

In confirmation of this testimony, the tempo of wickedness and destruction has been greatly accelerated since President Woodruff spoke those words, and so has the gathering in of the wheat. Even now the tares are binding themselves in bundles, making ready for the field to be burned. (*Conference Report, October 1966*, Second Day—Morning Meeting 53.)

**Neal A. Maxwell**

Years ago, I wondered over the scriptural imagery of angels waiting “day and night” for “the great command” to come down and reap the tares in a wicked and suffering world; it seemed rather eager to me. (See D&C 38:12; D&C 86:5.) Given such massive, needless human suffering, I don’t wonder anymore!

Even so, the final reaping will occur only when the Father determines that the world is “fully ripe.” (D&C 86:7.) Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, the challenge is surviving spiritually in a deteriorating “wheat and tares” world. (See D&C 86:7.) …we must not be intimidated or lose our composure even though the once morally unacceptable is becoming acceptable. (“Behold, the Enemy Is Combined,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 76)

**DC 38:13 I show unto you a mystery, a thing which is had in secret chambers**

Enemies to the Prophet were already plotting his death (see v. 28-31). Satan’s secret weapon is his secret combinations. Already, only nine months after the church was organized, Satan’s forces were entrenched and encircling. The Lord declared, “behold the enemy is combined.” (v. 12) “But if ye are prepared ye shall not fear.” (v. 30) We must never forget the Lord’s power to deliver his servants from Satan’s grasp.

“…the Lord cautioned the early elders: ‘Behold, the enemy is combined. And now I show unto you a mystery, a thing which is had in secret chambers, to bring to pass even your destruction in process of time, and ye knew it not’ (verses 12-13).

“The devil will never let you go unnoticed or unchallenged. From the many accounts written by missionaries, I have marveled that the Lord has so constantly watched over his missionaries. Some missionaries were warned to flee their apartments in the middle of the night. Others were prompted to stay at a member's home longer than usual, thus avoiding physical harm from a pending disaster. Others have talked about being prompted to leave investigators' homes, take alternative routes, or make phone calls that interrupted suicide attempts—and the list goes on.

“Very often it is not evident at the time why we are prompted to do certain things. People may laugh and mock our attempts to be sensitive to the Spirit. Sometimes we never find out what the Lord was protecting us from. Other times we learn why we behaved as we did. Given the number of missionaries who have recorded how they on occasion did not heed the promptings of the Spirit and then suffered as a result, I have a firm testimony that the Lord's promised blessings—including those of protective watch care (see D&C 84:42, 88).” (Randy L. Bott, *Serve with Honor: Helps for Missionaries* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 29.)

**DC 38:18 a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey**

A land “flowing with milk and honey” has great herds of cattle and goats to produce milk. The land also has honeybees to fertilize all the orchards. “The reference to a land flowing with milk and honey is ‘a proverbial expression indicating fertility and abundance’ (Dummelow, 51). It is found in the Old Testament and is descriptive of the land of promise into which Jehovah led the children of Israel (Ex. 3:8; Lev. 20:24; Jer. 11:5).” (Hoyt W. Brewster, Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 311.)

Even though the commandment given at this conference was to move to Ohio, the Lord is referring to the New Jerusalem in verses 18-21. The move to Ohio was preparatory, anticipating the redemption of Zion in Jackson County, Missouri.

**Orson Pratt**

He did not reveal to us the central portion of our land of promise on that conference day, but told us it should be revealed at a future time. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 21: 329 - 331.)

**Orson Pratt**

This did not mean that we should come in possession at that time, or in 1831; but when we had proved ourselves as wise stewards, and had rendered up the account of our stewardship, and had been accepted, then we should receive an inheritance, not only in time, but while eternity should endure. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 16: 158 - 159.)

**DC 38:18 there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh**

To say that “there shall be no curse when the Lord” comes certainly implies that there *will* indeed be a curse prior to that eventful day. After all the persecutions suffered at the hands of the Missourians, the Lord, through his servants, brought a curse upon the inhabitants of Jackson County. This curse will no longer be in force when the Lord comes.

