

Introducing the Doctrine and Covenants

Lesson 1

What is the “Doctrine” and “Covenants”?

- The “Doctrine” was the Lectures on Faith that formed part One of the 1835 edition
- The “Covenants” were revelations that formed part two of the 1835 edition (Revelation is knowledge given from God to man)
- It is the text by which we shall be judged
- It is a compilation of revelations, an account of the martyrdom, statements of policy, prayers (109), minutes of a high council meeting (107), and letters and epistles (124, 85)

The Doctrine and Covenants was received by:

- Personal Visitation: Heavenly messengers, angels, and resurrected beings delivered messages. The messengers included: Moroni (Section 2), John the Baptist (Section 13), an angel (section 27), Moses, Elias, Elijah, and the Savior (Section 110).
- Urim and Thummim: Some of the earlier revelations such as 3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17.
- Open Vision: Section 76 is a prime example of an open vision providing revelation
- Voice: D&C 130 was a prophecy declared by “a voice”
- Inspiration and confirmation: Through the spirit of prophecy and revelation, the “still, small voice” (D&C 85:6) and the Spirit act directly on the mind, providing inspired thoughts and ideas. This was the most frequent method by which the contents of the Doctrine and Covenants were received.

Editions of the Doctrine and Covenants

- The “Article and Covenants” was essentially Section 20.
- The “Book of the Law of the Lord” was a further compilation of revelations which was published in the Evening and Morning Star
- The “Book of Commandments” was compiled in 1833.
 - Most copies and the printing press were destroyed by a mob
 - 65 chapters—all revelations—were published in one part
 - Section 1 was given by the Lord for the preface
 - Some 3,000 copies were to be printed
 - It measured 2.5 x 4 x 0.5 inches thick
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1835 edition was
 - Printed in Kirtland, Ohio
 - Divided into two parts
 - Composed of 102 sections and the Lectures on Faith (theological lessons)
 - Section 133 was inserted in the appendix of the book
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1844 edition:
 - Printed in Nauvoo, Illinois
 - Contained 111 sections as well as the Lectures on Faith
 - Followed the two-part order of the 1835 edition
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1876 edition was
 - Composed of 136 sections and the Lectures on Faith
 - Sections 2, 13, 77, 85, 87, 108-111, 113-118, 120-123, 125, 126, 129-132, and 136 were added after Joseph Smith’s death
 - The first edition printed in Utah
 - Divided by Elder Orson Pratt into short verses with footnotes and references in 1879
 - The first in which Section 132 replaced Section 109 on marriage (109 was omitted)

- The Doctrine and Covenants 1908 edition
 - Included the “Manifesto”, which was added to the back of the book. It officially replaced the teaching of section 132.
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1921 edition
 - Removed the Lectures on Faith
 - Included headings and footings by Elder James E. Talmage
- The Doctrine and Covenants 1981 edition
 - Added sections 137-138
 - Added Official Declaration 2 (all worthy male members could now hold the priesthood)
 - Updated headings and enhanced cross references

Individuals involved in receiving the revelations and visions included:

- Joseph Smith, Jr.
- Brigham Young—Section 136
- Oliver Cowdrey—Section 134
- John Taylor—Section 135
- Wilford Woodruff—The “Manifesto”
- Lorenzo Snow—Affirmation of the “Manifesto”
- Joseph F. Smith—Section 138
- Spencer W. Kimball—Official Declaration 2

The Importance of the Doctrine and Covenants is stated in the following scriptures:

- D&C 1:37. It contains commandments from the Lord
- D&C 11:22; 26:1. It tells us what we should study
- D&C 18:33-36 tells us the source of the words
- D&C 33:16 tells us why the Lord gave us the scriptures
- D&C 42:12-13 reveals the sources from which the missionaries should teach
- D&C 84:60-61 command us to receive these words
- D&C 88:66 tells us the D&C contains truth
- D&C 88:76-78 teach us what we should learn from studying the D&C
- D&C 88:118 concerns teaching and learning

Selected verses of D&C section 1 for discussion include:

- D&C 1:14, 38 which emphasize the Lord’s speaking and our hearing
- D&C 1:16 warns us against walking in our own way
- D&C 1:23 tells the 18-month-old, 680-member Church that the gospel would be proclaimed to the ends of the world
- D&C 1:17-23 contains prophecies being fulfilled in our lifetime
- D&C 1:19, 23 teach that the Lord uses weak and simple servants for great works
- D&C 1:24-28 promises that weak and simple servants become strong
- D&C 1:24-28 contains teachings about the purposes of the revelations in the D&C
- D&C 1:3, 13, 33 warn of the consequences of being rebellious and disobedient
- D&C 1:32 tells us how to find favor with the Lord
- D&C 1:37 teaches that *searching* the scriptures is different than just *reading* them

“Behold, I Am Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World”

Lesson 2

Elder Boyd K. Packer: “[The Atonement of Jesus Christ] *is the very root of Christian doctrine. You may know much about the gospel as it branches out from there, but if you only know the branches and those branches do not touch that root, if they have been cut free from that truth, there will be no life nor substance nor redemption in them*” (Ensign, May 1977, 56). The Atonement of Jesus Christ brings life and gives meaning to all other doctrines of the true gospel.

The Doctrine and Covenants is another—modern dispensation—testimony of Jesus Christ

- A major purpose of all scripture is to testify of the Savior. Scripture is intended to persuade individuals to come unto the Savior and accept the salvation offered through His Atonement. While the Bible, the books of Moses and Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price, and the Book of Mormon are ancient witnesses of the Christ, the Doctrine and Covenants testifies that in our present day that He lives, He is the Savior of the World, He stands at the head of the Church, He speaks to His chosen servants—the prophets, and He guides His people today just as He did in biblical and Book of Mormon times.
- **D&C 50:41-44; 76:22-24.** The Doctrine and Covenants testifies powerfully of the Savior and His work. Most testimonies are directly from the Savior himself.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ allows us to come unto Christ, sincerely repent, and be forgiven.

- Think of Christ in Gethsemane and as He suffered on the cross. The D&C contains revelations which help us understand what He endured and why.
 - D&C 19:16-19 contains the Savior’s own description of His suffering in Gethsemane
 - D&C 18:10-11; 19:19, 24; and 34:3 help us understand why He was willing to suffer for us.
- Through His Atonement, we will all be resurrected.
 - D&C 88:14-16; 93:33; and Alma 11:42-43 explain that resurrection is the redemption of the soul. The spirit and body are reunited, inseparably connected in a perfect form.
 - D&C 88:18. Resurrection prepares us for celestial glory.
 - D&C 93:33. Resurrection is necessary for us to receive a fullness of joy.
 - Alma 11:44. All people will be resurrected.
- Through His Atonement, we can be forgiven of our sins and inherit celestial glory
 - D&C 18:11-12. We can repent of our sins and come unto the Savior.
 - D&C 19:16-17, 20. If we repent, Christ takes upon Himself the suffering for our sins.
 - D&C 58:42. When we repent, the Lord forgives us and remembers our sins no more.
 - D&C 76:62-70. We are eligible to rise in the first resurrection, be perfected through Christ, and inherit celestial glory.
- Through His Atonement, the Savior gained perfect empathy for our sorrows and afflictions
 - D&C 122:1-8 (given in Liberty Jail). The first 7 verses recount Joseph Smith’s trials, while verse 8 refers to the Savior’s trials.
 - Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said: “*When...difficult times come to us, we can remember that Jesus had to descend below all things before He could ascend above them, and that He suffered pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind that He might be filled with mercy and know how to succor (help) His people in their infirmities*” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 69).

We should ponder ways in which we can show our appreciation to our Savior for His sacrifice and suffering on our behalf.

- As we study the D&C, we gain an improved understanding of Christ's roles and attributes
- According to Joseph Smith, we must possess "*a correct idea of his character, perfections, and attributes*" (Joseph Smith, comp. Lectures on Faith [1985], 38) before we may properly exercise faith in Him. The D&C helps us understand our Father and His Son.

Attributes of the Savior that can be found in the scriptures we have read today include charity, obedience, humility, and submissiveness.

The following also highlight and help us recognize the Savior's attributes and His roles:

- D&C 6:20-21. If we are faithful and diligent, the Savior will encircle us in the arms of His love. He is the light that shines in darkness.
- D&C 6:32-37. He offers us protection and comfort and is ready to bless us when we remember Him and obey His commandments.
- D&C 19:1-3. Having done the will of the Father, He has subdued all things and retained all power. He will destroy Satan and his works. He will judge all people according to their deeds.
- D&C 29:1-2. His arm of mercy has atoned for our sins. If we hearken to His voice and humble ourselves, He will gather us as a hen gathers her chicks.
- D&C 38:1-3. He is the Creator of the world and He knows all things.
- D&C 43:34. He is the Savior of the world.
- D&C 45:3-5. He is our advocate with the Father.
- D&C 50:44. He is the Good Shepherd and the Stone of Israel, a sure foundation upon which we can build.
- D&C 76:5. He is merciful and gracious to those who fear Him, and He delights to honor those who serve Him in righteousness and truth to the end.
- D&C 93:5-19. He is the Only Begotten of the Father. He "continued from grace to grace" until He received a fullness of the glory and power of the Father.
- D&C 133:42-52. When He comes in power at the time of His Second Coming, those who He has redeemed will mention His loving kindness and goodness.
- D&C 136:22. His arm is extended to save His people.

As you study the Doctrine and Covenants, look for teachings that help you understand and appreciate Jesus Christ. He is the central figure in this modern-day book of revelations. The D&C can help you strengthen your testimony of the Lord and the plan of salvation.

“I Had Seen a Vision” Lesson 3 – Joseph Smith—History 1:1-26; Our Heritage, pgs. 1-4

After the Apostasy, God prepared the way for the Restoration

When Christ’s atonement and earthly mission were completed, the Apostles, with the senior apostle, Peter, at their head, led the Church Jesus had organized. Persecutions, lack of unity, and apostasy led to a fulfillment of the Apostles’ prophecy that a falling away from the truth—The Great Apostasy—would come to pass. (Acts 20:28-29; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 2 Timothy 2:3-4).

Consequences of the Great Apostasy included: (D&C 1:15-16; Joseph Smith—History 1:8-9, 19, 21; Mormon 1:13-14)

- No priesthood authority remained on the earth
- No apostles and no prophets on the earth
- Knowledge of the true nature of God was lost
- The doctrines of the gospel were corrupted
- Sacred ordinances such as baptism were altered
- The original Church divided into competing, discordant, and apostate groups

Before the Restoration which the Lord had planned, the earth was in spiritual darkness for many centuries. Then, the Lord began preparing the way for a final restoration. The long journey out of darkness began in the 1300’s. The following events prepared the earth and the people for enlightenment:

- The rebirth of learning, literature, art, and science heralded the Renaissance. Elder James E. Talmage said of the Renaissance was no random happening, but rather “*a development predetermined in the Mind of God to illuminate the benighted minds of men in preparation for the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was appointed to be accomplished some centuries later*” (Jesus the Christ, 3rd ed. [1916], 749).
- The Reformation was based on the belief that the churches had lost the truth of the Savior’s teachings. Elder M. Russell Ballard said that Martin Luther and other reformers “*were inspired to create a religious climate in which God could restore lost truths and priesthood authority*” (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 66).
- Europeans discovered the Americas and the land was populated with people who believed in establishing a country with religious tolerance and freedom. Later, the Constitution guaranteed religious freedom under the law. Elder Ballard said, “*God inspired the earlier explorers and colonizers of America and the framers of the Constitution of the United States to develop a land and governing principles to which the gospel could be restored*” (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 66).

God prepared Joseph Smith to be the prophet of the Restoration

- Heavenly Father not only created the right environment that was conducive to the restoration of the gospel, but He also prepared valiant leadership—the Prophet Joseph Smith.
- Joseph Smith’s Family helped prepare him for his calling. He came from a religious background that instilled strong moral values, patriotism, and an appreciation of education. His grandfather, Asael Smith, said, long before Joseph’s birth, “*It has been borne in upon my soul that one of my descendants will promulgate a work to revolutionize the world of religious faith*” (Essentials in Church History, Joseph Fielding Smith, 27th ed. [1974], 25).
- Joseph’s parents, Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack, were both faithful believers and devoted parents. They taught and exemplified godly attributes to the future prophet, preparing him with faith

and righteous behavior. They also shared with him some of the religious experiences they enjoyed. Each had had special spiritual blessings given in dreams or in answer to prayer. They were active seekers of truth and felt that the churches they had attended were lacking. Joseph Sr. did not join any church because he felt none were truly as God intended, but Lucy felt a duty to be baptized, so she became affiliated with the Presbyterians until the true church was restored to the earth.

- In the plan to prepare Joseph, the Lord let adversity strengthen the lad. *Our Heritage*, pgs. 1-2 gives an account of a serious infection that affected Joseph's leg and left him with a permanent limp. From this story, we can gain insight into the Prophet's early trials and his response.
- Joseph was prepared in an area where religious activity was frequent and fervent. Leaving Vermont at age 10, Joseph settled with his family in New York after crop failures made it necessary to move west. His history indicates that Joseph was confused about which church to join and where to find the truth he needed. His answers came in the scriptures.

The First Vision initiated the Restoration of the gospel

In the spring of 1820, early in the morning, Joseph uttered his first vocal prayer and sought wisdom from God. See Joseph Smith—History 1:1-19 for Joseph's account.

Truths revealed in the First Vision

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, *"I submit that in the few minutes that Joseph Smith was with the Father and the Son, he learned more of the nature of God the Eternal Father and the risen Lord than all the learned minds in all their discussions through all centuries of time"* (Church News, 24 Oct. 1998, 6).

From the First Vision, we learn:

- God the Father and Jesus Christ live
- The Father and Son are real, separate beings with glorified bodies of flesh and bones
- We are created in the image of God
- Satan and his power are real, but God's power is infinitely greater
- God hears and answers prayers. He cares for us.
- No church on earth had the fullness of Christ's gospel
- Revelation has not ceased

President David O. McKay testified that the First Vision *"answers all the [questions] regarding God and his divine personality. ...His relation to his children is clear. His interest in humanity through authority delegated to man is apparent. The future of the work is assured. These and other glorious truths are clarified by that glorious first vision"* (Gospel Ideals [1954], 85).

Elder Ezra Taft Benson said, *"The appearance of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ to the boy prophet is the greatest event that has occurred in this world since the resurrection of the Master"* (Ensign, June 1971, 34). Each of us should develop a testimony of that first vision and the truths it revealed.

“Remember the New Covenant, Even the Book of Mormon”

Lesson 4 – Joseph Smith—History 1:27-65; D&C 3; 5; 10; 17; 20:5-15; 84:54-62; Our Heritage, pgs. 5-10

Joseph Smith’s preparation to receive and translate the Book of Mormon

- In the three years after the First Vision, Joseph Smith suffered “severe persecution” but remained steadfast in his testimony of that momentous event. His courage and integrity are an example for us as we face persecution or ridicule.
- The angel Moroni visited Joseph when the Prophet was only 17 in response to prayer. When we recognize our weaknesses, we too can seek forgiveness and direction to get ourselves back on track.
- When Joseph was first shown the plates, he was unprepared to receive them, much less proceed to translate the strange writing. In Joseph Smith—History 1:33-35, 42, 44-46, and 53-54, we see how the Lord prepared Joseph for his task.

The miracle of the Book of Mormon’s preservation

Satan tried to thwart the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in numerous ways. He prompted evil men to attempt to steal the plates and persecute the Prophet and his family. Satan’s efforts were frustrated and the precious scriptures came forth despite all his plans and cunning.

- In one notable and familiar example of Satan’s efforts to prevent the successful introduction of the Book of Mormon, Martin Harris lost 116 pages of translated manuscript.
 - After the pages were lost, the Lord chastened Joseph for fearing his benefactor, Martin Harris, more than God. (D&C 3:7)
 - In spite of his despair, Joseph was comforted by the Lord as mercy was shown for the mistake. The Lord proved His love for Joseph in D&C 3:8 as He demonstrated that He would be “*with [Joseph] in every time of trouble*”.
 - Because the Lord knew that evil men would steal the 116 pages of manuscript, He had prepared an alternative to accomplish His purposes and defeat the evil plan. D&C 10:38-39 and 1 Nephi 9:2-5 explain.

Witnesses of the Book of Mormon

- The Three Witnesses were Oliver Cowdrey, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris.
 - D&C 5:11-15, 24-25; 17:3, 5 tell what the witnesses were commanded to do.
 - Ether 5:4; D&C 5:16-18; and 17:4 explain why their testimony was important.
- The Eight Witnesses saw the gold plates for themselves and so testified.
- While all of the Three Witnesses and three of the Eight Witnesses left the Church, none ever denied his testimony of what he saw. In the last year of his life, David Whitmer published a strong denial that he never recanted his testimony nor did the other two witnesses, Harris and Cowdrey. All three died reaffirming their testimony. See *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:145.
- The Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses testified of things which they saw and heard. Today, millions of faithful LDS members testify of the truth of the Book of Mormon because of the spiritual witness that they have received from the Holy Ghost. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley said, “*The strength of the Church is not in...its thousands of houses of worship across the world, nor in its universities...the strength of this church lies in the hearts of its people, in the individual testimony and conviction of the truth of this work*” (Ensign, July 1973, 49).

Our duty to “remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon”

- Early Saints were condemned by the Lord for taking the Book of Mormon lightly. (D&C 84:55)

- President Ezra Taft Benson said:
 - *“If the early Saints were rebuked for treating the Book of Mormon lightly, are we under any less condemnation if we do the same?”* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 4-5) *“The Lord is not pleased with us in the manner of attention we’re giving the Book of Mormon, a new witness for Christ. We need it in our homes, we need it in our families. It was written for us today”* (Church News, 9 Nov. 1986, 10)
 - *“There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance...[You will also enjoy] increased love and harmony in the home, greater respect between parent and child, [and] increased spirituality and righteousness. These promises are not idle promises, but exactly what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said the Book of Mormon will help us draw nearer to God”* (Ensign, Nov 1986, 7)
- President Benson went on to point out that we need to flow the earth with the Book of Mormon. We are encouraged to make the Book of Mormon a greater emphasis in our lives.
- Biblical prophecies that Moroni quoted to Joseph Smith included Malachi 3, Malachi 4, Isaiah 11, Acts 3:22-23, and Joel 2:28-32.

The Doctrine and Covenants is an external witness of the Book of Mormon.

President Ezra Taft Benson taught, “Excluding the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants is by far the greatest external witness and evidence which we have from the Lord that the Book of Mormon is true” (Ensign, May 1987, 83). President Benson referred to 13 different sections of the D&C that testify of the Book of Mormon: D&C 1, 3, 5, 8, 10-11, 17-18, 20, 27, 42, 84, and 135.

Drawing nearer to God through the Book of Mormon:

- The Prophet Joseph Smith said, *“I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book”* (History of the Church, 4:461).
- Pres. Benson cited this quotation and then asked, *“Is there not something deep in our hearts that longs to draw nearer to God, to be more like Him in our daily walk, to feel His presence with us constantly? If so, then the Book of Mormon will help us do so more than any other book”* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 7)

Translated by the gift and power of God:

- Joseph Smith completed the translation of the Book of Mormon in about 65 working days. Elder Neal A. Maxwell commented on the speed of the process and the remarkable fact that Joseph would rarely go back, review, or revise, so there was a “steady flow” in the translation process. Miracles still occur today in the process of translating the Book of Mormon into a multitude of languages for worldwide distribution.

“This Is the Spirit of Revelation”

Lesson 5 D&C 6, 8, 9, Joseph Smith—History 1:8-17

This lesson should help us prepare to receive personal revelation.

- “*God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them.*” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 149)
- The Lord does not require us to be prophets to receive revelation. We will not receive revelation to guide the Church, but we will receive personal revelation to guide our choices in life and to give us personal knowledge that will help us understand the gospel and gospel principles.

Personal revelation is a great blessing in our lives:

- The Lord communicates with us
- The heavens are open to us as we seek the truth
- “*No one of us can survive in the world of today, much less in what it soon will become, without personal inspiration.*” —Elder Boyd K. Packer (Ensign, Nov. 1991, 23)

Personal revelation and inspiration are important for us because:

- Revelation is the way we receive our testimony of the Savior, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the Church.
 - It allows us to learn divine truths
 - It allows us to receive guidance and to understand answers to life’s challenges and difficult choices.

Consider the personal benefits for you in receiving personal revelations.

The D&C teaches us how to prepare ourselves for revelations.

References:

D&C 9:8 and Joseph Smith—History 1:8-10 teaches us to study matters out in our own minds

- Practice serious reflection
- Reflect upon your feelings
- Gather knowledge that is available
- Invest time and effort in your study
- Actively study the scriptures
- Seek the answer for as long as it takes...do not set a time limit on heavenly knowledge and inspiration
- Use your agency properly

D&C 138: 1-11; Joseph Smith—History 1:11-12

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “*Scripture reading may...lead to current revelation on whatever [subject] the Lord wishes to communicate to the reader at that time. We do not overstate the point when we say that the scriptures can be a Urim and Thummim to assist each of us to receive personal revelation. Because we believe that scripture reading can help us receive revelation, we are encouraged to read the scriptures again and again. By this means, we obtain access to what our Heavenly Father would have us know and do in our personal lives today. That is one reason Latter-day Saints believe in daily scripture study.*” (Ensign, Jan. 1995, 8)

Inquire of the Lord in faith and believe that you will receive

- D&C 6:5, 14; 8:1; 42:61; 88:63-64 teaches us to ask questions

- Elder Boyd K. Packer: “No message appears in scripture more times, in more ways than ‘Ask, and ye shall receive’” (Ensign Nov. 1991, 21)
- President Spencer W. Kimball: “Do you offer a few trite words and worn-out phrases, or do you talk intimately to the Lord? Do you pray occasionally when you should be praying regularly, often, constantly?... When you pray, do you just speak, or do you also listen?... Do you give thanks or merely ask for favors?” (New Era, Mar. 1978, 17)
- D&C 8:1 counsels us to Ask “with an honest heart”
 - Honestly seek to understand the Lord’s will
 - Ask only those things that are in accordance with the Lord’s will
 - Be sure your motives are pure
 - Be sure that you are repentant

Joseph Smith—History 1: 13-16 teaches us some important lessons about prayer

- Pray vocally
- Kneel in humility
- Be sincere and speak from the heart
- Exert all your powers in calling upon Heavenly Father

D&C 6:14; 42:61 contain promises from the Lord

- We can receive instruction of the Spirit
- We can receive revelation and knowledge, know mysteries, and peaceable things and have joy

D&C 63:23; 76:5-10; 93:1, 28; 101:7-8 teaches us to be obedient and serve our Heavenly Father

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “The way to revelation is righteousness.” (The Lords’ Way,[1991], 34)
- He also taught “We cannot have the companionship of the Holy Ghost—the medium of individual revelation—if we are angry or if we are in rebellion against God’s chosen authorities” (Ensign, Mar. 1997)

D&C 5:24; 19:23; 112:10; 136:32-33 teaches us to be meek and humble

David Whitmer recalled this about one morning when Joseph Smith was preparing to resume translating the Book of Mormon: “...something went wrong about the house and he was put out about it. Something that Emma, his wife, had done. Oliver and I went upstairs and Joseph came up soon after to continue the translation but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went downstairs, out into the orchard, and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour—came back to the house, and asked Emma’s forgiveness and then came upstairs where we were and the the translation went on all right. He could do nothing save he were humble and faithful” (quoted in B.H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church, 1:131).

D&C 25:10; 30:2 teaches us to focus on the things of God rather than worldly concerns.