**George A. Smith**

[After suffering many persecutions in Jackson County] some of the High Council of Missouri stepped into the stand, and, as righteous Noah did when he awoke from his wine, commenced to curse their enemies. You never felt such a shock go through any house or company in the world as went through that… the spirit of cursing was with men who had been driven from Missouri by mob violence. Yet every word that they prophesied has been fulfilled. They prophesied that the bones of many of those murderers should bleach on the prairie, and that birds should pick out their eyes, and beasts devour their flesh. Men who have traversed the plains of Mexico, California, Nebraska, and Kansas, have often seen the fulfilment of that prophecy in the most marvellous manner. We have seen their names upon trees, on the heads of old trunks, and bits of boards; the names of men that I knew, and I knew just as well, in the Kirtland Temple, what would be their fate. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 2: 217.)

**Joseph Smith**

Let the government of Missouri redress the wrongs she has done to the Saints, or let the curse follow them from generation to generation until they do. (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* 5: 211.)

**DC 38:19-20 the land of your inheritance…ye shall possess it again in eternity**

**Orson Pratt**

We were commanded to purchase the land [in Missouri] for the time being; for it was to be signally our land of promise, and our children's land of promise, while the earth should stand, and then they should have it to all eternity.

We are at present cast out of that land, the same as the Israelites were in the land of Egypt, being away from their promised land. We are here in these mountain valleys. It is a goodly land which the Lord has pointed out for us. We are making preparation for our great redemption to go back to the promised land, the same as the Israelites are to gather back to their promised land. And a further promise is made unto us, in this connection, that when the time shall come, the Lord will raise up a man like unto Moses who shall deliver this people out of bondage, the same as the children of Israel, their fathers, were delivered. And he tells us that he will do this with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And he also says, that his angels shall go before us, and also his presence. Here then is a promise made to the Latter-day Saints, that the presence of the Lord, as well as his angels, should go before their camp.

I mention these things to show you what the Lord intends to bestow upon you, that your hearts may not faint… (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 19: 18 - 19.)

**Orson Pratt**

I expect that when we go from these mountains, by hundreds of thousands, down to that land to purchase it and to occupy it, that we will take with us a great deal of gold and silver—for the Lord will in those days make his people very rich, in fulfilment of another promise made in the same revelation, in which he says, that we shall become the richest of all people. If this is to be the case, the Lord will probably fulfill that prediction by Isaiah contained in the 60th chapter of his book—“for brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stone iron;” and he will bestow upon his people riches that they will not know what to do with them, unless directed by the counsels of the servants of the living God. With this we will purchase the land, and go down and inherit it, as a strong and powerful people, receiving our stewardships. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 21: 152.)

**DC 38:21-22 I will be your king and watch over you**

Americans argue that democracy is the best form of government. Foreign policy is based on the propagation and encouragement of democratic forms of government throughout the world. However, democracy is by no means the best form of government. When the Lord comes and takes the government upon his shoulders, he will establish a perfect system. We may call it a royal theocracy or divine monarchy, wherein Jesus Christ rules and reigns as king and protector.

“Laws that individuals are given, and the manner in which they are enforced, influence the state and situation of nations and peoples. Christ revealed that “in time ye shall have no king nor ruler, for I will be your king and watch over you. Wherefore, hear my voice and follow me, and you shall be a free people, and ye shall have no laws but my laws when I come, for I am your law-giver” (D&C 38:21-22). The peace that will exist during the Millennium will be due, in part, to the fact that Jesus Christ will reign in righteousness on the earth during this time period. He will give laws that are based on righteous eternal principles which lead to happiness and eternal life. These laws have the power to make the obedient free from sin and error. They will live in peace and have the opportunity to progress toward becoming like the Savior.” (Sperry Symposium *Voices of Old Testament Prophets: The 26th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 66.)

**DC 38:24-25 let every man esteem his brother as himself**

“How often do we judge people on a first impression? Has a new neighbor ever moved in across the street, and when we see him or her smoking in the yard, do we decide that there’s no point in getting to know that person after all?