-Elder Boyd K. Packer: “Inspiration comes more easily in peaceful settings. Such words as quiet, still, peaceable, Comforter abound in the scriptures... The world grows increasingly noisy. Clothing and grooming and conduct are looser and sloppier and more disheveled. Raucous music, with obscene lyrics blasted through amplifiers while lights flash psychedelic colors, characterizes the drug culture. Variations of these things are gaining wide acceptance and influence over our youth... This trend to more noise, more excitement, more contention, less restraint, less dignity, less formality is not coincidental nor innocent nor harmless. The first order issued by a commander mounting a military invasion is the jamming of the channels of communication of those he intends to conquer. Irreverence suits the purposes of the adversary by obstructing the delicate channels of revelation in both mind and spirit” (Ensign, Nov. 1991, 21-22)

-Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught: “Divine guidance is so crucial...that we need to go out of our way to put ourselves in a situation in which such special help can be given.” May we remember that as we seek personal revelation.

“I Will Tell You in Your Mind and in Your Heart, by the Holy Ghost”

Lesson 6 D&C 6, 8, 9, 11

While the last lesson helped us prepare to receive personal revelation, this lesson should help us recognize personal revelation from the Holy Ghost.

Understanding how the Holy Ghost communicates with us

- Revelation may come in many ways:
 - Appearances by the Lord or His messengers
 - Voices from the Lord or His messengers
 - Visions and dreams
 - Thoughts communicated to our minds and feelings in our hearts
- The Holy Ghost uses a still, small voice to communicate to our hearts and minds. D&C 8:2-3; 85:6
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught: *“Visions do happen. Voices are heard from beyond the veil. I know this. But these experiences are exceptional...Most of the revelation that comes to leaders and members of the Church comes by the still, small voice or by a feeling rather than by a vision or a voice that speaks specific words we can hear. I testify to the reality of that kind of revelation, which I have come to know as a familiar, even daily, experience to guide me in the work of the Lord.”* (Ensign, Mar 1997, 14)
- Elder Boyd K. Packer taught: *“These delicate, refined spiritual communications are not seen with our eyes nor heard with our ears. And even though it is described as a voice, it is a voice that one feels more than one hears.”* (That All May Be Edified [1982], 335)
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks cautioned: *“Some [people] have looked exclusively for the great manifestations that are recorded in the scriptures and have failed to recognize the still, small voice that is given to them... We need to know that the Lord rarely speaks loudly. His messages almost always come in a whisper.... Not understanding these principles of revelation, some people postpone acknowledging their testimony until they have experienced a miraculous event. They fail to realize that with most people...gaining a testimony is not an event but a process.”* (Ensign, Mar. 1997, 11-12, 14)

D&C 6:15; 11: 13-14. The Holy Ghost enlightens our minds.

- He gives us new ideas or insights
- He provides flashes of insight and strong impressions

D&C 6:22-23 The Holy Ghost brings peace to our minds.

- Oliver Cowdrey received a peaceful assurance of the divine calling of Joseph Smith.

D&C 9:7-8 The Holy Ghost may cause a burning in our bosoms.

1. Pres. Boyd K. Packer explained: *“This burning in the bosom is not purely a physical sensation. It is more like a warm light shining within your being”* (Ensign, Nov 1994, 60)
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: *“I have met persons who told me they have never had a witness from the Holy Ghost because they have never felt their bosom ‘burn within’ them. What does a ‘burning in the bosom’ mean? Does it need to be a feeling of caloric heat, like the burning produced by combustion? If that is the meaning, I have never had a burning in the bosom. Surely, the word ‘burning’ in this scripture signifies a feeling of comfort and serenity.”* (Ensign, Mar 1997, 13)

D&C 98:12 He reveals line upon line, precept upon precept.

- We usually receive revelation in accordance with our preparation to receive it.
- The more we prepare, the more we may receive

Cautions about personal revelation

- D&C 109:44. We should pray that the Lord's will be done—and be willing to submit our will to His.
 - If we feel unrest and uneasiness, confusion or negative feelings, or a stupor of thought, we may be receiving God's answer of "No".
 - Think about how you should respond if the answer is "No" when you petition the Lord.

D&C 88:68. The Lord will control the timing and manner of revelation.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained: *"The Lord will speak to us through the Spirit in his own time and in his own way. Many people do not understand this principle. They believe that when they are ready and when it suits their convenience, they can call upon the Lord and he will immediately respond, even in the precise way they have prescribed. Revelation does not come that way.... The principle stated in D&C 88:68 applies to every communication from our Heavenly Father: 'It shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.' We cannot force spiritual things"* (Ensign, Mar 1997, 10-11)

D&C 28:2, 6-7; 43:2-4 We receive revelation according to our stewardship and responsibilities

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained: *"Our Heavenly Father's house is a house of order...Only the President of the Church receives revelation to guide the entire Church.... The person who receives revelation for the ward is the bishop...Individuals can receive revelation to guide their own lives. But when a person purports to receive revelation for another person outside his or her own area of responsibility—such as a Church member who claims to have revelation to guide the entire Church....you can be sure that such revelations are not from the Lord."* ("Revelation", New Era, Sept. 1982, 45-46)

D&C 11:12-14; 50:23-24 teaches us to discern the source of a revelation.

- We may mistake our own thoughts as revelations
- Satan may provide revelations to us

The First Presidency said: *"When....inspiration conveys something out of harmony with the accepted revelations of the Church or contrary to the decisions of constituted authorities, Latter-Day Saints may know that it is not of God, no matter how plausible it may appear....Anything at discord with that which comes from God through the head of the Church is not to be received as authoritative or reliable"* (Messages of the 1st Presidency, [1965-75] 4:285)

When revelation is not received or recognized:

- Exercise patience and faith
- Increase your efforts to be spiritually in tune to the whisperings of the Spirit
- Increase your personal study and prayer...faithfully and honestly
- Be faithful in obeying the commandments
- Set the matter aside for awhile and cease being consumed by it
- Recognize that the Lord may wish you to decide the matter on your own
- Recognize that you may have received the answer but may not have accepted it

Each of us has the privilege and responsibility to become fluent in the language of the Spirit. Make the effort(s) necessary to receive and recognize the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. As we prepare ourselves, we will receive *"revelation upon revelation"* thru the Holy Ghost. (D&C 42:61)

“The First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel”

Lesson 7

This lesson will help us understand and seek the blessings that come from the first principles and ordinances of the gospel: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and confirmation.

D&C 128:21 teaches that the Lord restored the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith “line upon line, precept upon precept”. Some of the first truths to be restored were the first principles and ordinances of the gospel.

- **Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ** is the first principle.
 - The restoration began with an act of simple faith as a prayer was offered
 - Strengthening our faith in Christ is a constant challenge of Latter-Day Saints. We strengthen our faith gradually, not in one special experience, and then we must nourish it to keep it strong. See D&C 19:23; 88:118; Alma 32:27
 - We can demonstrate our faith in Christ as indicated in D&C 20:69 and James 2:14-17. Faith in Christ affects our desire to do good works.
 - D&C 8:10; 35:9; 42:48-51; and 63:9-11 teach us what we can accomplish with faith and what cannot be done without faith.
 - The D&C stresses the importance of praying with faith. D&C 10:46-52 indicates that the ancient prophets had “faith in their prayers“ that the Book of Mormon would be preserved.

Through sincere repentance, we can partake of the blessings of the Atonement.

Repentance is a major theme of the Doctrine and Covenants—it teaches the doctrine, emphasizes the need, and promises blessings for sincere repentance.

- D&C 58:42-43 teaches that repentance is the process of being cleansed and receiving forgiveness through the Savior’s Atonement. This involves recognizing the sin, feeling remorse (godly sorrow), refraining from sin, confessing to the offended and authorities as required, making restitution, being obedient to the commandments, and turning to God for strength to retain the remission of sins.
- Repentance is not just breaking a bad habit. Pres. Ezra Taft Benson explained: “*Repentance means more than simply a reformation of behavior.... True repentance is based on and flows from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. True repentance involves a change of heart and not just a change in behavior.*” (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [1988], 71)
- Elder Neal A. Maxwell: “...*repentance requires both turning away from evil and turning to God.*” (Ensign, Nov 1991, 30)
- D&C 18:11-13 and D&C 19:16-19 teach about the Savior’s love for us. We need to understand that we cannot cleanse ourselves because justice must be paid and only the Savior’s atonement can substitute mercy for justice.
- D&C 1:33; 19:17-18; and 29:17 identify some consequences of failing to repent of sins. Other consequences include estrangement from God and others, guilt, low self-esteem, rationalizing other sins, and being unforgiving.
- D&C 1:32; 58:42; and 109:53 promise blessings for the truly repentant.
- Barriers to repentance include procrastination, pride, discouragement, and complacency. (“*I’ll do it later when I’m not so busy, but even then it probably won’t help, and frankly, I don’t much care.*”)
- Elder Neal A. Maxwell: “*Repentance is a rescuing, not a dour doctrine. It is available to the gross sinner as well as to the already good individual striving for an incremental improvement*” (Ensign, Nov 1991, 30)

Baptism is an essential ordinance.

Faith and repentance lead to baptism, the first ordinance of the gospel. The D&C reveals the purposes, qualifications, and instructions for baptism.

- D&C 18:22; 49:13-14. Purposes of baptism include commitment to the Savior, remission of sins, membership in the Church, opening the door to the path of exaltation, and preparing to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- D&C 20:37 teaches about the qualifications required for baptism: humility, desire, broken heart and contrite spirit, witness of true repentance, willingness to take upon them the name of Christ, determination to serve God to the very end, and good works that indicate the receipt of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of sins.
- D&C 76:51 teaches that baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as well as the burial of our old self and our rebirth in Christ. Additionally, it symbolizes being cleansed from sin.

Through confirmation, we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- D&C 130:22 provides attributes of the Holy Ghost.
- D&C 33:15 and 35:5-6 show that Church members receive the gift of the Holy Ghost through the ordinance of confirmation.
- D&C 20:41 calls this ordinance the “*baptism of fire*”.
- The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “*Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without...the baptism of the Holy Ghost*”. (TPJS, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 314)
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught: “*Manifestations of the Holy Ghost are given to lead sincere seekers to gospel truths... The gift of the Holy Ghost is more comprehensive... [It] includes the right to constant companionship, that we may always have his Spirit to be with [us].*” (Ensign, Nov 1996, 60)
- Pres. Joseph Fielding Smith said: “*The Holy Ghost will not dwell with that person who is unwilling to obey and keep the commandments of God or who violates those commandments willfully*” (Church News, 4 Nov 1961, 14)

Functions of the Holy Ghost include:

- D&C 18:18; 39:6; 42:14; 75:10 He is a teacher
- D&C 39:6 He is the Comforter
- D&C 42:17; 100:8 He is a testifier
- D&C 11:12 He leads us to do good, walk humbly, and judge righteously
- D&C 11:13; 76:10 He enlightens our minds and fills our souls with joy
- D&C 84:33 Through Him we are sanctified
- D&C 31:11; 75:27; 84:85 He inspires us where to go and what to do and say.

We must endure in faith to the very end to receive eternal life.

Our baptism alone is not enough—no single experience will transform us. Remember that we need to strengthen our faith daily, repent of our sins, keep our baptism covenants, and live worthily to keep the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. If we endure faithfully to the end in these pursuits, we will receive exaltation.

“The shield of faith”

D&C 27: 15, 17 was the basis of Elder Boyd K. Packer’s remarks when he said: “*[The] shield of faith is not produced in a factory but at home in a cottage industry. The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of Heavenly Father.... Therefore our leaders press members to understand that what is most worth doing must be done at home. Some still do not see that too many out-of-home activities, however well intended, leave too little time to make and fit on the shield of faith at home*” (Ensign, May 1995,8-9)

“The Restoration of the Priesthood”

Lesson 8 D&C 13; 20:38-67; 27:12-12; 84:6-30; 107:1-20; 110:11-16; Joseph Smith—History 1:66-73

Definition and purpose of the priesthood

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord gave many revelations that add greatly to our understanding of the keys, offices, organization, ordinances, duties, and blessings of the priesthood.

Priesthood: The eternal power and authority of God; the creative and governing power in the heavens and the earth; the power by which we are redeemed and exalted.

- The purpose of giving the priesthood to worthy male saints is to empower them to preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of salvation (and exaltation), and govern His kingdom on earth.
- It is important to have the priesthood on earth so that men may act for God to bless his children and prepare them for exaltation.
- D&C 20:38-55; 107:8-12, 23, 35 teach of the ways priesthood holders act on behalf of God to bless his children.

The restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood Joseph Smith—History 1:68-72; D&C 13; 84:26-27; 107:20
The restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood was the first bestowal of divine authority in this dispensation.

- Elder James E. Talmage shared his thoughts about being ordained a deacon and its effect on him: *“As soon as I had been ordained, a feeling came to me such as I have never been able to fully describe. It seemed scarcely possible, that I, a little boy, could be so honored of God as to be called to the priesthood....I felt strong in the thought that I belonged to the Lord, and that he would assist me in whatever was required of me. The effect of my ordination...entered into all the affairs of my boyish life....When at play on the school grounds, and perhaps tempted to take unfair advantage in the game, when in the midst of a dispute with a playmate, I would remember, and the thought would be as effective as though spoken aloud—‘I am a deacon; and it is not right that a deacon should act in this way.’ On examination days, when it seemed easy for me to copy some other boy’s work...., I would say in my mind, ‘It would be more wicked for me to do that than it is for them, because I am a deacon’”* (Incidents from the Lives of Our Church Leaders [deacons Instruction manual, 1914], 135-136)

The authority and blessings restored with the Aaronic Priesthood. D&C 13; 84:26-27; 107:20

- The keys of the ministering of angels (D&C 13)
 - President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“That means, as I interpret it, that if you live worthy of the priesthood, you have the right to receive and enjoy the very power of heavenly beings to guide you, to protect you, to bless you.”* (Ensign, Nov 1982, 45)
 - As Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained, the ministering of angels can occur through personal appearances and *“can also be unseen. Angelic messages can be delivered by a voice or merely by thoughts or feelings communicated to the mind...Most angelic communications are felt or heard rather than seen”* (Ensign, Nov 1998, 39)
- The ministering of angels is available to all Church members, not just priesthood holders. According to Elder Dallin H. Oaks, *“Through the Aaronic Priesthood ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, we are cleansed of our sins and promised that if we will keep our covenants we will always have His Spirit to be with us. I believe that promise not only refers to the Holy Ghost but also to the ministering of angels, for ‘angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ’. So it is that those who hold the Aaronic Priesthood open the door for all Church members who worthily partake of the sacrament to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit of the Lord and the ministering of angels”*. (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 39)

- D&C 84: 88 teaches us about the ministering of angels

The keys of repentance and baptism. D&C 13; 84:26-27; 107:20

Repentance and baptism are also called the “preparatory gospel.” These principles help us prepare to receive greater blessings that are administered thru the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Aaronic Priesthood holders preach repentance through home teaching, missionary work, testimony bearing, and fellowshipping.

- They participate in the ordinance of baptism under the direction of the bishop, worthy priests may perform baptisms and serve as witnesses at baptisms – including, in 2018, baptisms in the temples.
- The Aaronic Priesthood also officiates as we renew baptism covenants in the sacrament ordinance.
- Elder Jeffery R. Holland said: *“We ask you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood to prepare and bless and pass the emblems of the Savior’s sacrifice worthily and reverently. What a stunning privilege and sacred trust given at such a remarkably young age! I can think of no higher compliment heaven could pay you. We do love you. Live your best and look your best when you participate in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.”* (Ensign, Nov. 1995)

The Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood

- The Melchizedek Priesthood is the greater priesthood that has the authority, knowledge and covenants necessary for exaltation of God’s children. It was restored to the earth through Peter, James, and John’s ordination of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey.

The authority and blessings restored with this priesthood include:

- D&C 84:19. Authority to administer the gospel of Jesus Christ includes the authority to govern the Church, preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances of salvation.
- D&C 107:18-19. *“The keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church”* include these blessings:
 - Knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom and knowledge of God...which comes thru the Holy Ghost
 - D&C 84:20-21. The power of godliness is administered thru the gospel ordinances.
 - D&C 84:22; 107:19. The opportunity to see, commune with, and enjoy the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - D&C 107:8-9. The right of presidency is the right to preside in the Church. The President of the Church is the only person on earth who may use (or authorize another to use) the keys of the priesthood for governing the Church. He authorizes the regional and local priesthood leaders.
 - D&C 110:11-16. The keys of the gathering of Israel, the gospel of the dispensation of Abraham, and the sealing power were restored by Moses, Elias, and Elijah in 1836.

Blessings of the priesthood for all people

Women and children are blessed by the priesthood as ordinances are performed that benefit them. Those women and children who do not have the priesthood in their home may share in its blessings thru ministering brothers (2018), priesthood leaders, and extended family members. The priesthood and its keys have been restored. Priesthood holders hold the authority to direct God’s work on earth and to act for Him in blessing His children and helping them prepare for exaltation. The blessings of the priesthood are available for all.

“The Only True and Living Church”

Lesson 9 - Selected verses from D&C 20; 21; 27; 115

Ancient prophecies (Isaiah 11:1-12; 29:13-14; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Daniel 2:44-45) were fulfilled in 1830 as the Church was organized. This followed the publishing of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the priesthood. Doctrine and Covenants Section 20 contains instructions from the Lord to Joseph Smith about the manner of organization of the Church.

The Church is organized in the latter days.

- D&C 20:1 and its heading indicate the date for the organization of the Church and why that date (6 April) was selected—because it was the Lord’s mortal birthday.
- Ten years passed between the reception of the First Vision and the formal organization of the Church. Many important milestones had to be accomplished in that decade of testing and preparation.
- In 1980, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“This day of organization was, in effect, a day of commencement, the graduation of Joseph from ten years of remarkable schooling. It had begun with the incomparable vision in the grove in the spring of 1820, when the Father and the Son appeared to the fourteen-year-old boy. It had continued with the tutoring of Moroni, with both warnings and instructions given on multiple occasions. Then there was the translation of the ancient record, and the inspiration, the knowledge, the revelation that came from that experience. There was the bestowal of divine authority, the ancient priesthood again conferred upon men by those who were its rightful possessors—John the Baptist in the case of the Aaronic Priesthood, and Peter, James, and John in the case of the Melchizedek. There were revelations, a number of them, in which the voice of God was heard again, and the channel of communication opened between man and the Creator. All of these were preliminary to that historic April 6”* (Ensign, Apr. 1980, 11-12)
- Both the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (see D&C 20:6-12) and the restoration of the priesthood were preparatory events and had to be accomplished for the following reasons:
 - The Book of Mormon contains a fullness of the gospel
 - The Book of Mormon proves the holy scriptures are true
 - The Book of Mormon proves that God inspires men and calls them as prophets in all ages
 - The Book of Mormon shows that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever
 - Priesthood authority was necessary to govern the Church
 - Priesthood authority was necessary to officiate in the ordinances of salvation
- On April 6, 1830, the log home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, NY, was the gathering place for a group of more than 50 who met to organize the Church according to the law and at the direction of the Lord. At least six members were required for legal formation of a church according to New York’s statutes, so six men—all of whom had previously been baptized and who had seen the gold plates of the Book of Mormon—were chosen to be the first six official members of the Church. The six were Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdrey, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer Jr., Samuel H. Smith, and David Whitmer. (History of the Church, 1:76)
- D&C 20:1 gives the original name of the Church at its organization—“the Church of Christ”.
- D&C 115:4 records “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” as the name the Lord gave to the Church in April 1838. 3 Nephi 27:8 teaches the importance of the name by which the Church is known. *Emphasized again in 188th General Conference, October 2018.

- The world gave the Church a nickname, but we have been instructed by Pres. Russell M. Nelson not to use that name when we refer to the Church or its membership. Instead, we must always refer to the full name of the Church or use the terms of “Latter-day Saints” or “LDS”.

The Lord commands Church members to follow the prophet.

During the meeting at which the Church was organized, the presiding officers were sustained—Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey. Then, the Lord instructed members to follow the Prophet Joseph’s direction in D&C 21.

- D&C 21:4-5 teaches us how to regard the words of the living prophet (not just Joseph Smith). We find the words and counsel of the living prophets in the Church magazines and publications, official letters, and at General Conferences. (Ponder what counsel or teachings of a living prophet have been special to you.)
- D&C 21:5 gives the Lord’s counsel to give heed to the words of a prophet “in all patience and faith.” (Ponder your experience about some counsel or teaching of the prophet that has required patience or faith from you.)
- D&C 21:6 promises blessings for following the living prophet. These promises are fulfilled in the lives of our members each day. These include:
 - “...the gates of hell shall not prevail against you”
 - “...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.”
- In D&C 21:9 the Lord promises “a mighty blessing” to those who labor in his service. (teacher’s comment: Note that the operative word here is “labor”.)

The Lord encourages Church members to meet together often to partake of the sacrament.

The meeting at which the Church was organized included the partaking of the sacrament.

- D&C 20:75-79 gives direction for the sacrament ordinance.
- D&C 20:75 teaches that the sacrament should be partaken “often”.
- D&C 20:77, 79 contain promises that we make when we partake of the sacrament. Both prayers emphasize remembering Jesus Christ. We are to remember Him always. Promises are also made to us for partaking worthily.

D&C 27:2 also contained counsel to Joseph Smith about the sacrament.

The Lord explains the duties of church members.

D&C 20:68-69 explain “the duty of members after they are received by baptism”. Verse 69 reveals some of the Lord’s expectations of us.

- One of our duties is to show gratitude for Church membership.

One of the great miracles of the latter days was the organization of the Church in 1830.

- The events of April 6, 1830 changed the world even though that meeting went largely unnoticed by most people.

President Wilford Woodruff told of a meeting in which the Prophet Joseph Smith prophesied of the Church’s growth. The meeting was in *“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, and who had gathered together to go off in Zion’s camp.”* After several of the men had borne their testimonies of the work, the Prophet said: *“Brethren I have been much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother’s lap. You don’t comprehend it...It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.”* (Conference Report, April 1898, 57)

“This Is My Voice unto All”

Lesson 10 D&C 25

Elder Jay Jensen described a time when he was looking in the scriptures for comfort when he came to Section 3. He said: *“When I read a verse, I often insert my name in it. I did so with verse 5 and found the help I needed to remove my gloomy feelings: ‘Behold, you [Jay Jensen] have been entrusted with these things, but how strict were your commandments; and remember also the promises which were made to you [Jay Jensen]’ (D&C 3:5) The words ‘remember also the promises’ struck me with unusual power....During those four days I had focused on nothing but problems. I had not stopped to consider one single promise”* (Ensign, Nov. 1992, 80) Elder Jensen then reviewed in his mind the promises given to him in his patriarchal blessing, in the blessing when he was set apart as a mission president, and in the scriptures. By doing so, he was able to find the strength and comfort he needed.

- Nephi counseled us to liken the scriptures unto ourselves, so putting our own names in the scriptures is one method of doing that.
- It can allow us to apply counsel from the Lord to individual Saints in the D&C to ourselves.

In a July 1830 revelation directed to Emma Smith, there are three themes that we will focus on this week.

Husbands and wives should support and comfort each other.