“’Let every man esteem his brother as himself,’ the Lord said, not once but twice, in section 38 of the Doctrine and Covenants. (D&C 38:24–25.) He didn’t qualify it with the words ‘unless he’s overweight’ or ‘unless he’s less educated than you’ or ‘unless he makes more money than you.’ (Heidi Holfeltz Parker, “Am I What I Appear to Be?” *Ensign*, Oct. 1991, 29)

**Anthon H. Lund**

If one man shall acquire more of this world's goods than another, let it not lift him up and make him feel that that makes him better than his brother. Remember that the Lord withstands the proud; and purse pride I think is meaner than any other pride. Yet it is natural to us. There should not arise class distinctions among the Latter-day Saints. I do not believe there is much of this; but at certain times there seems to be a little more of it in our midst than there ought to be. The other day I had the pleasure of attending a reception given our president on his birthday by the workers in the Temple. I was pleased to be present and feel the spirit there. In talking with one of our Bishops. I remarked how pleasant it was to see those who had not any of this world's goods mingling with those who had, as brethren and sisters, and he said, “I have heard some say that we have class distinctions in our midst, and men who have riches are accused of feeling above their brethren; but I have never felt anything of that kind.” Now, that man has plenty of this world's goods, but he did not feel that wealth exalted him above his brethren, I believe that as a general thing the possession of wealth has a tendency to lift men up. If the Lord blesses us with temporal riches they should not have this effect upon us. It may not be the fault altogether of those who have means that there sometimes arise lines of distinction between them and their poorer brethren. We who have not much of this world's goods are not entirely free from pride: if for instance, our brother with whom we have been well acquainted, and who has acquired more means than we have, happens to pass us without noticing us, though he does it unthinkingly, we are apt to judge him harshly and say to ourselves that because he has a little more means than we have he will not notice us now. He may be entirely innocent, yet we nurture this feeling, and we become estranged from one another. This should not be. We should love one another, and be one. You do not see any class distinction between those who labor in the Temples. (*Conference Report, April 1901*, Afternoon Session 20 - 21.)

**DC 38:27 be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine**

**Richard G. Scott**

Satan would segregate Father’s children into groups with strongly held individual interests. He would encourage a tenacious preservation of those interests regardless of the consequences to others. Father’s plan is expressed in His Son’s words, “Behold, … I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). (“Removing Barriers to Happiness,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 86)

**Dallin H. Oaks**

Jesus did not pray that His followers would be “diverse.” He prayed that they would be “one.” Modern revelation does not say, “Be diverse; and if ye are not diverse, ye are not mine.” It says, “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). (“News of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 119)

**Spencer W. Kimball**

If the Spirit of the Lord is to magnify our labors, then this spirit of oneness and cooperation must be the prevailing spirit in all that we do. Moreover, when we do so, we are told by the **Prophet Joseph Smith** that “the greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always come from faithfulness and concentrated effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise.” (“Becoming the Pure in Heart,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1985, 5)

**Stephen L. Richards**

Our unanimity of thought and action does not arise, as some suppose, from duress or compulsion in any form. Our accord comes from universal agreement with righteous principles and common response to the operation of the Spirit of our Father. It is actuated by no fear except one. That is the fear of offending God, the Author of our work. (*Conference Report*, October 1938, p. 116.)

**Marion G. Romney**

Some members assume that one can be in full harmony with the spirit of the gospel, enjoy full fellowship in the Church, and at the same time be out of harmony with the leaders of the Church and the counsel and direction they give. Such a position is wholly inconsistent, because the guidance of this Church comes not alone from the written word but also from continuous revelation, and the Lord gives that revelation to the Church through his chosen prophet. It follows, therefore, that those who profess to accept the gospel and who at the same time criticize and refuse to follow the counsel of the prophet are assuming an indefensible position. Such a spirit leads to apostasy. It is not new. It was prevalent in the days of Jesus and in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. (“Unity,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 17)

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

This great unity is the hallmark of the true church of Christ. It is felt among our people throughout the world. As we are one, we are his… We pray for our prophet dear, whom we love and honor. We pray for one another that we may go on in unity and strength. If we do so, no power beneath the heavens can stop the onward progress of this great kingdom. (“Except Ye Are One,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 5)

**DC 38:28 the enemy in the secret chambers seeketh your lives**

If these secret combinations had resulted in a murderous attempt on Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, history would have recorded their wicked deed. However, because of the Lord’s preemptive warning, we don’t know precisely who it was that was plotting their deaths. John Whitmer records that when Joseph and Sidney went to the Colesville area to preach after the conference the people were particularly hateful and manifested a murderous spirit.

**John Whitmer**

When Sidney and the revelator arrived there, they held prayer meetings among the disciples, and they also held public meetings, but it was all in vain; they threatened to kill them. Therefore, they knew that they were not fit for the kingdom of God, and well nigh ripe for destruction. The Spirit of the Lord fell upon Sidney, and he spoke with boldness, and he preached the gospel in its purity; but they laughed him to scorn, he being filled, with the Holy Spirit, he cried aloud, “O ye heavens give ear and ye angels attend, I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ that this people is sealed up to everlasting destruction.” And immediately he left them and escaped out of their hands. And his enemies were astonished and amazed at the doctrines which he preached, for they taught as men having authority and not as hireling priests. (*The Book of John Whitmer,* typescript, [Provo: BYU Archives and Manuscripts], chap. 1)

**Wilford Woodruff**

Should we fear because men, in their secret chambers, concoct plans to overthrow the kingdom of God? We should not. There is one thing we should do, and that is, pray to God. Every righteous man has done this…(*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 15: 278.)

**Wilford Woodruff**

Those who lay their plans in secret chambers to seek the blood of the Prophets, will have their case attended to by messengers on the other side of the vail, ministers will be sent to them who will render unto them a righteous judgment there. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 4: 150.)

**DC 38:29 ye hear of wars in far countries…but ye know not the hearts of men in your own land**

In 1831, the United States seemed secure enough, hearing of wars only in foreign countries, but bloodshed would soon change that. When the American Civil War started, it was only the beginning of the era when “war will be poured out upon all nations.” (D&C 87:2) In 1863, amidst the middle of this conflict, Wilford Woodruff saw the fulfillment of this prophecy.

**Wilford Woodruff**

Thirty years ago it was said unto us, You hear of wars in foreign countries, but you do not know the hearts of men in your own land, for you shall soon have greater wars in your own land, &c.

How is it, my friends, is there trouble in the eastern countries? What means this crowding of our streets with emigrants to the west? The Lord God has spoken through his Prophet; his words have been recorded, and he is backing up the testimony of his servants in fulfillment of his word; and the end is not yet. War and distress of nations has only just commenced, and famine and pestilence will follow on the heels of war, and there will be great mourning, and weeping, and lamentations in the land, and no power can stay the work of desolation and utter overthrow of the wicked.

More than twenty-five years ago I wrote a revelation which Joseph Smith gave, where in he said that the rebellion should commence in South Carolina, and from that, war should spread through this nation and continue to spread until war should be poured out upon all nations and great calamity and distraction should await them… We know these things are coming, and because of them we are here in Utah, and the Devil and the wicked do not like it. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 10: 219.)

**Neal A. Maxwell**

In our time we don't understand fully the hearts of some of our countrymen, either. Nor do many see fully the implications of social fragmentation and the diminution of the family. It is all made even worse because of evils and designs in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days—and not just those pertaining to the tycoons of tobacco and alcohol (see D&C 89:4)…[These things] are merely indicative of what is to be endured by the faithful. (*If Thou Endure It Well*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 17.)

**DC 38:30** **if ye are prepared ye shall not fear**

**L. Tom Perry**

On a daily basis we witness widely fluctuating inflation; wars; interpersonal conflicts; national disasters; variances in weather conditions; innumerable forces of immorality, crime, and violence; attacks and pressures on the family and individuals; technological advances that make occupations obsolete; and so on. The need for preparation is abundantly clear. The great blessing of being prepared gives us freedom from fear, as guaranteed to us by the Lord in the Doctrine and Covenants: “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30).