- The revelation included counsel to Emma about her responsibilities to her husband. D&C 25:5 helps us understand how husbands and wives can help each other in times of difficulty.
- The Prophet Joseph taught wives that they should treat their husbands *“with mildness and affection. When a man is borne down with trouble, when he is perplexed with care and difficulty, if he can meet a smile instead of an argument or a murmur—if he can meet with mildness, it will calm down his soul and soothe his feelings”* (TPJS, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 228).
- The Prophet taught husbands, *“It is the duty of a husband to love, cherish, and nourish his wife, and cleave unto her and none else; he ought to honor her as himself, and he ought to regard her feelings with tenderness”* (Elders’ Journal, Aug. 1838, 61)
- D&C 25:14 counsels Emma to *“Let thy soul delight in thy husband”*.
- Joseph and Emma supported each other during many afflictions. In 1842, Joseph was in hiding because his life was threatened, but Emma visited him. He later said: *“With what unspeakable delight, and what transports of joy swelled my bosom, when I took by the hand, on that night, my beloved Emma—she that was my wife, even the wife of my youth, and the choice of my heart. Many were the reverberations of my mind when I contemplated for a moment the many scenes we had been called to pass through, the fatigues and the toils, the sorrows and sufferings, and the joys and consolations, from time to time, which had strewed our paths...Oh what a commingling of thought filled my mind for the moment, again she is here...undaunted, firm, and unwavering—unchangeable, affectionate Emma!”* (History of the Church, 5:107)
- Joseph and Emma experienced the tragedy of losing children including four infants who died in four years. Of their eleven children, only four lived to late adulthood. During difficult times in Kirtland, when Emma’s newborn twins died within hours of birth, the grieving parents adopted the Murdock twins, Joseph and Julia. Sis. Murdock died shortly after the births.
- Lucy Mack Smith described Emma’s characteristics that enabled her to support her husband during challenges. *“I have never seen a woman in my life, who would endure every species of fatigue and hardship, from month to month, and from year to year, with that unflinching courage, zeal, and patience, which she has ever done; for I know that which she had had to endure... She has breasted the storms of persecution, and buffeted the rage of men and devils, which would have borne down almost any other woman”* (History of Joseph Smith, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 190-91)

We should be meek and avoid pride.

In D&C 25:14, Emma was commanded to “*continue in the spirit of meekness, and beware of pride*”. Similar instructions were given by the Lord to others:

- D&C 23:1 warned Oliver Cowdrey against pride.
- D&C 38:39 warned the Saints
- D&C 90:17 was addressed to the First Presidency
- D&C 98:19-20 admonished the Kirtland Saints
- Pres. Ezra Taft Benson taught: “*Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing. The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. Enmity means ‘hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition’*” (Ensign, May 1989, 4)
- Pres. Benson explained how pride affects our relationship with God: “*Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God’s...in the spirit of ‘my will and not thine be done.’ Our will in competition to God’s will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled... Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as rebellion, hard-heartedness, stiff-neckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren’t interested in changing their opinions to agree with God’s*” (Ensign, May 1989, 4)
- Pres. Benson also explained how pride affects our relationship with others: “*We are tempted daily to elevate ourselves above others and diminish them... Selfishness is one of the more common faces of pride... Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous dominion, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride.*”
- As Latter-day Saints, we should overcome pride and cultivate a spirit of meekness. Pres. Benson counseled: “*The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness. It is the broken heart and contrite spirit... We can choose to humble ourselves by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives*” (Ensign, May 1989, 6-7)
- The following scriptures cite blessings that come as we choose to become humble and meek:
 - D&C 1:28 promise strength, heavenly blessings, and—from time to time—knowledge
 - D&C 19:23 promises peace
 - D&C 112:10 promises that the Lord will lead you and answer your prayers
 - D&C 124:97 promise receipt of the Spirit, manifestations of truth, and inspiration for what to say

We should rejoice and be of good cheer.

The Lord admonished Emma and others to rejoice:

- D&C 25:13 - cheerfully cleave unto the covenants
- D&C 29:5 – He is in our midst and is our advocate with the Father
- D&C 61:36 – He is in our midst and has not forsaken us
- D&C 68:6 – He is with us, stands by us, and we should bear testimony of him
- D&C 78:18 – the kingdom is ours and the blessings thereof
- D&C 136:29 - our souls may be joyful if we call upon the Lord

Elder Marvin J. Ashton counseled: “*None of us will escape tragedy and suffering. Each of us will probably react differently. However, if we can recall the Lord’s promise, ‘for I the Lord am with you’, and we will be able to face our problems with dignity and courage. We will find the strength to be of good cheer instead of becoming resentful, critical, or defeated. We will be able to meet life’s unpleasant happenings with clear vision, strength, and power.... What a joy it is to see someone of good cheer, who, when others because of an unpleasant happening or development live in angry silence or vocal disgust, meets the situation with cheerful endurance and good spirits*” (Ensign, May 1986,66)

Try reading the scriptures with the intent of applying the messages of the scriptures to your individual circumstances. The Lord’s many admonitions to be of good cheer remind us that we can find peace and joy regardless of our circumstances.

“The Field Is White Already to Harvest”

Lesson 11 D&C 4, 11-12, 14-16, 18, 31, 33, 75

Resolve to strengthen the kingdom of God through diligent service, including faithfully sharing the gospel with others.

In February 1829, Joseph Smith’s parents visited their son and Emma in Harmony, Pennsylvania. D&C 4 was received by the Prophet for his father, Joseph Smith, Sr. Other members also asked Joseph to inquire of the Lord for them. The principles in the subsequent revelations pertain to all of us who serve in the kingdom.

“Serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength”

D&C 4:1-2 includes requirements for those who serve in the Lord’s kingdom. This suggests total dedication to His service. To realize what it means to be totally committed, we should understand why we are sometimes less than fully committed, and then consider carefully how we can improve our commitment to serve with devotion.

Joseph Smith, Sr. devoted his life to serving the Lord, as this account shows: *“Joseph Smith, Sr., was filled with the testimony of the truth, and was always anxious to share it with others. He was almost sixty when he made the tedious journey...to carry the gospel to his father and mother, his sisters and brothers. Soon after his return [home,] he was imprisoned for a small debt of fourteen dollars, rather than deny the divinity of the Book of Mormon and be forgiven the debt! He was cast into a cell with a condemned murderer and left for four days without food. Later he was transferred to the prison workyard where he preached the gospel and converted two persons whom he later baptized. He was in prison a full month before his family was able to obtain his release”.* (E. Cecil McGavin, *The Family of Joseph Smith* [1963], 68) It would be well for us to follow his example of devoted service.

Prepare to Serve the Lord

Throughout the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord counsels us in how to prepare ourselves to serve him. Some of the attributes he desires us to have include:

- D&C 4:3; 11:8 Desire is necessary to be called
- D&C 4:5-6; 12:8; 18:19. We need to have faith, hope, charity, love, singleness of purpose, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, humility, and diligence.
- D&C 11:6, 20 Obedience is essential. Seek to advance the work and keep the commandments faithfully and fully.
- D&C 4:7; 31:12 – Prayer (asking) helps us in serving the Lord and avoiding temptation.

We should select one of these attributes and prayerfully strive to improve it.

D&C 11:21 We can have the power of God unto the convincing of men, but before we declare the word, we must seek to obtain it.

“The field is white”

Throughout the D&C, the Lord communicates a sense of urgency about spreading the gospel message. This is because the purpose of the work is that stated in D&C 100:4—“the salvation of souls.”

- D&C 4:4; 11:3; and 33:3 compare missionary work to a field that is ready for harvesting. Why is this an appropriate analogy?
- The Lord warned the elders not to be idle or bury their talents and said that they should “go forth” rather than “tarry”. (D&C 60:13; 75:3)

- Elder Henry B. Eyring related the following experience: *“It’s easy to say ‘The time isn’t right.’ But there is a danger in procrastination. Years ago I worked for a man in California. He hired me; he was kind to me; he seemed to regard me highly. I may have been the only Latter-day Saint he ever knew well. I don’t know all the reasons I found to wait for a better moment to talk to him about the gospel. I just remember my feeling of sorrow when I learned, after he had retired and I lived far away, that he and his wife had been killed in a late-night drive to their home in Carmel, California. He loved his wife. He loved his children. He had loved his parents. He loved his grandchildren, and he will love their children and will want to be with them forever. Now I don’t know how the crowds will be handled in the world to come. But I suppose that I will meet him, that he will look into my eyes, and that I will see in them the question, ‘Hal, you knew. Why didn’t you tell me?’”* (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 33)

“Open your mouths and they shall be filled”

In the D&C, the Lord gives direction on what we should teach and how we should teach as we share the gospel. He also encourages us to speak without fear and he will help us when we feel inadequate.

- D&C 11:9; 15:6; 18:6; 31:3-4; 33:10-11; 42:12, and 52:8-9 provide us with what to teach including repentance and baptism, modern-day revelations, principles in the Book of Mormon and Bible, and things as prompted by the Spirit.
- D&C 18:20-21; 38:41; 42:6, 14; and 100:7-8 tell us how to teach—speak the truth in meekness and mildness, with the voice of a trumpet, and do not teach unless you have the Spirit with you. One important principle is to avoid contention when we preach and teach the gospel. We need to be both bold and meek as missionaries.
- D&C 30:11; 30:5; 33:8-11; 60:2; 19:38; 33:12-14. The Lord repeatedly exhorted elders not to “fear man” because He is with us.
- We must open our mouths as prompted or the Lord will be angry with us.
- D&C 11:21; 14:8; 31:3. If we are concerned about lack of ability in teaching or speaking, the Lord can help us overcome those fears if we will obtain His word, pray in faith, and ponder upon the things we are inspired with by the Spirit.
- Samuel Smith may have felt that his first mission was a failure, but it was a true success when the later results became known. His placement of books with Phineas Young and John P. Greene was a tremendously important event. What can we learn from such experiences about missionary work?

The Lord promises great blessings to those who labor in His service.

- D&C 4:4; 11:3; and 75:5 remind us of the blessings of laboring diligently in the Lord’s service including everlasting salvation, a crown of honor and glory, immortality, and eternal life.
- D&C 18:15-16 remind us that we will have great joy with those we bring into the Church.
- D&C 31:5; 84:60-61—our sins shall be forgiven and our families will be blessed.
- D&C 31:7; 109:55-57—People’s hearts will be opened including those of royalty as well as the poor as we spread the gospel all over the world.
- D&C 31:11; 84:85; 100:5-6. We will be given inspiration as we need it if we will treasure up the word of the Lord in advance.
- D&C 31:13; 75:9-13; 84:88 teach that we have the blessing of the Lord being with us—around us and going before us, and the Spirit will be in our hearts
- D&C 71:9-10 teach that no weapon shall prosper against us and our critics will be confounded.
- D&C 84:80 promises that we shall be strengthened, not be weary, the Lord will watch over us continually, and we shall not be hungry or thirsty (temporal needs will be met).
- D&C 100:7-8 contains the Lord’s promise that the Holy Ghost will bear witness of what we say.

“The Gathering of My People”

Lesson 12 D&C 29:1-8; 33:3-7; 37; 38:24-41; 52:2-5, 42-43; 57:1-3; 110:11
Our Heritage pgs. 16-23, 37-39

The Lord is gathering His people

The gathering of the house of Israel is another prominent theme in the Doctrine and Covenants. As the restoration commenced and missionary labors began early in this dispensation, the ancient prophecies began to be fulfilled. Those prophecies foretold a day in which Israel would be gathered in and the gospel blessings would be available to them again as they exercised faith and obedience.

- The Prophet Joseph Smith said: *“All that the prophets...have written, from the days of righteous Abel, down to the last man that has left any testimony on record for our consideration, in speaking of the salvation of Israel in the last days, goes directly to show that it consists in the work of the gathering”* (TPJS, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 83)

D&C 45:71, 10th Article of Faith—both indicate that the gathering has a physical and a spiritual component to it.

- **Spiritual:** Learning the gospel, coming unto Christ, baptism, reception of the Holy Ghost, keeping the covenants—gathered from the world to the Church.
- **Physical:** gathering in specific locations (Ohio, Missouri, Utah) and in the various stakes of Zion that now extend throughout the world.

D&C 29:1-2, 7-8 tells us more about the purposes of gathering that included assembling the Lord’s elect *“to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked”*.

D&C 110:11 (and the section heading) explain that the authority to direct the gathering is vested in specific keys of the priesthood and that those keys were restored to the earth at a specific time and place.

- What began with the gathering of a few people in New York has grown to a world-wide gathering process involving millions.
- D&C 33:7; 38:40; 39:11; 88:81 specify our responsibilities to assist in this great and glorious work.

The Saints gathered in Ohio (1831-1838) (1839-1846)

The first direction that the Lord gave to latter-day saints to physically gather was given in December 1830, eight months after the Church was organized.

- D&C 37:3 told Joseph to have them leave New York in favor of settling in Ohio.
- D&C 38:31-32; 39:15 reveal the purpose of the Ohio gathering.
- D&C 95:8; 105:33; 110:9 provide insight on how the Saints were “endowed with power from on high” while in Ohio. In part, endowments were given through appearances of the Lord and the restoration of priesthood keys in the Kirtland temple.
- D&C 38:24-27 His people were counseled to prepare for the gathering by being virtuous, loving each other, and becoming unified as a people. The Lord has often stressed that His people must be one.
- D&C 38:34-39 gave other counsel on the Ohio gathering (i.e., the appointment of brethren to look after the temporal welfare of the poor and needy Saints and administer to their relief, governing the affairs of the property of the church) and a promise of “riches” was made in verse 39—accompanied by a warning that they should not become prideful as the Nephites of old.

- During the January – May period in 1831, the majority of the Saints traveled the 300 miles to Ohio after disposing of their farms.

The changes required great sacrifice, financially and in other ways, on their part as they obeyed and helped build the kingdom on earth. (For more on the challenge—including the Knights, Lucy Mack Smith, and Brigham Young, see *Our Heritage*, pgs. 18, 19, 23)

The Saints gathered in Missouri (1831-1838)

Locating and establishing the city of Zion, or New Jerusalem, was a major objective of the early Saints who had read the prophecies of Isaiah and Nephi. When Joseph Smith received revelation that Missouri was the site of the city of Zion, that state became the second gathering place in this dispensation. (D&C 63:24, 36-48)

- Sept. 1830 – New York: The Lord revealed that the site of the city of Zion was “ on the borders by the Lamanites”, leaving the specific location to be identified later. D&C 28:9
- Sept/Oct 1830 in New York: In D&C 30:5-6; 32:1-3, the Lord called four missionaries to preach to the Lamanites. They became the first Church members to go to Missouri.
- Feb. 1831 in Kirtland: In D&C 42:62, the Lord said he would reveal the location of the New Jerusalem in his own due time.
- D&C 52:2-5, 42-43. June 1831 in Kirtland: Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and others were given a mission call to Missouri and the Lord promised to consecrate Missouri for an inheritance to His people.
- D&C 54:8. June 1831 in Kirtland: The Lord directs that the Colesville New York saints to continue on to Missouri rather than stopping at Kirtland. They did so and were joined by others. Their story is told in pages 37-39 in *Our Heritage*.
- D&C 57:1-3. June 1831 after the prophet’s journey to Missouri: Revelation named Independence, MO, as the center place of the city of Zion. A temple would be built there.

The Saints now gather to the stakes of Zion in their own lands

In 1847, Brigham Young led the Saints west into the Salt Lake Valley and numerous saints continued to migrate to Salt Lake and Utah until the middle of the 20th century.

In 1972, the Saints were counseled by Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “*[The] revealed words speak of... there being congregations of the covenant people in every nation, speaking every tongue, and among every people when the Lord comes again... The Place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala...and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. Japan is for the Japanese; Korea is for the Koreans;... every nation is the gathering place for its own people.*” (Conf. Rpt., Mexico and Central America Area Conference 1972)

According to Elder Packer, in April 1973, President Harold B. Lee, in effect, announced in general conference that “...*the pioneering phase of gathering was now over. The gathering is now to be out of the world into the Church in every nation.*” (Ensign, Nov. 1992, 71) This is partly due to the fact that the Church’s resources became sufficient to establish stakes and build temples in many areas of the world.

In times past, the Saints needed to gather together to strengthen each other and find refuge and protection from the world. Those objectives can now be met through the established stakes of Zion.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion...A stake has at least four purposes:

1. [Stakes are] to unify and perfect the members who live in [their] boundaries by extending to them the Church programs, the ordinances, and gospel instruction.
2. Members of stakes are to be models, or standards, of righteousness
3. Stakes are to be a defense. They do this as stake members unify under their local priesthood officers and consecrate themselves to do their duty and keep their covenants...
4. Stakes are a refuge from the storm to be poured out over the earth.” (Ensign, Jan 1991)

Temple building was an essential part of gathering in Kirtland, Missouri, Nauvoo, and Utah.

It continues to be essential. Temple work makes its own special contribution to the gathering of the Saints. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: *“What was the object of gathering...the people of God in any age of the world?...The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation...It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings”* (History of the Church, 5:423-24)

“This Generation Shall Have My Word through You”

Lesson 13 Our Heritage pgs. 23-25,41,58 and
Bible Dictionary, “Joseph Smith Translation”, pg. 717

The Lord declared that the people in this dispensation would receive His word through Joseph Smith.

In D&C 5:10, the words “this generation” refer to this latter-day dispensation—our day.

President Brigham Young said: “*What I have received from the Lord, I have received by Joseph Smith*”. This statement could be made by any Latter-day Saint—including you. The latter-day scriptures, priesthood ordinances, priesthood organization, Relief Society organization, and temple building came from the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Many ancient and latter-day scriptures have come through Joseph Smith

A prophecy in Moses 1:40-41 is being fulfilled. After the Prophet Joseph Smith was raised up by the Lord, His words are now “had again among the children of men.”

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, we received the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. Joseph was an instrument in the Lord’s hand in restoring ancient scriptures and many revelations given to him became latter-day scriptures. Speaking about Joseph Smith, Elder LeGrand Richards said: “*As far as our records show, he has given us more revealed truth than any prophet who has ever lived upon the face of the earth.*” (Ensign, May 1981, 33)

In the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 3:11-15 contains a prophecy about Joseph Smith. Verse 12’s “writings” refers to the Book of Mormon and the Bible. These ancient scriptures have blessed our lives by bringing us to a better knowledge of the Lord’s covenants, eliminating contention, and establishing peace. *Think about what the Book of Mormon means to you.

From 1823 to 1831, more than 60 revelations were given to Joseph Smith from the Lord. Most Church members could not access these revelations for study and instruction since only a few handwritten copies, usually in the hands of missionaries and a few others. While attending a conference of about a dozen leaders in late 1831 in Ohio, it was decided that the Book of Commandments would be published to make the revelations more widely available. Oliver Cowdrey and John Whitmer were selected to take the revelations to Independence, Missouri, for printing.

Completing the 1000-mile journey in January 1832, Cowdrey and Whitmer worked with William W. Phelps to get the first 160 pages printed by July 1833. But later that month, the printing press and many unbound pages of the Book of Commandments were destroyed by a mob. The pages that could be salvaged were bound into a few copies of the Book of Commandments, but that still did not make the revelations widely available as had been hoped. It wasn’t until 1835 when the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants was published, including 45 additional revelations, that these scriptures reached many of the Saints.

Appropriately named, **the Pearl of Great Price** is small like a pearl, but of great worth to the Saints. Although it spans the eternities from before our pre-mortal existence until our post-mortal eternal lives, it is only 61 pages long. Those pages contain doctrine on the Creation, the Fall, the Atonement, Free moral Agency, and this latter-day dispensation. Five parts comprise this book of the Standard Works: 1) Selections from the Book of Moses, 2) The book of Abraham, 3) Joseph Smith—Matthew, 4) Joseph Smith—History, The Articles of Faith

Review the last five paragraphs of the Introductory Note at the beginning of the Pearl of Great Price to benefit from an explanation of the background of each part of this book of scripture.

The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible came about because many parts of the Bible were changed, causing the loss of many plain and precious truths during the Great Apostasy when the Lord withdrew the fullness of the gospel from the earth. Reading the 8th Article of Faith makes clear that we believe the Bible *“as far as it is translated correctly”*.

Soon after the Church was restored, Joseph was instructed to begin making inspired corrections to the King James Version.

- References to these instructions include D&C 35:20; 37:1; 45:60-61; 73:3-4; 93:53. Because he did as instructed, we now have the inspired revisions in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST). It is not what would normally be thought of as a “translation” because it was not translated from one language to another—the only text was the King James Version, but Joseph was guided by the Spirit to make corrections and restore some passages that had been completely lost.
- Two excerpts from the JST are found in the Pearl of Great Price—the book of Moses and Joseph Smith—Matthew. In the LDS scriptures, excerpts are also found in the appendix following the Bible Dictionary and in the footnotes of the King James Version of the Bible. A comparison of some passages may help us understand the value of the JST:
 - While the KJV’s references to Enoch include Gen. 5:18-24, Luke 3:37, Hebrews 11:5, and Jude 1:14-15, the JST’s expanded text includes his teachings, visions, and prophecies in Moses 6:21-68 and 7:1-69.
 - The JST’s inspired revisions of Matthew 4 clarify and correct numerous verses. You can see the differences by reviewing footnotes that begin with “JST”.

The translation of the Bible is intertwined with the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants because revelations were received as the Prophet inquired further about corrections and additions to the Bible. His questions resulted in answers that produced an improved Bible as well as doctrinal teachings in the D&C. Together, they amount to a great restoration of truth and doctrinal integrity that was missing prior to the Prophet’s reception of these inspired teachings. (For further information, read the 2nd full paragraph of page 24 of Our Heritage and the heading of D&C 76 as well as D&C 76: 15-19). Our leaders have and do encourage us to use the Joseph Smith Translation in our studies of the scriptures.

Plain and precious doctrines of the gospel have been restored through Joseph Smith

While many gospel doctrines and principles were left unclear, incorrect, or incomplete in existing volumes of scripture at the time of Joseph Smith’s youth, we were given the clear, correct, complete principles and doctrines as a result of his faithful service as he received revelation and inspiration.

Examples of principles or doctrines that needed clarification or correction included:

Subject	Scriptures given thru Joseph Smith
Physical nature of the Godhead	Joseph Smith—History 1:17, D&C 130:1, 22
Melchizedek Priesthood	D&C 84:19-25; 107:1-8, 18-19
Mode of Baptism	D&C 20:71-74; 3 Nephi 11:22-26
3 Kingdoms of Glory	D&C 76:50-112; 131:1
Our Potential—Being like Father	D&C 88:107; 93:20; 132:20-24

The Law of Consecration

Lesson 14 - D&C 42: 30-42; 51; 78; 82; 104:11-18 Our Heritage pg. 26

The Lord revealed the law of consecration to the Saints

In February 1831, just after the Saints commenced gathering in Kirtland, Ohio, the law of consecration was revealed and Saints were commanded to begin living the law. D&C 42:30.

Consecration: The setting apart or dedication of something to the Lord's service.

Law of Consecration: The Lord's way of having individuals consecrate their time, talents, and possessions to the building up of the kingdom and the service of His children.

While this law was observed incompletely and unsuccessfully at various times in Ohio, Missouri, and Utah, it is now in suspense, awaiting a future time when it will be restored. The Church as an entity failed in the effort to live in harmony with the doctrine, so the Lord suspended the practice for now.

Provisions of the law include:

- D&C 42:30 Consecration of possessions: Under the law, Church members voluntarily consecrated their possessions to the Church via a legal deed. See D&C 42:30.
- D&C 42:32; 51:3. Receiving a stewardship: Upon deeding their possessions to the Church, members received a stewardship grant from their bishop. This stewardship was granted from the total consecrated property and the size of it was based on the family's circumstances and needs as determined by the bishop after consultation with the head of the receiving family.
- D&C 42:33; 51:13; 42:34-35. Surpluses: Under the law, if the family had more than they really needed, any and all surpluses produced from the stewardship were to be turned over to the bishop for the bishop's storehouse so that resources would be available when needed for those whose production did not meet their needs. In addition, the bishop used those resources to build houses of worship and fund other worthy causes.
- D&C 78:3; 92:1; 104. The United Order: The Lord revealed in early 1832 that there must be an organization—the “united order”—to regulate and administer the law of consecration among the people. Various revelations gave specific instructions.