Just as it is important to prepare ourselves spiritually, we must also prepare ourselves for our temporal needs. Each of us needs to take the time to ask ourselves, What preparation should I make to care for my needs and the needs of my family?

We have been instructed for years to follow at least four requirements in preparing for that which is to come.

First, gain an adequate education. Learn a trade or a profession to enable you to obtain steady employment that will provide remuneration sufficient to care for yourself and your family…

Second, live strictly within your income and save something for a rainy day. Incorporate in your lives the discipline of budgeting that which the Lord has blessed you with. As regularly as you pay your tithing, set aside an amount needed for future family requirements…

Third, avoid excessive debt…It is so easy to allow consumer debt to get out of hand. If you do not have the discipline to control the use of credit cards, it is better not to have them. A well-managed family does not pay interest—it earns it. The definition I received from a wise boss at one time in my early business career was “Thems that understands interest receives it, thems that don’t pays it.”

Fourth, acquire and store a reserve of food and supplies that will sustain life. Obtain clothing and build a savings account on a sensible, well-planned basis that can serve well in times of emergency. As long as I can remember, we have been taught to prepare for the future and to obtain a year’s supply of necessities. I would guess that the years of plenty have almost universally caused us to set aside this counsel. I believe the time to disregard this counsel is over. (“If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 35-36)

**DC 38:31-32 that ye might escape the power of the enemy**

“The Lord herein gave the Prophet four specific reasons for his going to Ohio: (1) a place to escape the power of the enemy (Satan and his co-workers), (2) the first gathering place for the Saints in this dispensation, (3) revelation of the law, (4) an endowment with power from on high. Within a few weeks after arriving in Kirtland, the Prophet saw all these promises fulfilled, except the last. He was to wait five years to receive that portion of the Lord's promise. “ (Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black, eds., *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith,*p.92 – 93)

**DC 38:32 for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio**

**Alvin R. Dyer**

As early as January, 1831, at Fayette, New York, looking forward to the erection of a temple unto the Most High in Ohio, and of ordinances to be performed therein, this revealed statement from the Lord concerning the endowment was given to Joseph Smith: “for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law (D&C 42); and there you shall be endowed with power from on high.”

At Kirtland, Ohio, in December of the following year, the Lord gave the commandment to the Prophet Joseph Smith and his followers to “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, (temple) even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.” (D&C 88:119) One of the purposes for the erection of a temple at Kirtland, Ohio, the first in this present dispensation of the gospel, was to bless the faithful saints with the sacred ordinance of the endowment. While the temple was in process of erection, the Lord again refers to the blessing of the endowment: “But inasmuch as there are those who have hearkened unto my words, I have prepared a blessing and an endowment for them, if they continue faithful.” (D&C 105:18) (Alvin R. Dyer, *Who Am I?,* p.376 – 377)

**Orson Pratt**

The Lord told us, when we were living in the State of New York, to go to the Ohio; there to build a Temple to the name of the Most High. And there the Lord condescended to bestow upon his servants and people a great endowment, a blessing such as was not known among the children of men. And from thence they should go the nations of the earth, and publish these tidings. We went to the Ohio; and after we had been sufficiently taught and instructed, the Lord commanded us through Joseph, to build a Temple, giving the pattern thereof, and the size thereof, the size of the inner and outer courts, the size of the several rooms and apartments, and the form of the pulpits and everything pertaining to it, was given by the inspiration of the Almighty that rested upon Joseph, and upon those associated with him. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols., 19:, p.16)

**DC 38:32 there you shall be endowed with power from on high**

To receive the endowment is clothed upon with a gift of spiritual power which protects the faithful from the power of the adversary. It applies not only to some future blessing but more especially to the everyday battle with evil. Once a saint has received the gift of the Holy Ghost, what could possibly be a greater blessing? Therefore, even though the church was in its first year and still quite weak—even though there were not even 400 members—still the Lord had in mind to endow the saints. Satan had a mind to destroy them. The Lord had a mind to protect and empower them.