Purposes of the law of consecration included:

- D&C 42:30 – care of the poor and needy (verses 31-34 provide elaboration)
- D&C 42:35 – to purchase lands, build houses of worship, and build the New Jerusalem
- D&C 42:40 – to help His people overcome and avoid pride
- D&C 42:42 – to help His people be industrious and avoid idleness
- D&C 51:9 – to help the Lord's people develop unity and be one
- D&C 78:3-7 – to help us be equal in earthly things and prepare for the celestial kingdom
- D&C 78:14 – to help the Church “stand independent above all other creatures”
- D&C 82:17-19 – to help members develop talents for the good of all, seek the interest of their neighbor, and do all things with an eye single to God's glory.

Clearly, this law is not just a worthy economic program or demanding temporal commandment—it is designed to prepare a people for living celestial laws and growing spiritually. D&C 29:34-35.

The law of consecration is an eternal law

Accounts of the Lord's people living the law of consecration are found in the Pearl of Great Price (Moses 7:18), the New Testament (Acts 4:32,34-35), and the Book of Mormon (4 Nephi 1:1-3,15).

We can consecrate our lives to the Lord now

Although living the law of consecration is not now required, we do not have to wait until it is required to learn to live the law. If we learn to obey this spiritual and temporal law now, we will be prepared to live it fully when the Lord asks us to live it in the future. We can choose to:

- Realize that all we now possess is the Lord's
- D&C 104:13-14; D&C 51:19; 78:22 teach ownership, responsibility, and reward.
- Bishop Victor L. Brown said that until we "*feel in total harmony*" that everything we have belongs to the Lord, "*it will be difficult, if not impossible, for us to accept the law of consecration. As we prepare to live this law, we will look forward with great anticipation to the day when the call will come. If, on the other hand, we hope it can be delayed so we can have the pleasure of accumulating material things, we are on the wrong path*" (1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year [1977], 439)

Make the sacrifices that the Lord requires now

Be willing to sacrifice your time, talents, and possessions now so that you will not encounter difficulties later when the Lord implements the full requirements of the law of consecration. *How do we do that?*

- Pay tithing, fast offerings, and give generously in other ways to those in need. Elder Marion G. Romney asked: "*What prohibits us from giving as much in fast offerings as we would have given in surpluses under the United Order? Nothing but our own limitations.*" (Improvement Era, 1966, 537)
- Serve willingly in the Church. D&C 107:99. We should fulfill the callings we receive to the best of our ability, share the gospel with others, do our family history and temple work, and assist those who are new converts or those members who may have weak testimonies to strengthen them.
- Serve a fulltime mission.

Elder Robert D. Hales taught: "*Going on a mission teaches you to live the law of consecration. It may be the only time in your life when you can give to the Lord all your time, talents, and resources. In return the Lord will bless you with His Spirit to be with you. He will be close to you and strengthen you.*" (Ensign, May 1996, 36)

- Develop Christlike love for others
D&C 82:19 and Jacob 2:17 teach how we are to show our love for others. Developing that love for others is essential to living the law of consecration—it is the foundation of that law. Elder Thomas S. Monson tells a story of his youth when his mother would have him deliver Sunday dinner to an elderly neighbor—old Bob. He wondered why he couldn't eat first and take Bob's plate later, but his mother would insist that it be delivered first. Elder Monson remembers how grateful the elderly man was each week for Sis. Monson's compassionate service. He remembers strongly how much better Sunday dinner tasted after he had completed his delivery to the old man. (Ensign, Feb. 1992, 4)
- Strive to consecrate all aspects of our lives to the Lord
Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: "*We tend to think of consecration only in terms of property and money. But there are so many more ways of keeping back part*" (Ensign, Nov 1992, 66)
D&C 64:34 and these examples give us an idea of how we might fall short of the goal:
 - An unwillingness to be completely submissive to the Lord's will.
Elder Maxwell said: "*The submission of one's will is the really the only uniquely personal thing that we have to place on God's altar. ...The many other things we 'give' ...are actually the things He has already given or loaned to us. However, when you and I finally submit ourselves, by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God's will, then we really give something to Him! It is the only possession which is truly ours to give!*" (Ensign, Nov 1995, 24)

- An unwillingness to give up selfish things—our roles, our preeminence, our possessions.
- Letting hobbies or other diversions become too consuming
- Giving commendable civic service but becoming strangers to the temple and the scriptures
- Being dutiful in family responsibilities, but not being gentle and Christlike with some family members
- Building up ourselves first before the kingdom of God
- Being privately prideful while sharing talents publicly
- Accepting a church calling while our hearts are more set on things of the world

We should examine our lives carefully to see how we can consecrate ourselves more fully.

“Seek Ye Earnestly the Best Gifts”

Lesson 15 D&C 46; Articles of Faith 1:7; 1 Corinthians 12-13; Moroni 10:8-18,
Our Heritage 42-43, 47-48, 63

Think about planting a garden and the choices of seeds you would make for the plants in your garden. Would it be the same choice as all the others in the Sunday School class? Obviously, the answer is “No”; but each garden, though it may be quite different, can be beautiful and useful. In the same way, even though each of us may have or cultivate different spiritual gifts, each of us can use those gifts for the benefit of the kingdom. It is our responsibility to nourish our individual gifts of the Spirit so that they become beautiful and useful.

All faithful members of the Church can receive gifts of the Spirit

Gifts of the Spirit are spiritual blessings or abilities that are given through the Holy Ghost. Having been taken from the earth during the Great Apostasy, they have now been restored for the purposes of blessing, edifying, and unifying the Saints as they are properly exercised. Such gifts have been part of the Church throughout this dispensation from the earliest times. Examples from stories in Our Heritage include:

- Newell Knight had the faith to heal – See D&C 46:20
- Philo Dibble and Amanda Smith had the faith to be healed – See D&C 46:19
- Amanda Smith received revelation – Articles of Faith 1:7
- The Prophet Joseph Smith had the gift of prophecy – D&C 46:22
- Dan Jones received the gift to teach – Moroni 10:9-10.

Many spiritual gifts are identified by the Lord in D&C 46, including:

- A testimony of the Savior and His Atonement (13)
- Belief in others’ testimonies of the Savior (14)
- Knowledge of “the differences of administration” used in Church administration (15)
- Discernment “to know the diversities of operation, whether they be of God” which helps us know the source of a teaching or an influence that comes upon us (16)
- Wisdom and knowledge (17-18)
- Faith to be healed (19)
- Faith to heal (20)
- The working of miracles (21)
- Prophecy (22)
- Discerning of spirits (23)
- Speaking in tongues (24)
- Interpretation of tongues (25)
- These gifts are also identified in 1 Corinthians 12:4-12; 13:1-13; Moroni 10: 8-18.

Each member of the Church who has received the gift of the Holy Ghost has been given at least one of these gifts.

God gives gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of His children

The purposes of the gifts of the Spirit are revealed in D&C 46. They include:

- To strengthen and bless us individually – D&C 46:9.
Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught that gifts of the Spirit “*can lead us to God*”.

- They can shield us from the power of the adversary. They can compensate for our inadequacies and repair our imperfections” (Ensign, Sept. 1986, 72)
- To help us serve others – D&C 46:11-12, 26.
Elder Orson Pratt said, “*Spiritual gifts are distributed among the members of the Church, according to their faithfulness, circumstances, natural abilities, duties, and callings; that the whole may be properly instructed, confirmed, perfected, and saved.*” (Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt, comp. N Lundwall [1953], 571)
See Laura Russell Bunker, “The Art of Perspective”, Ensign, Dec. 1998, 54-55 for an example.

Determine which of the gifts in D&C 46:13-25 would be helpful in the following situations:

- A ministering brother is called to the home of one of his families to give a blessing
- A missionary presides over a small branch of Church members
- A young woman is assigned to teach a lesson to her class
- An Aaronic priesthood adviser is responsible for a group of deacons on an overnight camping trip that encounters difficulty
- A Relief Society President assigns ministering sisters to the sisters in the ward
- To help us avoid being deceived - D&C 46:8

We should seek and cultivate gifts of the Spirit

We can discover the spiritual gift(s) that we have been given individually through pondering, prayer, fasting, reading our patriarchal blessing, obeying the commandments, and serving others.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that many gifts of the Spirit, such as wisdom or the gift to heal, are not evident until they are needed. He said that “it would require time and circumstances to call these gifts into operation.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 246)

Ways in which we can seek the gifts of the Spirit include:

- Ask of God and follow the Spirit’s guidance – D&C 46:7, 30
- Seek gifts for the benefit of others, not for selfish reasons – D&C 46:9
- Do all things in the name of Christ – D&C 46:31
- Thank God for the gifts he has given us – D&C 46:32
- Practice virtue and holiness continually – D&C 46:33

Pres. George Q. Cannon said: “*If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. Have I imperfections? I am full of them. What is my duty? To pray to God to give me the gifts that will correct these imperfections. If I am an angry man, it is my duty to pray for charity, which suffereth long and is kind. Am I an envious man? It is my duty to pray for charity, which envieth not. So with all the gifts of the gospel. They are intended for this purpose. No man ought to say, ‘Oh, I cannot help this; it is my nature.’ He is not justified in it, for the reason that God has promised to give strength to correct these things, and to give gifts that will eradicate them.*” (Millennial Star, 23 April 1894, 260)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained how his mother applied the principle of seeking gifts of the Spirit: “*Having lost her husband, my widowed mother was incomplete. How she prayed for what she needed to fulfill her responsibility to raise her three small children! She was seeking, she was worthy, and she was blessed! Her prayers were answered in many ways, including the receipt of spiritual gifts. She had many, but the ones that stand out in my memory are the gifts of faith, testimony, and wisdom. She was a mighty woman in Zion.*” (Ensign, Sept. 1986, 72)

Additional spiritual gifts

- Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: *“Spiritual gifts are endless in number and infinite in variety. Those listed in the revealed word are simply illustrations.”* (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, 371)
- Elder Marvin J. Ashton said some *“less-conspicuous gifts”* include *“the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; ...the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; ...the gift of seeing that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost.”* (Ensign, Nov. 1987, 20)
- Discerning true gifts of the Spirit is important because Satan can try to deceive people with his counterfeits of the genuine gifts. D&C 50 concerns false manifestations of spiritual gifts. We can know the gifts by the fruits they produce. Read D&C 50:17-24.
- D&C 43:8 and 88:122. Teaching by the Spirit includes the concept and practical necessity that we instruct and edify each other.

“Thou Shalt...Offer Up Thy Sacraments upon My Holy Day”

Lesson 16 D&C 59

How do you feel when you enter the temple? Read D&C 109:13. What makes it different from other places? In Genesis 2:1-3, the Lord instituted the Sabbath. What makes it different from other days? This lesson will help us remember what a privilege it is to have the Sabbath day.

The Lord established the Sabbath

The Lord himself established the pattern for the Sabbath during the Creation when He labored six days and rested on the seventh. Since the earliest times, He has commanded His people to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.

In Exodus 20:8-11 and 31:13-17, the Lord gave the commandment repeated many times throughout the scriptures. Again in this dispensation, the Lord, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, has reemphasized the need for faithful saints to attend Church meetings, partake of the sacrament, and rest from their worldly labors. See D&C 59:9-13.

Pay devotions to God by worshipping Him in Sunday Church meetings

D&C 59:9 requires “*Thou shalt go to the house of prayer...upon my holy day*”. Attending Church meetings is both an obligation and a privilege. President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “...*every sacrament meeting ought to be a spiritual feast and a time of spiritual refreshment*”. (Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, 563, 564) Making our attendance spiritually enriching requires coming with an attitude of worship, being punctual, showing reverence, studying lesson material in advance and being prepared to actively participate in discussion, by listening carefully, seeking to strengthen others, and not criticizing speakers or teachers.

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “*We do not go to Sabbath meetings to be entertained or even solely to be instructed, We go to worship the Lord. It is an individual responsibility, and regardless of what is said from the pulpit, if one wishes to worship the Lord in spirit and truth, he may do so by attending his meetings, partaking of the sacrament, and contemplating the beauties of the gospel. If the service is a failure to you, you have failed. No one can worship for you.*” (Ensign, Jan 1978, 4-5)

Elder Boyd K. Packer has expressed concern that “*an increasing number of our leaders and members do not sing the congregational songs.*” He then counseled, “*We should sing the songs of Zion—they are an essential part of our worship.*” (Ensign, Nov 1991, 22) Sacred music adds a great spiritual influence to our meetings.

Elder Boyd K. Packer said that we should be reverent in the chapel so that we do not intrude “*when someone is struggling to feel delicate spiritual communications.*” He also cautioned that “*reverence does not equate with absolute silence. We must be tolerant of little babies, even the occasional outburst from a toddler being ushered out.*” (Ensign, Nov 1991, 22)

Pay devotions to God by partaking of the Sacrament - D&C 59:9, 12

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin said: “*Windows must be washed regularly to clean away dust and dirt...Just as earthly windows need consistent, thorough cleaning, so do the windows of our spirituality...By partaking of the sacrament worthily to renew our baptismal covenants, we clarify our view of life’s eternal purpose and divine priorities. The sacrament prayers invite personal introspection, repentance, and re-dedication as we pledge our willingness to remember our Savior, Jesus the Christ*” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 77)

Pay devotions to God by resting from your labors

D&C 59:10 revealed that we should “*rest from [our] labors*”. Resting from our labors shows that we place the Lord first, above other concerns and desires on that day.

Resting from labors includes avoiding such activities as buying and selling, attending amusements and sporting events, and other such worldly diversions that draw our attention away from the intended purposes of the Lord’s day. In addition, we should avoid mental and emotional “labors” which sap our energy and drain our spirits. There is time enough on other days to worry and bear a load of heavy cares. The Sabbath should be a day of renewal on all fronts.

Presiding Bishop H. David Burton said: “*Now I know it’s hard, particularly for our young people, to choose to observe the Sabbath day when athletic teams on which they want so much to participate regularly schedule games on Sunday. I too know it seems trivial to many who are in need of just a few items on the Sabbath to quickly stop at a convenience store to make a Sunday purchase. But I also know that remembering to keep the Sabbath day holy is one of the most important commandments we can observe in preparing us to be recipients of the whisperings of the Spirit.*” (Ensign, Nov 1998, 9)

While resting from our labors is appropriate, that in no way means that we should be idle. Instead, we should follow that Savior’s example and do well on the Sabbath. President Spencer W. Kimball taught “*The Sabbath is a holy day in which to do worthy and holy things. Abstinence from work and recreation is important, but insufficient. The Sabbath calls for constructive thoughts and acts, and if one merely lounges about doing nothing on the Sabbath, he is breaking it. To observe it, one must be on his knees in prayer, preparing lessons, studying the gospel, meditating, visiting the ill and distressed, writing letters to missionaries, taking a nap, reading wholesome material, and attending all the meetings of that day at which he is expected.*” (Ensign, Jan. 1978, 4)

To decide what is appropriate for Sunday activities, consider the following criteria:

- Does the activity honor God? Is it spiritually uplifting? Does it nurture faith? Does it strengthen the family? Does it help or bless others? Is it different (and better) than the daily activities in which we engage?

Family-centered activities can strengthen the family on the Sabbath.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “*Let the Latter-day Saints be in their homes, teaching their families, reading their scriptures, doing things that are wholesome and beautiful and communing with the Lord on the Sabbath day*” (Ensign, July 1996, 73). President Hinckley further counseled: “*Now I do not want to be prudish. I do not want you to lock your children in the house and read the Bible all afternoon to them. Be wise. Be careful. But make that day a day when you can sit down with your families and talk about sacred and good things*” (Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, 559-560).

The First Presidency gave counsel on the Sabbath when the 3-hour block meeting schedule was announced in 1980. “*A greater responsibility will be placed on the individual members and families for properly observing the Sabbath day. More time will be available for personal study of the scriptures and family-centered gospel study.... It is expected that this new schedule of meetings and activities will result in greater spiritual growth for members of the Church.*” (Church News, 2 Feb. 1980, 3)

*The January 2019 implementation of a 2-hour schedule of meetings places more emphasis on teaching the gospel in our homes.

The Lord blesses those who keep the Sabbath day holy

D&C 59:9, 13, and 15-17 enumerate the blessings the Lord promises to those who keep the Sabbath holy and do not defile it.

D&C 59:9 counsels that we need to stay “*unspotted from the world*”. We may do that through practicing repentance, renewing our baptismal covenants, and directing our thoughts to spiritual concerns and items of eternal significance instead of material and temporal subjects.

D&C 59:13 reminds us that we may receive a fullness of joy from Sabbath observance. Ideally, the rest and re-dedication of the Sabbath will help us feel physically, mentally, and emotionally renewed before the beginning of our typical workweek. If we fully observe the Sabbath, we often feel—and are—more productive on the six workdays.

D&C 59:16-17 contains the Lord’s promise that proper Sabbath observance brings “*the fullness of the earth*” and “*the good things...of the earth*” to us (Isaiah). What do you think this may mean to us?

D&C 59:14 reminds us that the Sabbath was meant to be a day of “rejoicing”, yet many regard it as a day of limitations and regulations, restricting freedom. One way to make the Sabbath a delight is to concentrate on that which we can do rather than that which we should not do. A positive, grateful attitude and seeking positive opportunities overcomes the limitations if we let it.

Suggestions to help those who must work on Sunday:

Although there are times when employers require Sunday work, Latter-day Saints should make conscious decisions to select careers that do not require constant Sunday work. As we counsel with employers, we should request that our desires to keep the Sabbath holy are considered in work scheduling. We should also assure that if we are able to attend meetings and partake of the sacrament in a different ward before or after our Sunday work hours, we take that opportunity so that there is as little negative effect on us as possible. If it is not possible to attend Church meetings, then we should at least devote our free Sunday time to study of the scriptures and appropriate Sabbath activities for ourselves or with our family.

Strengthen your desire to keep the Sabbath day holy. It will bless your life in many ways.

“The Law of Tithing and the Law of the Fast”

Lesson 17 – D&C 59:13-14, 21; 119; 120

The Lord has commanded us to pay tithing. He has promised great blessings to those who obey this commandment.

The Lord’s definition of tithing

On the 8th of July 1838, the Lord gave Joseph a revelation on tithing. D&C 119:3-4 gives us the Lord’s definition of tithing. The First Presidency gave the following definition of tithing: *“The simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely, that the members of the Church should pay ‘one-tenth of all their interest annually,’ which is understood to mean income. No one is justified in making any other statement than this”* (First Presidency letter, 19 Mar. 1970)

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: *“It is remarkable how many excuses can be made and interpretations given as to what constitutes the tenth...It is written, however, that as we measure, it shall be measured to us again. If we are stingy with the Lord, he may be stingy with us, or in other words, withhold His blessings”* (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2 vols. [1953], 2:92)

The Lord’s promises to tithe payers

Malachi 3:10-12 tells what the Lord promises faithful tithe payers.

Malachi 3:8-9. We “rob God” if we do not pay tithes. Read D&C 59:21; 104:14.

Elder John A. Widtsoe spoke of the spiritual blessings that come when we pay tithing: *“The tithe-payer establishes communion with God. This is the happiest reward. Obedience to the law of tithing, as to any other law, brings a deep, inward joy, a satisfaction and understanding that can be won in no other way. Man becomes in a real sense a partner, albeit a humble one, with the Lord in the tremendous, eternal program laid out for human salvation. The principles of truth become clearer of comprehension; the living of them easier of accomplishment. A new nearness is established between man and his Maker. Prayer becomes easier. Doubt retreats; faith advances; certainty and courage buoy up the soul. The spiritual sense is sharpened; the eternal voice is heard more clearly. Man becomes more like his Father in Heaven.”* (Deseret News, 16 May 1936, Church section, 5)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks: *“During World War II, my widowed mother supported her three young children on a schoolteacher’s salary that was meager. When I became conscious that we went without some desirable things because we didn’t have enough money, I asked my mother why she paid so much of her salary as tithing. I have never forgotten her explanation: ‘Dallin, there might be some people who can get along without paying tithing, but we can’t. The Lord has chosen to take your father and leave me to raise you children. I cannot do that without the blessings of the Lord, and I obtain those blessings by paying an honest tithing. When I pay my tithing, I have the Lord’s promise that he will bless us, and we must have those blessings if we are to get along.’”* (Ensign, May 1994, 33)

Reasons for paying tithing

Although we may need the blessings, we should pay tithing because we love the Lord and have faith in Him. Consider how payment of tithing shows that we love the Lord.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin said that *“the payment of tithing has less to do with money, but more to do with faith,”* (Ensign, May 1990, 32)

Elder Marvin J. Ashton: *“Successful financial management in every LDS home begins with the payment of an honest tithe. If our tithing and fast offerings are the first obligations met following the receipt of each paycheck, our commitment to this important gospel principle will be strengthened and the likelihood of financial mismanagement will be reduced. Paying tithing promptly to Him who does not come to check up each month will teach us and our children to be more honest with those physically closer at hand”* (One for the Money: Guide to Family Finance [1992], 3)

Use of tithing funds

In D&C 120, we are informed about who is responsible for determining how the tithing funds are used. The “bishop and his council” refers to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church. The “high council” is the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The Council on the Disposition of the Tithes is therefore, composed of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric.

President Gordon B, Hinckley spoke of the deep respect the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes has for the tithing funds: *“I keep on the credenza behind my desk a widow’s mite that was given me in Jerusalem many years ago as a reminder, a constant reminder, of the sanctity of the funds with which we have to deal. They come from the widow; they are her offering as well as the tithe of the rich man, and they are to be used with care and discretion for the purposes of the Lord. We treat them carefully and safeguard them and try in every way that we can to see that they are used as we feel the Lord would have them used for the upbuilding of His work and the betterment of people”* (Ensign, May 1994, 35)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained how tithing funds are used: *“[Tithing] funds are spent to build and maintain temples and houses of worship, to conduct our worldwide missionary work, to translate and publish scriptures, to provide resources to redeem the dead, to fund religious education, and to support other Church purposes selected by the designated servants of the Lord”* (Ensign, May 1994, 35)

The Lord has commanded us to fast and to pay generous fast offerings

In this dispensation, the Lord restored the law of the fast. We have been instructed that a proper fast consists of abstaining from food and drink for two consecutive meals, attending fast and testimony meeting, and contributing a generous fast offering. Fasting may also be appropriate when special needs exist on days other than the normal monthly Fast Sunday.

Purpose, Preparation and Prayer are required to have a joyous experience when we fast. Otherwise, we may simply be going without food and will not have a spiritual benefit from the abstinence.

Purposes of fasting may include: drawing nearer to the Lord, receiving guidance, increasing our spiritual strength, humbling ourselves, subordinating our bodily needs to our spiritual desires, overcoming a weakness or temptation, strengthening our testimony, or seeking blessings for others.

Preparation for fasting can make the experience more meaningful. We can choose a specific reason for fasting, teach our family members the law of the fast and assure that they understand the doctrine, ponder the needs of loved ones and family members, and pay close attention to natural disasters or other problems which could be the subject of our fast.

Prayer should begin our fast, be part of the duration of the fast, and end our fast.

A proper fast must also include the giving of a generous fast offering. These funds are then used to care for the poor and needy, first in the ward and then in the stake where the member resides. The

bishop may use them for food, clothing, shelter or other life-sustaining aid. This is necessary for us to serve others and show our love for those in need.

President Spencer W. Kimball said: *“Sometimes we have been a bit penurious [unwilling to share] and figured that for breakfast we had one egg and that cost so many cents and then we give that to the Lord. I think that when we are affluent, as many of us are, that we ought to be very, very generous... and give, instead of the amount we saved by two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it.”* (Conf. Rpt. April 1974, 184)

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“Think...of what would happen if the principles of fast day and the fast offering were observed throughout the world. The hungry would be fed, the naked clothed, the homeless sheltered. Our burdens of taxes would be lightened. The giver would not suffer but would be blessed by his small abstinence. A new measure of concern and unselfishness would grow in the hearts of people everywhere.”* (Ensign, May 1991, 52-53)

“Establish...a House of God”

Lesson 18 – D&C 95; 109; 110. Our Heritage pg. 33-36

Background: As far as we know, only four temples were built by the Lord’s covenant people before our dispensation. Solomon’s temple was the first and it was rebuilt twice. It was also known as the temple of Zerubbabel and the temple of Herod. The Book of Mormon mentions three other temples—one built by Nephi (2 Nephi 5:16), another located in the land of Zarahemla (Mosiah 1:10) where King Benjamin gave his farewell address, and the third being the Bountiful temple where people gathered after the resurrection of the Savior (3 Nephi 11:1). At the beginning of this dispensation, Joseph Smith was a temple builder who constructed or planned five temples: Kirtland, Independence, Far West, Adam-On-di-Ahman, and Nauvoo. Today, we follow his example, having over 160 temples providing eternal spiritual opportunities for Saints all over the world.

The Lord commanded the Saints to build the Kirtland temple.

In D&C 95, the Lord called on His people to repent of their disobedience and begin immediately to construct the temple in Kirtland. They had previously been commanded in December 1832 to build the temple, but they had accomplished nothing in that five months. However, only four days after D&C 95 was received, digging of the foundation trenches and cutting of stone commenced.

The purpose(s) of the Kirtland Temple differed from that of present-day temples where we perform saving ordinances for the living and the dead. Its purposes included:

- Preparation of the apostles and pouring out of His Spirit on “all flesh” (D&C 95:3-4)
- Endowment of His chosen servants with power from on high (95:8-9)
- Offering of the sacrament, preaching, fasting, prayer; and a school for the apostles (95:16-17)
- A place for the personal appearance of the Savior (109:5)
- Establishment of a house of prayer, fasting, faith, learning, glory, order, and of God. (109:8)

D&C 95:13-17 gave instructions to the Prophet about how the temple should be built:

- It should not be after the manner of the world (13)
- It should measure 55’ x 65’ in the inner court (15)
- The lower part of the inner court was to be dedicated to the sacrament offering, preaching, fasting, prayer, and the offering of holy desires unto the Lord. (16)
- The higher part of the inner court was to be the school of the prophets. (17)

In addition, when some workers suggested a log or board construction, the Prophet replied: *“Shall we...build a house for our God, of logs? No...I have a plan of the house of the Lord, given by himself; and you will soon see by this, the difference between our calculations and his idea of things.”* (History of Joseph Smith, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 230)

A vision given to the First Presidency revealed the plan for the temple. President Fredrick G. Williams said that a model of the building “appeared within viewing distance....After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seemed to come right over us.”

He later reported that the finished building looked exactly as it had been seen in vision. (In The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith, comp. Lyndon W. Cook [1981], 198)

Today, the First Presidency receives revelation that determines when and where temples are built.

The Saints were blessed for their great sacrifices in building the temple

D&C 109:5 indicates that the Kirtland Temple was built in a time of tribulation and poverty. The property was obtained after a new convert, John Tanner, was prompted by the Lord to move to Kirtland from New York. Upon arrival, he provided the \$2000 that purchased the farm on which the temple was built. The Saints consecrated their time, talents, and means for three years as they labored on the temple. While the brethren provided labor and skill and guarded the temple site at night, the sisters spun and knit to clothe the workers. (Our Heritage, 33-34)

Blessings attendant to the completion of the temple included visions and the ministering of angels; it was a time of rejoicing according to the Prophet. The greatest blessings came with the dedication of the temple on 27 March 1836 as approximately 1,000 people gathered at the site. *“The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning”* was written for the dedication and the Prophet, Sidney Rigdon, and others delivered sermons. Eliza R. Snow recorded that *“Angels appeared to some, while a sense of divine presence was realized by all present, and each heart was filled with ‘joy inexpressible and full of glory’.”*

Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple

The Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple during a 7-hour service on March 27, 1836. D&C 109 is the dedicatory prayer as received in revelation from the Lord. That prayer was pronounced along with the singing of hymns, the bearing of testimonies, the administration of the sacrament, the delivery of sermons, and the observance of a solemn assembly in which the Prophet and other Church leaders were sustained by those in attendance. The conclusion of the dedication came as the Saints participated in the Hosanna Shout, an event that is part of the dedication of each new house of the Lord.

Responsibilities of members with regard to temples include:

- D&C 109:7, 14 – We should seek learning diligently by study and by faith
- D&C 109:17-19 – Our incomings, outgoings, and salutations should be in the name of the Lord
- D&C 109:20-21 We must be worthy (as verified by a recommend) and clean to enter
- D&C 109:23 When departing the temple, we should bear gospel tidings to the ends of the earth

In the dedicatory prayer, the Prophet petitioned the Lord for numerous blessings:

- D&C 109:15 The Saints would receive of the fullness of the Holy Ghost
- D&C 109:22 The Saints would leave the temple armed with power and watched over by angels
- D&C 109:25-26 No weapon or wickedness would prevail against the Saints
- D&C 109:32-33 The Lord would break off the yoke of affliction from the Saints
- D&C 109:36-37 Spiritual manifestations, like on the Day of Pentecost, would be poured out
- D&C 109:54-58 The Lord would prepare the hearts of people across the world for His gospel
- D&C 109:61-64, 67 The gathering of the House of Israel would begin
- D&C 109:72-74 The Church would fill the whole earth

The Lord accepted the Kirtland Temple, and ancient prophets restored priesthood keys

In D&C 95:8, the Lord had promised to endow his servants with power from on high after the completion of the Kirtland Temple. The promised endowment consisted of the Savior’s visit, an outpouring of the Spirit, numerous revelations, and the restoration of priesthood keys. The result was increased power and ability being enjoyed by His faithful servants.

In D&C 110:1-3, the Prophet described the appearance of the Savior as He accepted the Kirtland Temple. His remarks about the temple are contained in D&C 110:6-10.

Keys were restored by Moses, Elias, and Elijah as recorded in D&C 110:11-16.

Moses restored the keys of the gathering of Israel; Elias the keys of the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham (see Abraham 2:9-11); and Elijah the keys of the sealing power.

Temple building and temple work accelerate in our day

(Temples in 1980=19, 1997=51, 2000=100, 2018=160)

Temple construction has accelerated as President Gordon B. Hinckley announced plans to construct smaller temples at the October 1997 General Conference. He set the goal of 100 temples by the end of the year 2000 and achieved it. In three years, as many temples were built as had been constructed in the Church's first 167 years. In conjunction with that effort, Church leaders placed greater emphasis on temple work. In D&C 138:53-56, we recognize that the worthy members of today are among the *"choice spirits who were reserved to come forth in the fullness of times to take part in...the building of temples and the performance of ordinances therein."*

President Howard W. Hunter said: *"Let us be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people. Let us hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow. Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us go also for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which is provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls. The temple is a place of beauty, it is a place of revelation, it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us"* (Ensign, Oct. 1994, 5).

It is time for each of us to determine how we will support this heavenly mission to redeem the dead. We should be just as dedicated as were the early Saints at Kirtland in faithfully supporting the building of temples and the use of the temples near us. If we will be faithful in this effort, the Lord will bless us as he did the Saints of Kirtland for our righteous work.

Do you display pictures of the temple(s) in your home? Pres Howard W. Hunter said: *"Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing."* (Ensign, Nov 94, 8)

“The Plan of Salvation”

Lesson 19

This lesson should help us understand the grand scope of the plan of salvation and encourage us to live according to our knowledge of the plan. This lesson is an overview, giving insight into how elements of the plan relate to one another.

The plan of salvation is “*one of heaven’s best gifts to mankind.*”

The Father’s plan for our existence has variously been called:

The Plan of Salvation (Alma 24:14; 42:5; Moses 6:62)

The Plan of Happiness (Alma 42:8, 16)

The Plan of Redemption (Jacob 6:8; Alma 12:25-33)

The Plan of Restoration (Alma 41:2)

The Plan of Mercy (Alma 42:15, 31)

These words emphasize various benefits and features of the Father’s plan for us. It can certainly bring us happiness if we follow the commandments and live up to our potential.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “*The great plan of salvation is a theme which ought to occupy our strict attention, and be regarded as one of heaven’s best gifts to mankind*” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 68)

Ask yourself: Are you giving the plan of salvation your “strict attention”?

Premortal life

As members of the Church, we have been blessed with an increased knowledge and understanding of our premortal existence. The increased knowledge includes:

- Understanding our literal relationship to God as spirit sons and daughters who lived with Him before we came to earth in mortality. D&C 76:24; 93:29. Our knowledge of this special relationship should influence our behavior and attitudes here on earth.
- A knowledge that we participated in the council in heaven and accepted the Father’s plan for our salvation and exaltation. 2 Nephi 2:24-26, Alma 34:8-9, and Abraham 3:24-25 detail elements of the plan that was presented and approved. Those elements include the Atonement and mission of Christ, the creation of this earth, the Fall of man, the plan for receiving bodies and being tested, and free moral agency—the ability and opportunity to choose good or evil.
- Jehovah’s response to the plan of salvation as He became the central figure on whom the whole plan depended for its success.
- Moses 4:2; D&C 19:16-19 and 76:40-42 demonstrate how the Savior obeyed the Father’s will.
- Rebelling against the plan of salvation, Lucifer sought to withhold free moral agency, force and compel our behavior, and gain the Father’s power for himself. (Moses 4:1, 3; D&C 29:36) Becoming Satan, he and his followers were cast out of Father’s presence, losing their opportunity for mortality and salvation. (D&C 29:36-38; 76:25-27; Moses 4:4; Abraham 3:26). It is important that we accept the literal existence of Satan just as we accept the existence of Our Heavenly Father.
- When the plan of salvation was accepted, we were joyful. According to latter-day prophets, Job 38:4-7, especially verse 7, indicates the way we felt on that occasion. Knowledge of our premortal acceptance should help us as we face the trials and tribulations of life.
- Great and noble spirits were chosen by the Father and foreordained to carry out important responsibilities on the earth as the work progressed and the plan was executed. D&C 138:55-56; Abraham 3:22-23, and Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 365.

Mortal life

Since we all kept our “first estate”, our premortal life, we have come to the “second estate” or mortality. (Abraham 3:26) D&C 29:40 explains that we entered mortality through the Fall of Adam and Eve, so we now exist in a fallen state as mortals subject to temptation and trials as well as the two deaths—physical and spiritual. The necessity of this step for our eternal progress is taught by modern-day revelation. Eve put it in perspective when she said: *“Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient”* (Moses 5:11)

Purposes of this mortal life include:

- Reception of a physical body. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom” (TPJS, 181)
- To prove our faithfulness through obedience to all of God’s commandments (Abraham 3:25-26). This includes the doctrine of repentance and receiving the ordinances of salvation.
- To form eternal families, sealing parents and children through temple ordinances. (Moses 2:28; D&C 93:40; 131:1-4; 138:48). The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles proclaimed that “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children...The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Ensign, Nov 1995, 102)

Temptation from Satan is a part of mortal life (D&C 29:39) for a wise purpose—to allow us to choose good over evil and learn by our experiences to make wise choices with desirable consequences. Agency is an important part of mortality as taught in D&C 58:27-28; 101:78; and 2 Nephi 2:25-27.

Life after death - Life does not end at physical death.

When we die, our spirits enter the spirit world. Our mortal record will heavily influence our conditions in the postmortal spirit world. (Alma 34:34; 40:11-14)

D&C 137:7-9 and 138:30-34 teach that those who have not had the opportunity to receive the gospel in mortality will be presented with the choice after this life. If they accept the gospel and qualify themselves, they can inherit all that they merit by their works and desires.

D&C 128:6-8, 15 indicate that we can help our ancestors receive all the blessings of the gospel by acting as proxies for them where necessary and appropriate and that for us to be perfect, we need to help them [the dead] become perfected.

Physical and spiritual death came by the Fall of man through Adam’s choice. D&C 88:14-16 and 93:33 teach that we will be redeemed from the grave [temporal death] through the Atonement of Christ with the potential for a “fullness of joy”. Alma 42:11-13, 15 teach deliverance from spiritual death through the mercy of the Savior if we choose to repent of our sins and sincerely seek forgiveness.

D&C 76:111 teaches that we will be returned to the presence of God to be judged according to our works; inheriting the place we deserve in the celestial, terrestrial, or telestial degree of glory based on the way in which we have “received the testimony of Jesus.”

(D&C 76:51) Our next lesson will review the doctrines concerning the three kingdoms of glory.

President Boyd K. Packer said: *“There are three parts to the plan. You are in the second or the middle part, the one in which you will be tested by temptation, by trials, perhaps by tragedy.... Remember this! The line “And they all lived happily ever after” is never written into the second act [of the play]. That line belongs in the third act, when the mysteries are solved and everything is put right... Until you have a broad perspective of the eternal nature of [the plan], you won’t make sense out of the inequities in life. Some are born with so little and others with so much. Some are born in poverty, with handicaps, with pain, with suffering. Some experience premature death, even innocent children. There are brutal, unforgiving forces of nature and the brutality of man to man. We have seen a lot of that recently. Do not suppose that God willfully causes that which, for His own purposes, he permits. When you know the plan and the purpose of it all, even these things will manifest a loving Father in Heaven”* (The Play and the Plan, [7 May 1995], 1-2)

“The Kingdoms of Glory”

Lesson 20 – D&C 76; 131; 132:19-24; 137

Our last lesson on the Plan of Salvation reviewed teachings on three stages of our eternal existence: premortal life, mortality, and life after death. We would remain woefully ignorant about the third stage—life after death—if it were not for D&C sections 76, 131, and 137. President Wilford Woodruff said: *“I will refer to the ‘Vision’ alone, as a revelation which gives more light, more truth, and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be”* (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 47-48).

Today, we will review teachings about the eternal inheritances in the kingdoms of glory and seek to understand how we might merit that inheritance along with our families.

The kingdoms of glory and “the testimony of Jesus” D&C 76:11-24, 40-43, 119.

D&C 76:11-19 and the heading to D&C 76 provide a look at the circumstances that led up to the reception of D&C 76 – “The Vision”—by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. This vision, from start to finish, is a testimony of Christ and His mission and Atonement. Look specifically at 76:20-24 and 76:119 for strong testimony of the Savior. Look also at D&C 76: 40-43.

As we discuss the three kingdoms or “degrees” of glory—the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial—in which most people will have an inheritance, consider how you have received “the testimony of Jesus” (D&C 76:51) to see which kingdom you think your choices will entitle you to inhabit for eternity. Remember that your reward will depend on not only what you do here, but also why you did it. Doing the right things for the right reasons is required to merit celestial glory.

Perdition – a state of loss and destruction (not a kingdom of glory)

D&C 76:25-26, 31-32. This state of existence after mortality is the consequence of choosing to follow Satan rather than the Savior in this life. The “sons of Perdition” will dwell in this state because they chose the enticings of Satan over the invitation of Christ.

(**Note: We are counseled by our leaders to avoid speculation on this subject and focus only on what has been taught in the scriptures and by latter-day prophets.)

- D&C 29:36-37; 76:25-28; Moses 4:1-3 record Lucifer’s expulsion from the Council in Heaven and his banishment to earth.
- D&C 76:29 and Moses 4:4 indicate that after being cast out, he made war on the saints.
- D&C 10:5; 27:15-18 tell us that we will win the war with Satan and his forces if we will pray always, be faithful and believing, prepare and protect ourselves, put on the whole armor of God, and do all that we can to stand firm in the gospel. We must be righteous, truthful, devoted to the gospel of peace, shielded with faith, partakers of salvation, armed with the Spirit and the word of the Lord, and endure faithfully to the end. (Teacher’s note: He cautions us to prepare for the battles and the war—he does not say that we will not have to struggle in that conflict—he only promises that we can win.)
- D&C 76:32-34, 36-38, and 44-49 reveal the suffering of the sons of perdition. They are condemned to experience this eternal punishment and tremendous suffering because they allowed themselves to be overcome in the war with Satan’s armies; denying the Holy Ghost and having crucified the Lord (see D&C 76:30-31, 35). The Prophet Joseph Smith said: *“What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned*

against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 385).

The Telestial kingdom “The glory of the stars” (D&C 76:81, 98)

The criteria for those who will inherit this lowest kingdom of glory are recorded in D&C 76:81-83, 98-101, 103. They did not receive the gospel of Christ, the testimony of Jesus, the prophets, or the everlasting covenant, but neither did they deny the Holy Spirit. These are the liars, sorcerers, adulterers, whoremongers, and those who love and make lies.

- The limitations on those in this kingdom are found in D&C 76:84-86, 102, 104-106, 112. (Note: The “hell” referred to in verses 84 and 106 is defined as the temporary spirit prison.) Telestial beings will suffer conditions including being cast into hell, waiting till the last resurrection, not receiving “of his fullness”, not being gathered with the saints, suffering the wrath of God on earth and eternal fire, and suffering until the fullness of times when they will become servants outside the presence of God.

The Terrestrial kingdom “The glory of the moon” (D&C 76:78, 97)

The terrestrial kingdom will be the inheritance of those who are described in D&C 76:71-75, 79. These died without law, received the testimony of Jesus only in the spirit world, were honorable people deceived by men, and were not valiant in the testimony of Jesus.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: *“Those destined to inherit the terrestrial kingdom are: (1) those who died ‘without law’—those heathen and pagan people who do not hear the gospel in this life, and who would not accept it with all their hearts should they hear it; (2) those who hear and reject the gospel in this life and then accept it in the spirit world; (3) those ‘who are the honorable men of the earth, who [are] blinded by the craftiness of men’; and (4) those who are lukewarm members of the true church and who have testimonies, but who are not true and faithful in all things”* (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 146)

In D&C 76:76-78 we find that conditions and limitations on the terrestrial inhabitants include:

- They receive visits from the Savior but not the Father, and have less than a fullness of glory.

Guidance on how to avoid “the craftiness of men” is given in D&C 3:7-8; 21:4-6; 52:14-20.

1. Fear (respect) God more than man,
2. Be faithful—relying on God in times of trouble,
3. Give heed to the prophets,
4. Walk in holiness (live righteously),
5. Pray,
6. Obey the Lord’s commandments,
7. Have a contrite spirit,
8. Use meek and edifying language, and
9. Bring forth good fruits (works).

The Celestial Kingdom “The glory of the sun” (D&C 76:70, 78, 96)

Those inheriting this highest degree of glory are described in D&C 76:50-53, 68-69.

Note that the Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Ghost who functions in his capacity as the confirmer and witness of validity of the ordinances and covenants we have received and fulfilled honorably.

- They received the testimony of Jesus, were baptized and cleansed of sin, received the Holy Ghost, overcame the world through faith, are just and true, are known by Christ and the Father, or are “just men made perfect”.
- Not quite four years after receiving D&C 76, “The Vision”, the Prophet Joseph Smith received another vision, recorded in D&C 137, in which he beheld Alvin, his other brother who had died a dozen years earlier—seven years before the Church was restored in this dispensation. He recognized that Alvin was in the celestial kingdom. From this (D&C 137:7-9), he learned of the mercy of Christ and the benefit it has for those who did not hear the gospel in this life, but who—if they had been privileged to hear it—would have accepted it with all their hearts. Next, in D&C 137:10, he saw the condition of children who die before the age of accountability. These teachings bring us comforting doctrine that is not taught by many other churches.
- Blessings received in the celestial kingdom include those recorded in D&C 76:54-67, 94-95: Membership and fellowship in the Church of the Firstborn; the trust of their Father; ordination as priests and kings; reception of the fullness of the Father’s gospel, his glory, and his priesthood power; godhood; the ability to overcome all things; dwelling with God forever; coming forth in the first resurrection; and fellowship with prophets and holy men (and women).
- Our testimony of Jesus is a determining factor in our assignment to a kingdom of glory. We must be “valiant in the testimony of Jesus”. According to Elder Bruce R. McConkie, that means:
 - “*...be courageous and bold... fight the good fight of faith...* ”; *obeying “the whole law of gospel”*; “*...come unto Christ, and be perfected in him*”; *love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength*”
 - “*...believe in Christ and his gospel with unshakable conviction*”; “*know the divinity of the work*”
 - “*...be doers of the word and not hearers only*” “*...conformity and personal righteousness*”
 - “*...press forward with steadfastness in Christ*”; “*have a bright hope*”; “*endure to the end*”
 - “*...live our religion, to practice what we preach, to keep the commandments*”
 - “*...manifest pure religion*” “*...keeping ourselves ‘unspotted from the world’*”
 - “*...bridle our passions*” “*...control our appetites*” “*...be morally clean*” “*...tithe ...honor the Sabbath*”
 - “*...pray with full purpose of heart*” “*...walk on the Lord’s side on every issue*” “*be one with Him*”

Some eleven years after D&C 76 was revealed, the Prophet taught us in D&C 131:1 that there are three degrees within the celestial kingdom. The highest degree of glory is reserved for those who are exalted... D&C 131:1-3; 132:19. Celestial beings inherit thrones, kingdoms, ...powers... and eternal increase.

- Only those in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom will have “eternal increase”—spirit children in the eternities. D&C 131:4; 132:19-20. They will be gods because they have no end ..and all power.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants...should be treasured by all members of the Church as a priceless heritage. It should strengthen their faith and be to them an incentive to seek the exaltation promised to all who are just and true” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2 vols. [1953], 1:279)

The great blessings of exaltation in the celestial kingdom are available to all people through the mercy and suffering of Jesus Christ. We can be perfected and be exalted with our families in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom if we are willing to obey the commandments, receive the ordinances of salvation, and keep all of the covenants we make with our Heavenly Father.

“Looking Forth for the Great Day of the Lord to Come”

Lesson 21 – D&C 29:9-29; 34:5-12; 45:16-75; 88:86-99; 101:22-34; 133

The birth of Jesus and His Second Coming are two of the most glorious events in the history of the world. Due to his humble circumstances in mortality, Jesus was generally not recognized as the Promised Messiah. His Second Coming will be what many expected the first time—a great event in which He comes in power and glory. This lesson will cover teachings about both His Second Coming and millennial reign on earth.

The Savior will return to earth in power and great glory

In the dispensation of the fullness of times, we have revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants that teach us about the Second Coming, the events that will precede His coming, and the 1000-year millennial reign. Prophecies about the Second Coming include:

- D&C 29:9-11; 45:44 – Christ will come in power and glory; the proud and wicked will be burned, and wickedness will cease on the face of the earth.
- D&C 34:7, 12; 43:17; 110:16 – The time of the Second coming is at hand
- D&C 34:8, 11; 63:34 – All nations will tremble; His power and influence will be with the faithful
- D&C 45:45-54; 88:96-99 – Deceased Saints will rise to meet the Savior. Living Saints will be gathered to welcome Him. He will appear on the Mount of Olives, which will divide. Jews will recognize the Messiah and suffer remorse for having persecuted Him when He came into mortality and during His ministry. Then, those inhabitants of the spirit prison who received the gospel there will be resurrected.
- D&C 49:6 – All enemies will be under His feet (subjected to Him)
- D&C 49:7 – No one, not even the angels know when the day or hour of the Second Coming. (Note: What were the teachings of Joseph Smith about this? You might do some research on it.)
- D&C 133:46-53 – The Savior’s robes will be red and vengeance will come upon the wicked, while the righteous will be redeemed.

The Millennium will be a time of joy and peace

Our 10th Article of Faith states that Christ will “*reign personally on the earth*” and “*the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory*” during the Millennium. D&C 101 describes some of the Millennial conditions:

- 101:23 – Everyone will be able to see the Savior
- 101:24 – The wicked will be destroyed
- 101:25 – The earth will be in a renewed state
- 101:26 – People and animals will coexist peacefully together
- 101:27 – Righteous desires will be granted
- 101:28; 45:55; 88:110 – Satan will be bound (how and by whom?) and we will not allow him to tempt us or gain power over us
- 101:29 – No sorrow or death
- 101:30-31 – The elderly will change suddenly from mortality to immortality
- 101:32-34 – All things about the earth and heaven, their creation and destiny, will be revealed
- 45:58 – Children will grow up without sin
- 45:59; 133:25 – The Lord will be the king and the lawgiver for the entire earth

Understanding the Millennial conditions should be a blessing to us now and should strengthen our confidence in the Savior’s promises and the teachings of the prophets.