When the Kirtland temple was finally dedicated in 1836, the saints received a portion of that endowment which would empower them to move the kingdom forward. In that temple, the full endowment was not revealed, but therein they received their washings and anointings. (see Donald Q. Cannon, Larry E. Dahl, and John W. Welch, “The Restoration of Major Doctrines through Joseph Smith: Priesthood, the Word of God, and the Temple,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1989, 11)

“While instructing the Saints, the Prophet said that the endowment was a special gift of knowledge derived by revelation and was a gift of power emitted from God. This gift included learning principles of obedience and other laws of God and was in part designed to help missionaries serve with greater effectiveness. Although the Prophet taught that many of the brethren would not comprehend the endowment, he told bearers of the priesthood to prepare for this gift by purifying themselves, by cleansing their hearts and physical bodies. ‘You need an endowment, brethren,’ he added, ‘in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things.’ After instructing the Saints for about three months (in 1836), the Prophet concluded that the bearers of the priesthood had received ‘all the necessary ceremonies’ relating to that endowment. He then challenged those who had received the gift to ‘go forth and build the kingdom of God.’”  (Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 1: The Doctrine and Covenants*, p.418)

**DC 38:35 they shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief**

“The Lord commanded the Saints in 19th-century New York, for example, to make sure that they took care of the poor and unfortunate among them. He also commanded them in the same revelation to be united, for if they were not one they were not his people. He gave these commandments to them as they were preparing to leave New York to go to Ohio in 1831. This was the first step in gathering to Zion in Jackson County, Missouri. Within eight months of these instructions some of these members were already in Independence. Two years later mobs drove them out. Subsequently the Lord explained in a revelation the reason he had allowed this to happen: they had not done as he had instructed—they were not taking care of the unfortunate, and they were not united.

“Thus it would appear that taking care of the unfortunate and being united according to the model of the celestial kingdom are high on the Lord’s list of expectations for his people. When we covenant with him to sacrifice and to consecrate ourselves and all we have to his service, we need to make these covenants manifest in our lives.” (Robert J. Woodford, “The Remarkable Doctrine and Covenants,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1997, 47)

**DC 38:37 they that have farms…**

The Lord was very practical about what members should do with their farms. In essence, he said, “you can sell them, you can rent them, or you can just leave them.” Now to leave them without recompense would be a trial for anyone. However, the Lord doesn’t worry about such things because he knows that the saints will receive all that and more eventually. Such is the meaning of the phrase, “all these things shall be gathered unto the bosom of the church.” The Lord has said, “every one that hath forsaken houses…for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” (Matt. 19:29) The Lord fully intends to pay back those saints who should sacrifice for his name’s sake.

“In December 1830, the Church was commanded to ‘assemble together at the Ohio.’ (D&C 37:3.) Newel Knight said that this entailed the sacrifice of their property. Newel sold 60 acres, Freeborn DeMille 61 acres, Aaron Culver 100 acres, and Father Knight 140 acres, with ‘two Dwelling Houses, a good barn, and a fine orchard.’ Led by Newel, sixty-two Knight kin moved to Ohio as part of the first gathering. Unlike other Church units, the Colesville Branch remained intact.” (William G. Hartley, “The Knight Family: Ever Faithful to the Prophet,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1989, 46)

“Between the end of January and the middle of May 1831, most of the New York Saints sold their possessions, packed their most precious material goods, and migrated to Kirtland and the adjacent areas.” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 1989 Institute Manual, p. 91)

**Brigham Young**

Those who had farms and stores were instructed to sell out, to forsake all, to give to the poor, and to impart of their substance to sustain this elder, clothe another elder, and to send another on his mission, which they did, and up they got, and to the Ohio and to the Missouri they moved. What other people would have done this? They are not to be found in Christendom. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols., 12:, p.102 – 103)

**DC 38:39 if ye seek the riches…ye shall be the richest of all people**

**John Taylor**

I will promise the Latter-day Saints that if they will go into these things allowing God to dictate in the interests of Israel and the building up of his Zion on the earth, and take themselves and their individual interests out of the question, feeling they are acting for him and his kingdom, they will become the wealthiest of all people, and God will bless them and pour out wealth and intelligence and all the blessings that earth can afford. (*Journal of Discourses,* vol. 20, p. 164)