We must Prepare for the Second Coming

D&C 133:4, 10-11 emphasizes the need to be properly prepared for the Second Coming. The Lord's counsel is that *our preparation should be an integral part of our daily lives.*

- D&C 61:38 - Be watchful for signs of the Savior's coming
- D&C 45:36-39 this parable teaches why these signs have been (or will be) given to us

Positive signs of the Second Coming include:

- D&C 45:9; 133:57-58 – The fullness of the gospel will be restored
- D&C 45:66-71 – The new Jerusalem will be built as a place of refuge for the righteous
- D&C 65:2-6 – God's kingdom will be established on the earth
- D&C 110:11-16 – The keys of the Priesthood will be restored
- D&C 133:8-9, 36-39 – The gospel will be preached throughout the world

Negative signs of the Second Coming include:

- D&C 29:15; 88:91 – weeping, despair, fear...men's hearts will fail them
 - D&C 29:16; 45:31; 112:24 – Famines, scourges, disease, and desolation
 - D&C 34:9; 45:40-42; 88:87 – Signs and wonders in the heavens and the earth
 - D&C 45:26; 63:33 – wars and rumors of wars...the whole earth in commotion
 - D&C 45:27 – The love of men will wax cold and iniquity will abound
 - D&C 45:33; 88:89-90 – Earthquakes, tempests, tidal waves. Hard hearts, conflict
- Some of these signs have occurred, others are occurring, and others will yet come.

Throughout these times, the Lord counseled in D&C 45:35 that we “be not troubled”. It will not be easy, but we as Latter-day Saints can maintain a bright hope and be full of faith even while surrounded on all sides by turmoil, sin, and distress. It's a matter of trusting the Lord, his promises, and his anointed leaders who hold the earthly keys during these troubled times!

Stand in holy places

The main preparatory steps we can take are daily acts of righteousness. Each of the following scriptures counsels us with things we can do to prepare:

- D&C 27:15; 33:17 – Be steadfast in righteousness
- D&C 34:6; 39:19-20; 43:20-23 – Cry repentance and practice repentance as needed
- D&C 45:32; 87:8; 101:22-23 – Stand in holy places such as our temples, our chapels, our homes, and the stakes of Zion. Even in worldly environments, we must strive to assure that the wickedness and temptations around us do not keep us from being holy and worthy.
- D&C 45:56-57 – Keep the Holy Ghost as our guide throughout our lives

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: *“How do you prepare for the Second Coming? Well, you just do not worry about it. You just live the kind of life that if the Second Coming were to happen tomorrow, you would be ready. Nobody knows when it is going to happen...Our responsibility is to prepare ourselves, to live worthy of the association of the Savior, to deport ourselves in such a way that we would not be embarrassed if He were to come among us. That is a challenge in this day and age.”* (Church News, 2 Jan 1999, 2)

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve gave the following counsel: *“Teenagers also sometimes think, ‘What's the use? The world will soon be blown all apart and come to an end.’ That feeling comes from fear, not from faith. No one knows the hour or the day (see D&C 49:7), but the end cannot come until all of the purposes of the Lord are fulfilled. Everything that I have learned from the revelations and from life convinces me that there is time and to spare for you to carefully*

prepare for a long life. One day you will cope with teenage children of your own. That will serve you right. Later, you will spoil your grandchildren, and they in turn spoil theirs. If an earlier end should happen to come to one, that is more reason to do things right” (Ensign, May 1989, 59)

Since the Lord has revealed more to us than to any other people at any time in the world’s history, we should use that knowledge to prepare and stand steadfastly in righteousness as the signs unfold. Remember that His Second Coming will be a “great and dreadful day”—great for the righteous and dreadful for the wicked. We, therefore, should be joyful as we contemplate the coming of a joyful day!

The parable of the ten virgins is based on ancient Jewish wedding traditions. In Jesus’ time, the bridegroom and his friends would escort the bride from her home to the home of the bridegroom. Along the way, the friends of the bride waited to join them. When they arrived at the bridegroom’s home, they all went inside for the wedding. This usually took place in the evening, so those waiting for the bride usually carried small lamps fueled by oil. In the parable, the bridegroom represents the Savior, the virgins represent the members of the Church. The wedding represents the Savior’s Second Coming. The oil in the lamps represents preparation for the Second Coming.

- President Spencer W. Kimball said: *“In the parable, oil can be purchased at the market. In our lives the oil of preparedness is accumulated drop by drop in righteous living. Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to the store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity—these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can, at midnight, refuel our exhausted lamps”* (Faith Precedes the Miracle, [1972], 256).

The Word of Wisdom: “A Principle with Promise”

Lesson 22 – D&C 89; 49:19-21; 59:15-21; 88:124; Our Heritage pgs. 25-26

Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley: *“I recall a bishop’s telling me of a woman who came to get a [temple] recommend. When asked if she observed the Word of Wisdom, she said that she occasionally drank a cup of coffee. She said, ‘Now, bishop, you’re not going to let that keep me from going to the temple, are you?’ To which he replied, ‘Sister, surely you will not let a cup of coffee stand between you and the house of the Lord.’ ”* (Ensign, May 1990, 51)

As we study the clear, simple law of health given by the Lord, it is important to remember the physical dangers inherent in violating this commandment, but the most important thing we should remember is the sacred promise of physical and spiritual blessings for faithful, loving obedience.

Why was the Word of Wisdom revealed?

- Our bodies were provided by Heavenly Father for a divine purpose. They are a necessary part of His plan for our eternal progression.
- He has given us a stewardship to care for those bodies, revealing the principles we need to observe to keep our bodies clean and pure.
- Obedience to this law of health expresses our love for Father and our gratitude for our bodies and the doctrine of eternal progress.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 6:19-20 give reasons for caring for our bodies as temples of our spirits. We also need pure bodies so that the Holy Ghost can be our companion. Caring for our bodies physically has a definite effect on our spiritual health.

D&C 89:4 gives another reason for the Lord’s revelation of the Word of Wisdom. An example of the *“evils and designs...in the hearts of conspiring men”* that are associated with harmful substances include the misrepresentations associated with happiness, success, and social relationships that are put forth in advertising and entertainment. TV and movies continue to encourage the use and abuse of substances.

The Lord’s love for us is indicated by the fact that he gave us this law of health long before science began to discover and understand the effect of both harmful and healthful substances on our bodies. He was also loving in His requirement for obedience when He gave 18 years (a generation) between revealing the principles in 1833 and making them a commandment in 1851. He gave the opportunity for those addicted to tobacco and/or strong drink, etc. to overcome their difficulties before He asked the Saints to observe these principles to be regarded as being “worthy” for full fellowship in the Church.

The Lord’s counsel about that which is not good for the body

(Note: Our leaders have asked that during the discussion of what is not good and what is good for the body, that we focus on basic health principles revealed by the Lord—taking care not to discuss “health fads, special diets, and other kinds of food and drink”.)

The Lord has not specified everything that we should and should not partake of. *“Such revelation is unnecessary,”* President Joseph Fielding Smith said. *“The Word of Wisdom is a basic law. It points the way and gives us ample instruction in regard to both food and drink...If we sincerely follow what is written with the aid of the Spirit of the Lord,...we will know what is good and what is bad for the body”* (Improvement Era, Feb 1956, 78-79)

The Lord's counsel about that which is not good for the body:

- D&C 89:5-7 – Wine and strong drink (alcoholic beverages)
- D&C 89:8 – Tobacco (smoking and smokeless tobacco use)
- D&C 89:9 – Hot drinks, defined as tea and coffee (That IS the doctrinal requirement)

In addition, we should not: use any substance that contains illegal drugs, use any habit-forming substances except under the care of a competent physician, or misuse prescription or over-the-counter drugs. (The wise Latter-day Saint will exercise good judgment rather than continually rely on antacids.)

The First Presidency has declared: *“Drunken with strong drink, men have lost their reason; their counsel has been destroyed; their judgment and vision are fled...Drink has brought more woe and misery, broken more hearts, wrecked more homes, committed more crimes, filled more coffins, than all the wars the world has suffered.”* (Conf. Report, Oct. 1942, 8)

The Lord's counsel about that which is good for the body

- D&C 89:10 – Wholesome herbs—nourishing vegetables and plants
- D&C 89:11 – Fruit
- D&C 89:12 – Flesh of beasts and fowls (Note the guidance on using meats; see also D&C 49:19, 21)
- D&C 89:14-17 – Grains (Note the guidance on using grains in verses 14 and 16)
- D&C 88:124 – retiring to bed early and rising early—getting adequate sleep

President Brigham Young said: *“Instead of doing two days' work in one day, wisdom would dictate to [the Saints] that if they desire long life and good health, they must, after sufficient exertion, allow the body to rest before it is entirely exhausted. When exhausted, some argue that they need stimulants... But instead of these kind of stimulants they should recruit by rest”* (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 187).

In D&C 89:11, we are counseled to use food *“with prudence”* and *“with...thanksgiving”*. This should prompt us to eat nourishing food and use moderation in both the kind and amount of food we consume. We should also remember to offer thanks to our Heavenly Father for each day's supply of food.

Promised blessings for obedience to the Word of Wisdom

- D&C 89:18 – Physical Health.
- D&C 89:19 – Wisdom and great treasures of knowledge.
- D&C 89:20 – The ability to run and not be weary and walk and not faint.
- D&C 89:21 – Protection from the destroying angel.

In general, obeying the Word of Wisdom will produce a better quality of life and a longer life. Some, however, will suffer severe illnesses or disabilities despite faithful obedience. Even when such physical difficulties come, the spiritual blessings of obedience may be received.

The spiritual treasures of knowledge received may include testimony, knowledge of divine truths, personal revelation, patriarchal blessings, and temple ordinances and covenants. Elder Boyd K. Packer said: *“I have come to know ...that a fundamental purpose of the Word of Wisdom has to do with revelation...If someone ‘under the influence’ [of harmful substances] can hardly listen to plain talk, how can they respond to spiritual promptings that touch their most delicate feelings? As valuable as the Word of Wisdom is as a law of health, it may be much more valuable to you spiritually than it is physically”* (Ensign, Nov. 1979, 20).

The promise of D&C 89:20 could include increased mental and emotional strength, self-mastery, and self-sufficiency.

Additionally, we may gain increased strength to resist temptation and the patience required to continue, day after day, in the struggle toward eternal life.

As for the promise that the destroying angel will pass by us (D&C 89:21), that means that we will be saved from spiritual death and blessed with eternal life through the Savior's Atonement.

Obedience to the Word of Wisdom would solve the world's economic problems: President Heber J. Grant taught that, "*the Word of Wisdom...would solve the economic problems...of every...country, if it were obeyed by the people of the world*" (Conf. Rpt., 1936, 48). The amount of land, money, and other resources consumed to produce harmful substances, advertise them, purchase them, and treat the consequences of their use could be used for beneficial purposes rather than destructive ones.

Obeying the Word of Wisdom is associated with additional benefits: In studies by social scientists, it has been shown that Church members who live the gospel, including the Word of Wisdom, are more likely than others to have happy marriages and satisfactory family lives. They are also less likely to engage in premarital or extramarital sex, experience depression, or be involved in delinquent, deviant, or antisocial behaviors. (Latter-day Christianity: 10 Basic Issues [booklet, 1998],46-47)

Obeying the Word of Wisdom helps a missionary teach with power: One missionary reported that while he was teaching the Word of Wisdom, he was asked by a man, "*Do you mean to tell me that you have never tried drugs, smoked a cigarette, or tasted alcohol in any form?*" The missionary answered, "*No, sir. I never have.*" He later described that experience: "*A power went through me at that moment and I knew why I had always kept the Word of Wisdom. I am grateful that when I came to that moment in my life, I was able to bear a strong testimony of the importance of the Word of Wisdom because I had always been obedient to it.*"

Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength (D&C 10:4): This counsel also applies to our health. It is dangerous to disregard our physical limits and abuse and overwork our bodies.

Tattoos and unusual body piercings: Having received the Lord's counsel about not defiling our bodies by partaking of harmful substances, we should also refrain from defiling our external surface with tattoos or unusual piercings. Such modifications can have negative physical, social, and spiritual consequences in spite of their seeming popularity in some segments of society.

“Seek Learning, Even by Study and Also by Faith” Lesson 23

The School of the Prophets provides a pattern for us to follow in our learning

Instructed by the Lord to create a School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio, the Prophet used a small room above Newell K. Whitney’s store to instruct the leaders of the Church in gospel doctrine, the affairs of the Church, and other matters to prepare them for Church leadership and missionary service. (D&C 88:77-80) These meetings provided opportunities for deep discussions of gospel principles, the reception of spiritual experiences, and the reception of revelations. D&C 88:122-125 gave commandments to the brethren in the School, requiring them to appoint a teacher, love one another, avoid being covetous and give freely, and be charitable. They were also required to cease from and avoid idleness, uncleanness, faultfinding, excessive sleep, late bedtimes, and sleeping late in the morning.

We should learn “by study and also by faith”

D&C 88:118. President Marion G. Romney said: *“I believe in study. I believe that men learn much through study...I also believe, however, and know, that learning by study is greatly accelerated by faith”* (Learning for the Eternities, comp. George J. Romney [1977], 72)

In addition to studying the gospel, we are counseled to seek knowledge in science, history, and literature. President John Taylor said: *“We ought to foster education and intelligence of every kind; cultivate literary tastes, and men of literary and scientific talent should improve that talent; and all should magnify the gifts which God has given unto them...If there is anything good and praiseworthy in morals, religion, science, or anything calculated to exalt and ennoble man, we are after it. But with all our getting, we want to get understanding, and that understanding which flows from God”* (The Gospel Kingdom, sel. G. Homer Durham [1943], 277).

President Gordon B. Hinckley quoted Matthew 11:29, *“Learn of me”* and then said: *“I should like to suggest that you follow that injunction given by the Son of God. With all of your learning, learn of Him. With all of your study, seek knowledge of the Master. That knowledge will complement in a wonderful way the secular training you receive and give a fullness to your life and character that can come in no other way”* (Improvement Era, Dec 1964, 1092)

We should continue to learn throughout our lives

Elder Russell M. Nelson said: *“Because of our sacred regard for each human intellect, we consider the obtaining of an education to be a religious responsibility...Our Creator expects His children everywhere to educate themselves”* (Ensign, Nov 1992, 6)

Why should we learn? What should we learn? How can we learn? The following scriptures provide answers:

- D&C 6:7 - Seek for wisdom, not worldly riches; receive knowledge of the mysteries
- D&C 88:76-80, 118 – Teach the doctrines of the kingdom and learn theory, principle, doctrine, the law of the gospel, all things pertaining to the kingdom of God; astronomy/space science, earth science, history, current events, domestic and foreign affairs, geography, political systems...that we may be prepared to magnify our callings. Learn words of wisdom from the best books.
- D&C 130:18-19 – Knowledge and intelligence we gain here will go with us into the eternities
- D&C 11:21-22 – Seek to obtain the Spirit and His word; study the scriptures and their teachings

- D&C 90:15 - Become acquainted with good books; learn languages, dialects, and cultures
- D&C 131:6 – We cannot be saved in ignorance
- D&C 19:23 – Learn of the Savior and His teachings, learn meekness, and you will have peace
- D&C 93:36-37, 53 – Intelligence, light and truth, are the glory of God; learn history, geography and cultures, laws and legislation, justice and mercy...for the salvation of man.
- D&C 136:32-33 – Learn wisdom and humility, the power of prayer; enlighten the humble and contrite

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught young people the value of education: *“It is so important that you young men and you young women get all of the education that you can. The Lord has said very plainly that His people are to gain knowledge of countries and kingdoms and of things of the world through the process of education, even by study and by faith. Education is the key which will unlock the door of opportunity for you. It is worth sacrificing for. It is worth working at, and if you educate your mind and your hands, you will be able to make a great contribution to the society of which you are a part, and you will be able to reflect honorably on the Church of which you are a member. My dear young brothers and sisters, take advantage of every educational opportunity that you can possibly afford, and you fathers and mothers, encourage your sons and daughters to gain an education which will bless their lives”* (Ensign, June 1999, 4)

President Brigham Young taught: *“Our education should be such as to improve our minds and fit us for increased usefulness; to make us of greater service to the human family”* (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 255) A good education helps us serve our families, others, and the kingdom of God.

D&C 68:25-28. Parents have a solemn responsibility to help their children learn the gospel as well as practical skills such as how to maintain good health, work diligently, get along with others, manage their finances, and get a good education. While serving in the Quorum of the Twelve, Elder Hinckley emphasized: *“You know that your children will read. They will read books...magazines and newspapers. Cultivate within them a taste for the best. While they are very young, read to them the great stories which have become immortal because of the values they teach. Expose them to good books. Let there be a corner somewhere in your house, be it ever so small, where they will see at least a few books of the kind upon which great minds have been nourished”* (Ensign, Nov. 1975, 39)

President Thomas S. Monson reminds us that little children can understand the teachings of the scriptures: *“A ...hallmark of a happy home is discovered when home is a library of learning...the Lord counseled, ‘Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith’ (D&C 88:118). The standard works offer the library of learning of which I speak. We must be careful not to underestimate the capacity of children to read and to understand the word of God”* (Ensign, Nov. 1988, 70)

President Benson taught: *“Today, with the abundance of books available, it is the mark of a truly educated man to know what not to read...Feed only on the best. As John Wesley’s mother counseled him: ‘Avoid whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, takes off your relish for spiritual things, ...increases the authority of the body over the mind’”* (1979 Devotional Speeches of the Year [1980], 61)

In the temple we gain an education for eternity

The plan for developing the city of Zion was sent to the Missouri saints by the Prophet in 1833. A temple was planned for the center of the city. Salt Lake City followed this plan and we should learn

from that. The temple should be at the center of our lives and the temple is a center of learning for faithful Saints. In D&C 88:119, the Savior emphasizes that the temple is “a house of learning”.

Elder John A. Widtsoe taught: *“The temple is a place of instruction. Here the principles of the gospel are reviewed and profound truths of the kingdom of God are unfolded. If we enter the temple in the right spirit and are attentive, we go out enriched in gospel knowledge and wisdom”* (Ensign, Jan 1972, 56-57)

Elder Boyd K. Packer said: *“The temple is a great school. It is a house of learning. In the temples the atmosphere is maintained so that it is ideal for instruction in matters that are deeply spiritual... The temple ceremony will not be fully understood at first experience. It will only be partly understood. Return again and again and again. Return to learn. Things that have troubled you or things that have been puzzling or things that have been mysterious will become known to you. Many of them will be the quiet, personal things that you really cannot explain to anyone else. But to you they are things known...So look toward the temple. Point your children toward the temple. From the days of their infancy, direct their attention to it, and begin their preparation for the day when they may enter the holy temple. In the meantime, be teachable yourself, be reverent. Drink deeply from the teachings—the symbolic, deeply spiritual teachings—available only in the temple”* (The Holy Temple [pamphlet, 1982], 6-8)

Because of the sacredness of temple ordinances, the counsel of our leaders is that we should not discuss specific aspects of the ceremonies and ordinances outside the temple.

Attend the temple as often as you are able. President Ezra Taft Benson asked: *“Do we return to the temple often to receive the personal blessings that come from regular temple worship? Prayers are answered, revelation occurs, and instruction by the Spirit takes place in the holy temples of the Lord”* (Ensign, May 1988, 85)

Continuing to learn throughout our lives enables us to be of better service to others.

Considering learning without being overwhelmed by all there is to know, President Wilford Woodruff counseled: *“Do not be discouraged because you cannot learn all at once; learn one thing at a time, learn it well, and treasure it up, then learn another truth and treasure that up, and in a few years you will have a great store of useful knowledge which will not only be a great blessing to yourselves and your children, but to your fellow men”* (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 269)

Considering learning the gospel in seminary and institute class, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“Our great program of Church education moves forward. The work of training students through the seminary and institute program is constantly being enlarged... We urge all for whom it is available to take advantage of it. We do not hesitate to promise that your knowledge of the gospel will be increased, your faith will be strengthened, and you will develop wonderful associations and friendships”* (Ensign, May 1984, 47).

Developing our talents through education: Since each of us has been given talents by our Heavenly Father, we should use educational opportunities that will help develop our individual talents and interests. If we do this, the Lord will give us greater opportunities to use those talents and abilities.

“Be Not Deceived, but Continue in Steadfastness”

Lesson 24 – D&C 26; 28; 43:1-7; 50; 52:14-19

Our history shows that some early Church members apostasized for various reasons, including a misspelled name. Our study in this lesson will help us understand how to avoid individual apostasy.

Recognize deceptions of Satan that can lead us into apostasy

In the early years of the Church, some members were deceived and fell into apostasy, rebelled against God and the Prophets, and became enemies of the Church and their former fellow saints, and joined in the persecution of the saints in both Ohio and Missouri. Saints today must avoid following Satan’s deceptions.

D&C 50:2-3 and 2 Nephi 2:18, 27 remind us that Satan seeks to overthrow us and make us as miserable as he is. We are also reminded that we are free to choose to follow him if we so desire.

The following are some of Satan’s temptations that could and would lead us into apostasy:

- *Not recognizing the prophet as the source of revelation for the Church:* False prophets temporarily deceived some early members—In 1830, Hiram Page, one of the Eight Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, was supported by Oliver Cowdrey, the Whitmers, and others when he claimed to receive revelations about the building of Zion and the order of the Church through a stone that he possessed. The Prophet Joseph Smith stated that Page’s claims, “were entirely at variance with the order of God’s house, as laid down in the New Testament, as well as in our late revelations” (History of the Church, 1:110). The Prophet’s prayers about the situation resulted in the reception of D&C 28, making clear that only the President of the Church has the right to receive revelations for the Church. The Lord instructed Oliver Cowdrey to inform Page that Satan had given the revelations he received. Bro. Page repented, renouncing the stone and all things connected with it.
- *Pride:* Members who erred because of pride included the President of the Quorum of the Twelve, Thomas B. Marsh, and his wife, Elizabeth. Elizabeth Marsh violated an agreement with Sister Harris by keeping a pint of cream from each of her cow’s milk production instead of sending the entire contents to Sister Harris for the making of cheese. When the matter was referred to their bishop in Far West, it was determined that Sister Marsh was in error. The Marshes appealed to the high council and then the First Presidency, but the original decision was upheld that Sister Marsh had erred. Declaring that he would sustain the character of his wife and refusing to accept the righteous judgment of the brethren, Bro. Marsh soon turned against the Church and even falsely testified before Missouri officials that the Latter-day Saints were hostile toward the state of Missouri.

Referring to this incident, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “*What a very small and trivial thing—a little cream over which two women quarreled. But it led to, or at least was a factor in, Governor Boggs’ cruel exterminating order which drove the Saints from the state of Missouri, with all of the terrible suffering and consequent death that followed. The man who should have settled this little quarrel, but who, rather, pursued it, ...lost his standing in the Church. He lost his testimony of the gospel*” (Ensign, May 1984, 83). Nineteen years later, Bro. Marsh went to Salt Lake and asked for forgiveness and rebaptism. He wrote: “*I began to awake to a sense of my situation; ...I know that I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight.*” He then described what he had learned: “*The Lord could get along very well without me and He has lost nothing by my falling out of the ranks; But O what have I lost?! Riches, greater riches than all this world or many planets like this could afford*” (Ensign, May 1996, 7)

- *Being critical of leaders’ imperfections:* Simonds Ryder was a convert in 1831. When he later received a mission call, his name was misspelled as “Rider” in the letter. He “thought if the

‘Spirit’ through which he had been called to preach could err in the matter of spelling his name, it might have erred in calling him to the ministry as well; or, in other words, he was led to doubt if he were called at all by the Spirit of God, because of the error in spelling his name!” (History of the Church, 1:261) He later apostasized.