**Lorenzo Snow**

When this people deed over their property, they understand what they are about; they know that they will eventually be exalted to possess all that is desirable—the land, the houses, the vineyards, the cattle, the gold, the silver, and all the riches of the heavens and of the earth. The Lord says, All these things are mine; and because of the willingness of my people, all will be restored back to me; and then I will put them in possession of all the riches of eternity. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 5: 65)

**DC 38:39 but beware of pride lest ye become as the Nephites of old**

“Let us note that, although the Lord can bestow on us ‘the riches of the earth,’ the riches he most wants to bless us with are ‘the riches of eternity.’ As he counsels elsewhere, ‘Seek not for riches, but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.’ (D&C 6:7.)

“One of the problems with material wealth is that it sometimes corrupts those who have it. It is for this reason that the Lord’s promise of riches in section 38 cited above ends with the warning: ‘But beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old.’ (D&C 38:39.)

“If we set our minds on the ‘treasures of earth’ rather than on the things of eternity, we will lose our spirituality and begin to rely on our own wisdom. Indeed, it was the Nephites’ pride and lust for riches and their failure to dedicate their blessings to the Lord’s work that stirred Jacob to condemn them for failing to ‘think of [their] brethren like unto [them]selves’ and for not being ‘familiar with all and free with [their] substance.’ (Jacob 2:17.)” (Alan Webster, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1990, 52–53)

“Some fall victim to greed when they think that the Lord and his church are failing them economically. Paul describes the result in his love-of-money passage: ‘They have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.’ (1 Tim. 6:10.)

“… Our greed begins when we think more about what God owes us than what we owe him. The Lord has promised the faithful the ‘riches of eternity.’ We should be content with that promise and serve for the joy of serving.” (Richard Tice, “Greed: When Enough Is Not Enough,” *Ensign*, June 1989, 34)

**Theodore M. Burton**

Wealth is given us as a holy trust, not to be used for ourselves alone but to assist others. How deadly prideful it is to have wealth, position, and influence and not to share with others less fortunate those gifts God has given us. (“A Disease Called Pride,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1971, 28)

**DC 38:41 let your preaching be the warning voice…in mildness and meekness**

“In our strong desire to influence people, we sometimes do things that make it difficult for them to understand our message and feel the Spirit. We cannot control how people will react, but we can try to avoid doing things that could offend them.

“When bearing my testimony, I do not want to come across as condescending, or as someone who feels he is more spiritual and righteous than the other person. The Lord tells us to preach (testify) ‘in mildness and in meekness.’ (D&C 38:41.) I have been tempted at times to be dramatic, to speak in a ‘spiritual’ tone of voice, to gesture with my hands, to lean closer to the other person, and so on. That kind of behavior sometimes makes people feel uneasy.

“We are promised that if we testify sincerely and in meekness, ‘the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever [we] shall say.’ (D&C 100:8.) I seem to be most effective when I trust this promise while sharing in a natural style and voice my feelings about the Church.” (Steve F. Gilliland, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, June 1993, 62)

**DC 38:42 Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord**

**James E. Faust**

As members of the Church and particularly as holders of the priesthood, we believe in being chaste. There is no different or double standard for moral cleanliness for men and women in the Church. In fact, I believe holders of the priesthood have a greater responsibility to maintain standards of chastity before  marriage and fidelity after marriage. The Lord has said, “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” This means being pure in thought as well as in deed. The **Prophet Joseph Smith**stated, “If we would come before God, we must keep ourselves pure, as He is pure.” If husband and wife will remain pure and chaste, completely devoted to each other during the storms and sunshine of life, their love for one another will deepen into something of supernal fulfillment. An early LDS Apostle, **Parley P. Pratt**, said, “From this union of affection, springs all the other relationships, social joys and affections diffused through every branch of human existence.” (“We Seek After These Things,”*Ensign*, May 1998, 44–45)