- *Being offended*: Becoming offended by the actions or words of other members is a common cause of inactivity and apostasy.
 - As an example, when the Kirtland Temple was completed, many Saints gathered for the dedication. The seats filled quickly, and many people were allowed to stand, but even so, not everyone could squeeze inside. Elder Frazier Eaton, who had donated \$700 for the temple, arrived too late and was not allowed inside for the dedication. Even though the dedication was repeated the next day for those who had been outside the first day, Bro. Eaton was unsatisfied and left the Church. (See George A. Smith, Journal of Discourses, 11:9) If we are ever offended, the Lord has given counsel of what we are required to do in D&C 64:8-11 and 82:1—forgive! No exceptions!
- *Rationalizing disobedience*: Often, when members are in error and know it, they are tempted to excuse or defend their unacceptable behavior. Such rationalization is self-deception.
- *Accepting the false teachings of the world*: False ideas and philosophies accepted by some members include that God’s commandments are far too restrictive, that immorality is okay, and that worldly pursuits and riches are more important than family and spiritual responsibilities. Presiding Bishop H. David taught: “*One of [Satan’s] insidious strategies is to progressively soften our senses regarding what is right and wrong. Satan would have us convinced that it is fashionable to lie and cheat. He encourages us to view pornography by suggesting that it prepares us for the real world. He would have us believe that immorality is an attractive way of life and that obedience to the commandments of our Father in Heaven is old-fashioned. Satan constantly bombards us with deceptive propaganda desirably packaged and carefully disguised*” (Ensign, May 1993, 46)

Remaining valiant in our testimonies and avoiding deception

Blessings and commandments from the Lord can help us remain valiant and avoid deception. The following are **ways in which we can protect ourselves**:

- *Recognize the Lord’s appointed leaders of the Church*: In the early years, many people claimed to have received revelations to correct the Church or the Prophet. The Lord revealed D&C 28 and 43 in response to such false claims and explained that the Prophet receives revelation for the Church and none other is appointed to do so. (See D&C 28:2, 6-7 and 43:1-3) President Joseph F. Smith taught: “*The Lord has...appointed one man at a time on the earth to hold the keys of revelation to the entire body of the church in all its organizations, authorities, ordinances and doctrines. The spirit of revelation is bestowed upon all its members for the benefit and enlightenment of each individual receiving its inspiration, and according to the sphere in which he or she is called to labor. But for the entire Church, he who stands at the head is alone appointed to receive revelations by way of commandment and as the end of controversy*” (Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, [1965-75], 4:270)
- *Study the scriptures and know the doctrines of the Church*: D&C 1:37 and 33:16. We can better discern the truth of ideas by comparing them to the doctrines in the “standard” works. President Harold B. Lee taught: “*If [someone] writes something or speaks something that goes beyond anything that you can find in the standard Church works, unless that one be the prophet, seer, and revelator—please note that one exception—you may immediately say, ‘Well, that is his own idea.’ And if he says something that contradicts what is found in the*

standard Church works, you may know by that same token that it is false” (The Teachings of Harold B. Lee, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 540-41).

President Lee also taught: *“If we are not reading the scriptures daily, our testimonies are growing thinner, our spirituality isn’t increasing in depth”* (The Teachings of Harold B. Lee, 152).

- Recognize that the things of God will always edify us: D&C 50:17-24. Joseph Smith explained that in Kirtland, *“many false spirits were introduced, many strange visions seen, and wild, enthusiastic notions were entertained; men ran out of doors under the influence of this spirit, and some of them got upon the stumps of trees and shouted, and all kinds of extravagances were entered into by them; ...many ridiculous things were entered into, calculated to bring disgrace upon the Church of God, to cause the Spirit of God to be withdrawn”*. Concerned, the Prophet inquired of the Lord and received D&C 50. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: *“There is no saying of greater truth than ‘that which doth not edify is not of God.’ And that which is not of God is darkness, it matters not whether it comes in the guise of religion, ethics, philosophy or revelation. No revelation from God will fail to edify”* (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2 vols. [1953], 1:201-2)
- Apply the Lord’s pattern for protecting ourselves from being deceived: D&C 52:14-19 provides a pattern for avoiding deception and these verses mention characteristics of teachers who are “of God”. Deceptions of Satan can be overcome by following the directions and counsel given by the Lord and His servants. We can have the companionship of the Spirit to keep us on the straight and narrow path. Elder Carlos E. Asay, one of the Seventy, taught that the following actions can strengthen us in avoiding apostasy:
 - “Avoid those who would tear down your faith...
 - “Keep the commandments...
 - “Follow the living prophets...
 - “Do not contend or debate over points of doctrine...
 - “Search the scriptures...
 - “Do not be swayed or diverted from the mission of the Church...
 - “Pray for your enemies...
 - “Practice ‘pure religion’ [See James 1:27 and Alma 1:30]...
 - “Remember that there may be many questions for which we have no answers and that some things have to be accepted simply on faith” (Ensign, Nov. 1981, 67-68)

“Priesthood: The Power of Godliness”

Lesson 25 – D&C 84:33-44; 121:34-46; D&C 107; Our Heritage, pgs. 26-27

This lesson will help us gain a greater understanding of the priesthood, its covenants and blessings.

Order in the restoration of the priesthood and its offices

Both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods were restored in 1829 before the organization of the Church. After the Church was organized, the Lord began to reveal the complete organization of the priesthoods’ offices, quorums, and councils. Today, the Lord continues to give revelations about the priesthood to guide the growth of the Church. One example is the calling of the Area Authority Seventies and the organization of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums of the Seventy in 1997. The following is the **historical timeline of the Priesthood**:

- Aaronic Priesthood restoration: 15 May 1829 (D&C 13)
- Melchizedek Priesthood: May or June 1829 (D&C 128:20)
- Apostles, elders, priests, teachers, and deacons: April 1830 (D&C 20:38-60)
- Bishop: 4 February 1831 (D&C 41:9-10)
- High priests: June 1831 (heading to D&C 52)
- First Presidency: 1832-33 (D&C 81; 90)
- Patriarch: 18 December 1833 (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith [1976], 38-39)
- High Council: 17 February 1834 (D&C 102)
- Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: 1835 (D&C 107:23-24)
- Seventies: 1835 (D&C 107:25)
- First Quorum of the Seventy: 1835 (D&C 107:26, 93-97)

The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

The oath and covenant of the priesthood reveals the covenants made by men to God and by God to men concerning the Melchizedek priesthood.

- Elder Carlos E. Asay said: *“Of all the holy agreements pertaining to the gospel of Jesus Christ, few, if any, would transcend in importance the oath and covenant of the priesthood. It is certainly one of the most sacred agreements, for it involves sharing of heavenly powers and man’s upward reaching toward eternal goals”* (Ensign, Nov. 1985, 43).
- Joseph Fielding Smith taught: *“...the blessings of the priesthood are not confined to men alone. These blessings are also poured out...upon all the faithful women of the Church...The Lord offers to his daughters every spiritual gift and blessing that can be obtained by his sons, for neither is the man without the woman, not the woman without the man in the Lord”* (Improvement Era, June 1970, 66).

Priesthood holders’ covenants are found in D&C 84: 33, 36, and 39-44:

- Be faithful in obtaining the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood (33)
- Magnify their callings (33).
President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“We magnify our priesthood and enlarge our calling when we serve with diligence and enthusiasm in those responsibilities to which we are called by proper authority... We magnify our calling, we enlarge the potential of our priesthood when we reach out to those in distress and give strength to those who falter... We magnify our calling when we walk with honesty and integrity”* (Ensign, May 1989, 48-49)

Giving counsel about achieving the correct balance between priesthood service and support of our families, Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: *“Sometimes, unintentionally, even certain*

extracurricular church activities, insensitively administered, can hamper family life. Instructively, after the resurrected Jesus taught the Nephites, He said ‘Go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said,’ and pray and prepare ‘for the morrow’ (3 Nephi 17:3). Jesus did not say go to your civic clubs, town meetings, or even stake centers!’
(Ensign, May 1994, 89)

- Receive the Lord’s servants (36). When we accept the messages and ordinances of the gospel from the Lord’s servants, we also receive the Lord.
- Give diligent heed to the words of eternal life (43-44)

The Lord covenants to:

- Sanctify us by the Spirit (33), meaning that we become pure and holy. This baptism, which truly makes us Saints as the Holy Ghost removes impurities from us, is also called “the baptism of fire”.
- Renew our bodies (33). This promise may have reference to our resurrection, when those who have lived a celestial law will be resurrected with a perfected, celestial body. In addition, President Hugh B. Brown bore testimony that this promise was realized in the long life and health of President David O. McKay as well as many of the Church leaders as they are sanctified because of their priesthood service.
- Give us the blessings promised to Abraham and his posterity (34). These include blessings mentioned in Abraham 2:9-11...the blessings of the gospel, salvation, and eternal life.
- Make us His elect, or chosen (34)— the “elect” belong to the “church” and “kingdom” of God and will be exalted in the celestial kingdom and have membership in “the church of the Firstborn”.
- Give us all that the Father has (38)—including eternal life, which is “the greatest of all the gifts of God,”
- Give His angels charge over us (42)—we will have heavenly beings protecting and prompting us to do those things which will further the work of the Lord and develop celestial attributes within us.

Principles for using the priesthood

D&C 121:34-46 reveal principles for using the priesthood.

- D&C 121:34-40 reveals that some priesthood holders are not able to exercise the priesthood with power because they are too worldly, aspire to vanity and worldly honors, attempt to cover sins, gratify their pride or vain ambition, or exercise unrighteous dominion. The priesthood may be used only in righteousness and a spirit of love in the service of others. Elder M. Russell Ballard said: *“Those who hold the priesthood must never forget that they have no right to wield priesthood authority like a club over the heads of others in the family or in Church callings...Any man who...seeks to use the priesthood in any degree of unrighteousness in the Church or in the home simply does not understand the nature of his authority. Priesthood is for service, not servitude; compassion, not compulsion; caring, not control”* (Ensign, Nov. 1993, 78)
- D&C 121:41-42 reveals principles for exercising the priesthood—persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness and meekness, love unfeigned, kindness, pure knowledge, humility and guilelessness.
- D&C 121:43-44 teaches principles for giving correction or discipline. (Note: Betimes means “promptly” or “soon”. Sharpness means “clearly” or “precisely”.)
- D&C 121:45 counsels us to “let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly”, and D&C 27:15-18 explains that we can do that by taking upon us the whole armor of God and the shield of faith.

- In D&C 121:45-46, the Lord promises, if we are “full of charity” and “let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly”, that our confidence will wax strong in the presence of God and the Holy Ghost shall be a constant companion. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“It has been my privilege on various occasions to converse with Presidents of the United States and important men in other governments. At the close of each such occasion I have reflected on the rewarding experience of standing with confidence in the presence of an acknowledged leader. And then I have thought, what a wonderful thing, what a marvelous thing it would be to stand with confidence—unafraid and unashamed and unembarrassed—in the presence of God. This is the promise held out to every virtuous man and woman”* (Improvement Era, Dec. 1970, 73).

Responsibilities of the presiding quorums in the Church:

The First Presidency: D&C 107:9, 22, 65-66, 78-81, 91-92; 112:30-32. “...officiate in all offices”, “...form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church”, “...one be appointed...to preside over the Priesthood...”, accept appealed cases of church courts and make the “final decision upon controversies in spiritual matters”, “...preside over the whole church... be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet...”, “be...counselors”, and hold the keys of the dispensation.

The Quorum of the Twelve: D&C 107:23, 33, 35, 39, 58; 112:30-32. “...special witnesses...of Christ in all the world”, “...”officiate in the name of the Lord”...”...build up the church, and regulate all of the affairs...in all nations”, proclaim the gospel and preside over the missionary work, “...ordain evangelical ministers”, “...ordain and set in order all the other officers of the church..”, and hold the keys of the dispensation.

The Quorums of the Seventy: D&C 107:25-26, 34, 38, 97. “...preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses..”, be equal in authority to the Quorum of the Twelve, “...build up the church, and regulate all of the affairs...in all nations”, preach and administer the gospel, and be “traveling ministers”.

“Go Ye into All the World, and Preach My Gospel”

Lesson 26 – Our Heritage, pages 29-33, 36

Elder Erastus Snow left on his 1836 mission with a set of scriptures, a pair of socks, five small coins, and a piece of paper with the following message: “This suitcase belongs to Elder Erastus Snow. I have been called by the Prophet Joseph Smith to serve a mission in western Pennsylvania. I am instructed to leave in the spring of 1836. I will be departing from Kirtland alone and on foot. I am taking all my worldly wealth.” (Our Heritage, pg. 31) Sacrifice, Courage, and Faith were required for Elder Snow to serve his mission.

The Lord poured out great blessings during the Kirtland period

Most of the past 13 lessons have covered doctrines that were revealed and events that took place in Kirtland, Ohio. Those revelations and spiritual growth experiences were great blessings to the Saints. Teachings and experiences included the law of consecration, the law of tithing and the fast, the purposes of the temple, the restoration of important keys, the plan of salvation and the kingdoms of glory, the Word of Wisdom, the Second Coming, keys to avoiding apostasy, and the revelation of the priesthood.

The Saints in Kirtland made great sacrifices to share the gospel

Missionaries were called to preach in the U.S., Canada, and England. Most served at great personal sacrifice.

D&C 42:6 and D&C 88:81 are examples of many of His commandments to preach the gospel. In following those revelations, many Saints like Parley P. Pratt were called to serve in Canada. On his way to Toronto, *“a stranger gave him a letter of introduction to John Taylor, a Methodist lay preacher in Toronto. Taylor was affiliated with a group who believed existing churches did not correspond with New Testament Christianity. For two years this group had met several times a week for the ‘purpose of seeking truth, independent of any sectarian organization.’* In Toronto, Elder Pratt was courteously received by the Taylors, but they were not at first enthusiastic about his message. Discouraged at being unable to secure a place to preach, Parley decided to leave Toronto. Before going, he stopped at the Taylors to get some of his luggage and to say goodbye. While he was there, Lenora Taylor told her friend Mrs. Isabelle Walton about Parley’s problem and said she was sorry he was leaving. *‘He may be a man of God,’* she said. Mrs. Walton replied that she had been inspired by the Spirit to visit the Taylor’s that morning because she was willing to let Elder Pratt stay at her home and preach. He did so and was eventually invited to attend a meeting of John Taylor’s group, in which John read the New Testament account of Philip’s preaching in Samaria. *‘Now,’* said he, *‘where is our Philip? Where is our receiving the Word with joy, and being baptized when we believed? Where is our Peter and John? Our apostles? Where is our Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands? ...’* When Parley was invited to speak, he declared that he had answers for John Taylor’s questions. For three weeks John Taylor attended Elder Pratt’s meetings, making detailed notes of his sermons and carefully comparing them with the scriptures. Gradually he became convinced that the true gospel of Jesus Christ was restored. He and his wife, Lenora, were baptized 9 May 1836.” (Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt [1975], 134-40, 151). John Taylor was ordained an elder and served faithfully as a missionary, later becoming the third President of the Church.

Levi Hancock was baptized in November 1830, and soon afterward he was called to leave Kirtland and serve a mission in Missouri. The journey involved walking hundreds of miles, and he and his companion, Zebedee Coltrin, had success in preaching the gospel as they traveled. “But they also suffered hardships on their journey. Levi fell ill because of an infection in his feet and had to spend time recuperating with a family who took him in while Zebedee went on without him. Later, in

Missouri, he continued to struggle with illness and chafed at times because of his inability to do all he wanted. But grateful to serve, he wrote: *'I have to be honest before God and do all the good I can for his kingdom or woe is me. I care not for the world nor what they say. They have to meet my Testimony at the Judgment seat. I mean that my conduct shall be such that my words will be believed, the Lord being my helper.'*" Later Levi served valiantly as part of Zion's Camp. In February 1835, he was chosen as one of the Presidents of the Seventy. (Ensign, July 1999, 48-50)

Obviously, overcoming adversity is important in missionary work and that cannot be done without faith and a willingness to sacrifice to advance the work of the Lord. How willing are we to make sacrifices?

Members of the Quorum of the Twelve taught thousands in England

As the Church grew, the forces working against it became more vigorous. Some of the Saints faltered in their faith. During this challenging time, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that *"something new must be done for the salvation of His Church"* (History of the Church, 2:489). That *"something new"* proved to be an infusion of new converts to the Church from England. *"Because many early missionaries obediently accepted mission calls despite personal sacrifice, thousands of British converts enjoyed the blessings of the restored gospel. They gathered to Zion and greatly strengthened the Church for the crucial periods that lay ahead."* (Our Heritage, Pg. 33)

On 23 July 1837, the day the missionaries first preached the gospel in England, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation, D&C 112, directed to Thomas B. Marsh, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. D&C 112:19-22 contains promises made to the twelve that they would have doors opened and be successful in their labors. The promise in verse 19 was quickly fulfilled—within eight months, 2,000 people had been converted and 26 branches were organized in England.

The Lord continues to fulfill this promise, as shown by this story related by President Thomas S. Monson: *"In 1968, when I made my first visit to the German Democratic Republic, tensions were high. Trust and understanding did not exist. No diplomatic relations had been established. On a cloudy and rain-filled day I journeyed to the city of Gorlitz, ...I attended my first meeting with the Saints. We assembled in a small and ancient building. As the members sang the hymns of Zion, they literally filled the hall with their faith and devotion. My heart was filled with sorrow when I realized the members had no patriarch, no wards or stakes, just branches. They could not receive temple blessings—either endowment or sealing. No official visitor had come from Church headquarters in a long time. The members could not leave their country. Yet they trusted in the Lord with all their hearts. I stood at the pulpit, and with tear-filled eyes and a voice choked with emotion, I made a promise to the people: 'If you will remain true and faithful to the commandments of God, every blessing any member of the Church enjoys in any other country will be yours.' Then I realized what I had said. That night, I dropped to my knees and pleaded with my Heavenly Father, 'Father, I'm on Thy errand; this is Thy Church. I have spoken words that came not from me but from Thee and Thy Son. Wilt Thou fulfill the promise in the lives of this noble people.' Thus concluded my first visit to the German Democratic Republic."* Eight years later, Elder Monson offered a dedicatory prayer on the land including these words: *"Dear Father, let this be the beginning of a new day for the members of Thy Church in this land."* Following this inspired prayer, the Church grew rapidly in the land. District councils were organized, followed by the creation of stakes. Priesthood leaders and patriarchs were called. The Freiberg Germany temple was dedicated in 1985. And in 1989 the government permitted the Church to send full-time missionaries to the country. (Ensign, May 1989, 50-53)

Many Saints in Kirtland remained valiant despite persecution

By 1838, the Kirtland era was drawing to a close as persecution intensified and the dangers increased. While some Church members apostasized, most remained faithful and strengthened the Church at a crucial time.

- As an example, Brigham Young demonstrated loyalty and faith in the Lord's prophet, Joseph Smith when some apostates, including some prominent Church leaders, were plotting to replace Joseph with someone else. Brigham said: *"I rose up, and in a plain and forcible manner told them that Joseph was a Prophet, and I knew it, and that they might rail and slander him as much as they pleased; they could not destroy the appointment of the Prophet of God, they could only destroy their own authority, cut the thread that bound them to the Prophet and to God, and sink themselves to hell. Many were highly enraged at my dedicated opposition to their measures...This meeting was broken up without the apostates being able to unite on any decided measures of opposition"* ("History of Brigham Young", Deseret News, 10 Feb. 1858, 386)

Great blessings came to the Kirtland Saints as they served missions and sacrificed to share the gospel. Most remained faithful despite great adversity. They left a legacy of faithful obedience and personal sacrifice that still serves as a powerful example for us today. Follow the appointed leaders, remain faithful in times of adversity, and share your testimony with everyone you meet.

“They Must Needs Be Chastened and Tried, Even as Abraham”

Lesson 27 – D&C 101; 103; 105; Our Heritage, pgs. 27-29, 37-45

The Church had two centers of population from 1831 to 1838—one in Kirtland, Ohio, and the other in western Missouri. Events of importance happened in both these places. The next two lessons will cover the doctrines and events that are associated with the Church in Missouri.

The Saints settle in Jackson County, Missouri, and are later driven out

July 1831: Joseph Smith, on his first journey to Missouri, received revelation designating Missouri as the place for the city of Zion. Independence was named the center place in D&C 57:1-3. After Sidney Rigdon dedicated the land for the gathering of the Saints, Joseph dedicated the temple site in Independence on August 3rd.

- Members of the Colesville Branch from New York were the first members to settle in Missouri. By 1832, more than 800 Saints were gathered in five branches in Independence and Jackson County.

Peace and hope were enjoyed by the Saints for a while—until late 1832. Disobedience arose and some refused to accept the authority of their local Church leaders, while others criticized the Prophet for returning to Ohio. Some members became contentious, covetous, selfish, and faithless. Tensions with neighbors increased and then became violent on July 20, 1833. From that time, until November, persecution increased as mobs burned crops, destroyed homes, assaulted the brethren, and terrorized the women and children.

Near Big Blue River on November 4th, a mob attacked a small group of LDS men and boys. During the next two days more than 1,000 Saints were driven out of Jackson County in the bitter cold. Most of the destitute Saints crossed over the Missouri River and took temporary refuge in Clay County.

The Lord instructs the Saints who were driven from Jackson County

Distressed over news of the persecution in Missouri, Joseph petitioned the Lord and received D&C 101. The Lord gave the following reasons for allowing afflictions to be visited upon the Saints:

- D&C 101:2, 6; (and D&C 103:4) Because of their transgressions
- D&C 101:4 because they needed to be chastened and tried
- D&C 101:7-8 because some of the Saints had been slow to hearken to the Lord during peaceful times

The Lord then demonstrated His compassion for the Saints after chastening them:

- D&C 101:9 promises Saints that he would not cast them off and would show mercy to them
- D&C 101:10 promises that the Lord’s indignation will fall upon the enemies of the Saints
- D&C 101:11-15 promises that they will be saved, gathered, and comforted
- D&C 101:16-19 promises that Zion will be redeemed at a future time
- D&C 101:35-38 promises eternal life for those who endure to the end in faith and continually seek the Lord

Zion’s Camp is organized and marches to Missouri

The persecuted Saints petitioned Missouri Governor Daniel Dunklin for assistance in restoring their homes and for protection. The governor expressed a willingness to help if the Saints would organize a group of men for their own protection. Joseph received word of the governor’s offer in February 1834 in Kirtland. He responded by organizing a group of the Ohio brethren for the mission of protection and aid to their Missouri brethren. It would require a march of nearly 1,000 miles to help return them

to their lands and then protect them afterward. This expedition became known as Zion's Camp and directions for it were given in the revelation known as D&C 103.

- As directed in D&C 103, the Prophet organized Zion's Camp to help the Saints regain their property. When the expedition neared Jackson County, the Lord revealed that the redemption of Zion would have to wait. The Prophet Joseph then disbanded the camp without accomplishing their avowed purpose. However, important purposes intended by the Lord were actually accomplished:
 - The participants were strengthened by several miraculous manifestations of the Lord's power
 - It was a trial of faith, allowing the participants to demonstrate their obedience and willingness to sacrifice all things including their lives if required.
 - It determined who was faithful and could be called to positions of service in Church leadership
 - Participants learned much from direct association with the Prophet and were prepared for future leadership responsibilities.

While some regarded it as a failure, Zion's Camp demonstrated that God's purposes can be accomplished in ways that we may not fully understand at the time. Brigham Young said of the experience: *"I would not exchange the knowledge I have received this season for the whole of [this] County."* (Journal of Discourses, 2:10)

Five months after the Camp was disbanded, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Quorum of the Seventy were organized in February 1835. Nine of the Twelve and all Seventies had served in Zion's Camp. The Prophet Joseph spoke of how the camp helped prepare these leaders: *"Brethren, some of you are angry with me, because you did not fight in Missouri; but let me tell you, God did not want you to fight. He could not organize His kingdom with twelve men to open the Gospel door to the nations of the earth, and with seventy men under their direction to follow in their tracks, unless He took them from a body of men who had offered their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham"* (History of the Church, 2:182).

The experience of George A. Smith demonstrates how Zion's Camp prepared men for future leadership in the Church. At 16, he was the youngest in the camp, inexperienced and lacking confidence. Despite personal discomfort and the complaints of many men about the poor conditions, George willingly followed all of the Prophet's instructions. George slept in the Prophet's tent and heard much of his counsel and instructions. Through this close association with the Prophet, George learned leadership skills and developed strength that prepared him for a lifetime of leadership. Less than five years after the camp, bro. Smith became an Apostle. Later, he served with Brigham Young as a member of the First Presidency.

We can use the Zion's Camp experience to learn some valuable lessons:

- Understanding the purpose of trials. D&C 103:12. Blessings come after trials.
- Appreciating the importance of obedience. D&C 103:7-10, 36. The obedient will prevail and succeed
- The need to be willing to sacrifice all things for the Lord. D&C 103:27-28. Total commitment is required.
- The importance of being unified in the Lord's work
- The importance of sustaining the prophet and following his counsel even if it is difficult or when we do not fully understand the reasons for his counsel

The Lord reveals that His people must “wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion”

The Lord’s promise to redeem Zion and restore His people to their lands was conditioned upon their obedience. (D&C 103:5-8,11-14). Because some members were disobedient and dissented, the redemption of Zion had to wait, just as the Israelites had to wander for years before being allowed into the promised land.

In D&C 105:1-13, the Lord gave some requirements for the eventual establishment of Zion, including:

- The Saints must learn obedience - D&C 105:3, 6, 37
- They must care for the poor and needy – D&C 105:3
- They must be “united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom” D&C 105:4, 5
- They must be taught more perfectly, gain more experience, and know their duties more perfectly – D&C 105:10
- They must be endowed with power from on high – D&C 105:11-12, also 33

In D&C 105:38-40, the Lord counseled the Saints to seek peace, even with their persecutors. In return, He promised, *“all things shall work together for your good”*.

The Lord has given instructions as to what we must do to prepare for the redemption of Zion. We should seek to obey with all our hearts.

The Lord’s instructions to the exiled Saints included:

- Seek the redemption of Zion. In D&C 101:43-62, the parable reminds the Saints that disobedience had weakened their position and allowed their enemies to overpower them. However, He assured them that Zion would be redeemed in His own time.
- Continue the work of the gathering. In D&C 101:63-75, the Lord instructed the Saints to continue gathering in the places He had designated. In our day, these places are the stakes of Zion.
- Seek for redress. In D&C 101:76-95, the Lord commanded that formal petitions should be made for compensation and justice since their constitutional rights of freedom of religion and property had been violated in Missouri. After being denied the help the constitution required, they left judgment and redress to the Lord and moved on with their lives.
- D&C 101:96-101 counseled them to hold onto their claim on the property in Jackson County.

“O God, Where Art Thou?”

Lesson 28 – D&C 121:1-33; 122; Our Heritage pgs. 45-53

Think about an adversity you have personally experienced, what you learned from it, and how you grew through having that experience.

Background:

- In late 1833, the Saints were driven from Jackson County and took refuge in nearby Clay County.
- In 1836, they were asked to leave, so they moved approximately 60 miles to the north, establishing the community of Far West and some smaller settlements. The Church prospered for a while in that area; the population quickly increased, and Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman were chosen for temple sites.
- But all was not well in Zion due to continuing disputes among some of the members. Prominent leaders including Oliver Cowdrey and David Whitmer were excommunicated.
- Conflicts with non-members occurred and in 1838, mobs and militias attacked. In late October, 3 members were slain at Crooked River—one was an Apostle, David W. Patten. Days later, Missouri’s Governor Boggs issued the infamous extermination order which stated that “the Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state” (History of the Church, 3:175). Within 48 hours, on 30 October 1838, a mob of about 200 men killed 17 men and boys at Haun’s Mill.
- On the 31st, the Prophet and approximately 50 Church leaders were arrested on trumped-up charges. All but six were released within 3 weeks, but despite their innocence, Joseph and Hyrum were among those detained. They remained imprisoned, mostly at Liberty Jail, until April 1839. Kept in a lower-level dungeon-like room, the prisoners endured unsanitary, dark, cold conditions with little food—and what there was of it was filthy. Sleeping on a little straw between them and the cold stone floor, they only had thin blankets for cover. The taller brethren, especially Joseph and Hyrum, were unable to stand up because of the low ceiling. In addition, they were regularly subjected to death threats.
- While the Prophet was in Liberty Jail, some 8,000 Saints were forced out of their homes in accordance with Gov. Bogg’s order. Many were robbed, beaten, and some were killed as they fled to Illinois.
- Upon hearing of the suffering and hardships, Joseph pled with the Savior for relief for his followers. Responding, the Lord gave revelations which the Prophet sent in a letter to Church leaders in Quincy, Illinois. Portions of these revelations have come to us as Sections 121, 122, and 123 of the D&C.

Joseph Smith’s prayer in Liberty Jail and the Lord’s response

D&C 121:1-6 record Joseph’s entreaties to the Lord as he sought the welfare of the Saints.

D&C 121:7-33 and section 122 are the Lord’s response to Joseph’s prayers. In 121:7-10, the Lord tells the Prophet that this is temporary and that things could be worse! Imagine in your mind how Joseph might have felt about that answer—and how you would feel in that situation!

In the midst of this deep tribulation, the jail became a place of heavenly instruction. B.H. Roberts wrote: *“The eyes of the saints were turned to [Liberty Jail] as the place whence would come encouragement, counsel—the word of the Lord. It was more temple than prison, so long as the Prophet was there. It was a place of meditation and prayer...Joseph Smith sought God in this rude prison, and found him”* (A Comprehensive History of the Church, 1:526)

The Savior's perfect understanding of our sufferings and adversity

D&C 122:5-8 taught the Prophet to put trials in perspective and learn from them. He also reminded Joseph that He was well acquainted with suffering, having “descended below” all things. (D&C 19:16-19)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell spoke of the Savior's suffering: *“As part of His infinite atonement, Jesus...has borne the sins, griefs, sorrows, and, declared Jacob, the pains of every man, woman, and child (2 Nephi 9:21). Having been perfected in His empathy, Jesus thus knows how to succor us...Nothing is beyond His redeeming reach or His encircling empathy. Therefore, we should not complain about our own life's not being a rose garden when we remember who wore the crown of thorns!”* (Ensign, May 1987, 72) Bro. Maxwell speaks from experience when he gives counsel on how to endure sufferings. Knowledge of the Savior's suffering can help us maintain our faith as we endure trials and troubles.

Purposes of adversity

Adversity is part of the plan that God proposed and we chose. It was incorporated into mortality to test us and cause us to grow in this life. Experiencing pain, trials, and difficulty was something we knew would occur here and we accepted it as part of the test, knowing that success in the testing would bring eternal rewards and enlarged ability.

The Prophet Joseph Smith experienced so many afflictions that he said they *“have been my common lot in all the days of my life;...and I feel, like Paul, to glory in tribulation”* (D&C 127:2) There were numerous occasions, in addition to the times in Liberty Jail, when the Lord taught the Prophet about adversity.

Purposes of adversity include:

D&C 98:12, 14-15; 101:4; 136:31. Adversity tries us, allowing us to be proven worthy by keeping our covenants in spite of the difficulties

- D&C 101:1-2. Adversity may come as a result of our transgressions and bad choices
- D&C 122:7. Adversity can teach us truths, give us experience, help us develop empathy

D&C 121:8 promises blessings if we “endure it [adversity] well”. Determine what you think it means to “endure it well”.

Affliction is not just for punishment. It may come from transgression—that is one cause, but committing a sin or making a bad choice is not the only reason for adversity. Some adversity comes just because we live in a telestial world and it's part of the requirement for “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). Another cause of adversity is the condition that others be allowed their free agency. In exercising their free agency, others may cause accidents or may choose to cause pain and suffering for us, taking actions that God could protect us from, but He may not do so because of His respect for our free agency. And in some cases, adversity is a learning opportunity—maybe a really difficult one—but an opportunity all the same.

Elder Harold B. Lee said that *“living the gospel of Jesus Christ is no guarantee that adversity will not come into our lives; but living the gospel does give us the strength and faith and power to rise above that adversity and look beyond the present trouble to the brighter day”* (Improvement Era, Dec. 1967, 47)

The Lord's counsel to those who experience adversity

- D&C 24:8; 31:9; 54:10; 121:7 encourage patience in afflictions and placing things in perspective
- D&C 98:1 is counsel to rejoice in affliction and be thankful for it
- D&C 98:11 teaches us to remain obedient and continue seeking to do good
- D&C 101:36-38 counsels caring more for the soul than the body and seeking the Lord
- D&C 122:9 reminds us that God will be with us and we should not fear what man can do

Also, remember that it is not what happens to you that matters, but how you handle it! Some react with bitterness, despair, hopelessness, or anger. Others are refined by the experience and learn empathy.

The Lord's promises to those who are faithful in adversity

- D&C 3:8; 24:8; 112:13; 122:4 give us assurance that the Lord will be with us and heal us
- D&C 58:2-4; 101:35-36; 103:12; 121:29; 127:4; 136:31 promise rewards of glory, joy, and other blessings for those who are faithful through their tribulations
- D&C 98:3; 122:7 teaches the principle that all things work together for our good and to the glory of God

Elder James E. Faust said: *“In the pain, the agony, and the heroic endeavors of life, we pass through a refiner’s fire, and the insignificant and the unimportant in our lives can melt away like dross and make our faith bright, intact, and strong...It is part of the purging toll exacted of some to become acquainted with God. In the agonies of life, we seem to listen better to the faint, godly whisperings of the Divine Shepherd”* (Ensign, May 1979, 53).

Elder Marion G. Romney said: *“I have seen the remorse and despair in the lives of men who, in the hour of trial, have cursed God and died spiritually. And I have seen people rise to great heights from what seemed to be unbearable burdens. Finally, I have sought the Lord in my own extremities and learned for myself that my soul has made its greatest growth as I have been driven to my knees by adversity and affliction”* (Improvement Era, Dec 1969, 69).

D&C 121:8 and 127:2 promise the blessing of exaltation to those who are faithful in affliction

In April 1839, after nearly five months of imprisonment, the Prophet and his companions were sent to Daviess County and then to Boone County for trial. They were allowed to escape while being transported to Boone County because some of the officials concluded that they couldn't be prosecuted successfully. Making their way to Illinois, they were reunited with their families and the surviving Saints.

Remember that in times of adversity, reading the revelations received in Liberty Jail can be comforting and instructive. The Lord will lift each of us if we turn to Him in our trials.

“Building the Kingdom of God in Nauvoo, Illinois”

Lesson 29 – D&C 124:1-21, 87-90, 97-100; 126; Our Heritage, pgs. 51-52, 55-58, 61-62

Nauvoo was important in Church history for a number of reasons. It was there that the doctrine of baptism for the dead was revealed; temple endowments were first performed; and The Relief Society was organized. The early Nauvoo Saints did much to build the kingdom of God.

The Saints sought refuge in Illinois

While the Prophet suffered in Liberty Jail, it fell to Brigham Young as President of the Quorum of the Twelve to get the Saints safely out of Missouri, across the Mississippi River and into Illinois to escape the persecution of the mobs and the state’s governor.

In late 1838, Saints gathered in Quincy, IL. It was only when Joseph returned to them that they moved upriver to the village of Commerce.

There, they drained the swampy land, planted their crops, and began constructing homes. That summer, the Prophet renamed Commerce to Nauvoo, saying, *“The name of our City (Nauvoo) is of Hebrew origin, and signifies a beautiful situation, or place, carrying with it, also, the idea of rest”*

(Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 182). About eighteen months later, Illinois granted Nauvoo a charter that allowed the city to have a militia, establish a city court, and start a university. It quickly became the second largest city in Illinois as the Church grew and new converts migrated to the new gathering place of the Saints. A month after Nauvoo received its charter, the Lord gave commandments to the membership about their responsibilities, which we now have as D&C 124. By studying this revelation and the way the Nauvoo Saints performed, we can learn much about how to build the kingdom of God.

Missionaries sent from Nauvoo converted thousands of people

Numerous members—including the Quorum of the Twelve—were called on missions during the Nauvoo period. As an example of their success in the mission field, Wilford Woodruff told of this experience: *“I...met with a large assembly of Saints and strangers, and while singing the first hymn the spirit of the Lord rested upon me and the voice of God said to me, ‘This is the last meeting that you will hold with this people for many days.’ I was astonished at this, as I had many appointments out in that district. When I arose to speak to the people, I told them that it was the last meeting I should hold with them for many days. They were as much astonished as I was. At the close of the meeting four persons came forward for baptism; we went down into the water and baptized them. In the morning I went in secret before the Lord, and asked Him what was His will concerning me. The answer I received was that I should go to the south; for the Lord had a great work for me to perform there, as many souls were waiting for His word.”* For the next two days he traveled south until he came to the farm of John Benbow in Herefordshire. Mr. Benbow and his wife, Jane, received him gladly and said that there was a company of over 600 men and women who had formed their own congregation called the United Brethren. Elder Woodruff said: *“This body of United Brethren were searching for light and truth, but had gone as far as they could, and were calling upon the Lord continually to open the way before them and send them light and knowledge, that they might know the true way to be saved. When I heard these things I could clearly see why the Lord had commanded me, while in the town of Hanley, to leave that place of labor and go to the south; for in Herefordshire there was a great harvest-field for gathering many saints into the Kingdom of God.”* Elder Woodruff’s efforts in England enabled him *“to bring into the Church, through the blessings of God, over 1800 souls during 8 months, including all of the 600 United Brethren except one person”* (Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors, ed. Matthew F. Cowley [1909], 116-19).

The Church was greatly strengthened by the sacrifices of the dedicated missionaries in England. Elder Harold B. Lee summarized what happened during this time in England when he said: *“In one year, 1840 to 1841—one year and fourteen days, to be exact—nine members of the twelve were called to labor in the British Mission. If you remember the history [in Nauvoo], those years marked the period of some of the severest persecution that the Church was to undergo in this dispensation. In that one year and 14 days the nine members of the Twelve, with their associates, established churches in every noted town and city in the kingdom of Great Britain. They baptized between 7000 and 8000 converts. They printed 5000 copies of the Book of Mormon, 3000 hymnbooks, and 50,000 tracts, ...and [they] emigrated 1000 souls to America”* (Conf. Rpt. Apr. 1960, 108)

The examples of the Nauvoo Saints show the importance of enduring to the end in righteousness

D&C 124 includes many instructions and promises given to Nauvoo residents. As examples:

- D&C 124:12-14 Robert B. Thompson – told to help write; ... “he shall be great in mine eyes”
- D&C 124:16-17 John C. Bennett was to do missionary work and would be crowned with blessings and “great glory” if he continued to do good and if he would accept counsel
- D&C 124:18-19 Lyman Wight was to preach...he would be borne “up as on eagles’ wings...”
- D&C 124:87-90, 97-103 -- William Law was to trust in the Lord and proclaim the gospel in specific areas...and was promised a “multiplicity of blessings” for himself and his family
- D&C 124:104-10 -- Sidney Rigdon was to remain with the Lord’s people and be a spokesman and warn the inhabitants...and “if he will hearken” it would be well with him.

Most of the Saints were faithful during trials, endured to the end, and were blessed for their steadfastness. Some, however, such as Bros. Bennett, Law, Wight, and Rigdon became apostates and were unable to realize the blessings which could have been theirs.

D&C 124:15 highlights the attributes of Hyrum Smith that the Lord loved—deep integrity and a love for *“that which is right before me”*.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said of his brother, *“I could pray in my heart that all my brethren were like unto my beloved brother Hyrum, who possesses the mildness of a lamb, and the integrity of a Job, and in short, the meekness and humility of Christ; and I love him with that love that is stronger than death, for I never had occasion to rebuke him, nor he me”* (History of the Church, 2:338).

The Relief Society was organized in Nauvoo

While in Nauvoo, the Church was blessed with a new organization. Through the authority of the priesthood, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society. (See Our Heritage, pgs. 61-62)

Purposes of the Relief Society

The following declaration was presented in the 1999 general relief Society meeting: *“We are beloved spirit daughters of God, and our lives have meaning, purpose, and direction. As a worldwide sisterhood, we are united in our devotion to Jesus Christ, our Savior and Exemplar. We are women of faith, virtue, vision, and charity who: Increase our testimonies of Jesus Christ through prayer and scripture study; Seek spiritual strength by following the promptings of the Holy Ghost; Dedicate ourselves to strengthening marriages, families, and homes; Find nobility in motherhood and joy in womanhood; Delight in service and good works; Love life and learning; Stand for truth and righteousness; Sustain the priesthood as the authority of God on earth; Rejoice in the blessings of the temple, understand our divine destiny, and strive for exaltation”* (Mary Ellen Smoot, Ensign, Nov. 1999, 92-93).

The early Saints were excused from building a temple in Missouri. The Lord taught them in D&C 124:49-53 that if their enemies prevent them from following a commandment, the Lord will judge their enemies and punish them unless they repent.

The Saints would be relieved of their assigned responsibility if they did all that they could to do the work in spite of the opposition. Today, we need to remember this principle and a statement that Brigham Young made: *“Man controls the acts, God controls the results.”* If we are true and faithful in doing all within our power to accomplish what the Lord has assigned us, then even if others prevent the accomplishment, the Lord will know that we have done our best and will reward us.

The Apostles’ efforts to fulfill the Lord’s words.

In D&C 118, the Lord instructed the Apostles to go to Europe on missions.

His specific instructions were that they leave from the temple site at Far West. When they were ready to go, the mobs had driven them out of Far West and threatened to kill any LDS leaders who returned. Following the Lord’s instructions, would, therefore, be very dangerous. Despite the threats and danger, Brigham Young, four other apostles, and several others returned to the Far West temple site shortly after midnight on the morning of 26 April 1839. There they ordained two additional apostles—Wilford Woodruff and George A. Smith. They sang and prayed, and a large stone was rolled to a corner of the proposed temple site. Soon afterward, they left for their missions to England.

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s red brick store was not only a general store, but also served as a center of religious, social, and civic activity. A public school was established there. Church and civic meetings as well as youth gatherings were hosted in it.

On March 17, 1842, The Relief Society was organized at the store. It was also used as an ordinance room before the temple was completed, so the first endowments in this dispensation were given there.

A Proclamation to the World.

D&C 124:1-7 was the reason Joseph and others worked on a proclamation until the Prophet’s martyrdom in 1844. The Quorum of the Twelve then completed it and it was published on 6 April 1845. Addressed to the kings of the world, the US President, and the rulers and people of all nations, it proclaimed that God had spoken again from the heavens and that the kingdom of God and the holy priesthood had been restored to prepare the way for the Second Coming of the Savior.

In 1975, President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve quoted part of this document in general conference and declared that the Church was once again proclaiming these truths to the world.

“The Prisoners Shall Go Free”

Lesson 30 – D&C 2; 124:25-55; 127; 128; Joseph Smith—History 1:36-39

The Prophet Joseph Smith said of his oldest brother, Alvin: *“He was...one of the noblest of my father’s family. He was one of the noblest of the sons of men...In him there was no guile...He was one of the soberest of men, and when he died the angel of the Lord visited him in his last moments”* (History of the Church, 5:126-27). Alvin died some five years before the restoration of the priesthood, but he had accepted Joseph’s testimony of the First Vision. Since his death, the gospel restoration has made available the saving ordinances as part of the fullness of the gospel. Because we can function as proxies for deceased family members, we can provide the temple ordinances for all those who were unable to receive those saving ordinances in their mortal lifetime.

The Lord revealed the doctrine of priesthood ordinances for the dead

All people must have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and receive the saving ordinances administered by the priesthood. If that opportunity was not available in mortality, it will be extended in the spirit world. Since these ordinances require a mortal body, and spirits in the spirit world are separated from theirs, we act as proxies serving *“for and in behalf”* of the dead who are receiving these ordinances. The deceased may then accept or reject the ordinance in accordance with the principle of free agency.

President Gordon B. Hinckley commented on the teachings that the Prophet Joseph Smith received from the Lord: *“It is tremendously significant to me that...this repetition of the wondrous words of Malachi concerning the work for the dead, was given to the boy Joseph four years before he was allowed to take the plates from the hill. It was given before he received either the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood, before he was baptized, and well before the Church was organized. It says much concerning the priority of this work in the plan of the Lord.”* (Ensign, Mar. 1995, 61).

On 15 August 1840, the Prophet preached at Seymour Brunson’s funeral. As part of his sermon, he quoted extensively from 1 Corinthians 15, in which verse 29 refers to baptism for the dead. He followed this scripture with an announcement that members could be baptized for their family members or friends who had died without receiving the gospel. The Prophet further assured the Saints that the plan of salvation offered the opportunity to save anyone who was willing to obey God’s law and accept the gospel covenants. Later, the nearby Mississippi River became the site of the baptisms for the dead until a proper site could be prepared in a house of the Lord. (See the Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 15 Aug. 1840)

The Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Nauvoo

In D&C 124:25-27, several months after baptisms for the dead began to be performed in the river, the Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Nauvoo. Reasons for constructing a temple included:

- D&C 124:28, 40-41 – additional priesthood ordinances would be revealed
- D&C 124:29-30, 33 – a font for baptizing the dead would be provided
- D&C 124:55 – An opportunity for the Saints to prove their faithfulness (which would allow the Lord to bless them with honor, immortality, and eternal life)

The Nauvoo temple was the second temple in this dispensation and as such, was designed for ordinances that were not performed in the Kirtland Temple such as baptisms and confirmations for the dead, the endowment, and temple marriage.

After great sacrifices by the Saints to build the temple and obey the Lord, the temple was built in Nauvoo. See “The Nauvoo Temple”, Our Heritage, pgs 58-60.

For a short time, baptisms for the dead continued to be performed in the Mississippi, but in October 1841, the Prophet gave instructions that the practice should cease “...until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord’s House” (History of the Church, 4:426).

The baptisms quickly resumed after a temporary but carefully crafted wooden baptismal font was dedicated in the unfinished temple’s basement by Brigham Young on 8 November 1841. Today all ordinances for the dead must be performed in temples. We should give serious thought to the determination and priority demonstrated by the anxious efforts of the early Saints to prepare a place where they might redeem their dead.

We should be enthusiastic and joyful in our efforts to perform baptisms for the dead

While some baptisms for the dead were performed after the Savior’s resurrection, the great work of redeeming the dead falls to latter-day Saints in this last dispensation. To participate in baptisms for the dead, you must be 12 or older and hold a current temple recommend. New converts can participate, but any male member must hold the priesthood.

D&C 128:15 emphasizes the mutual dependency for salvation that we share with our dead. D&C 128:17-18 give further enlightenment. President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “*That which goes on in the House of the Lord...comes nearer to the spirit of sacrifice of the Lord than any other activity of which I know. Why? Because it is done by those who give freely of time and substance, without any expectation of thanks or reward, to do for others that which they cannot do for themselves*” (Ensign, Mar. 1995, 62-63).

Elder John A. Widtsoe said: “*In our preexistent state, in the day of the great council, we made certain agreement with the Almighty. The Lord proposed a plan, conceived by him. We accepted it. Since the plan is intended for all men, we become parties to the salvation of every person under that plan. We agreed, right then and there, to be not only saviors for ourselves, but...saviors for the whole human family. We went into a partnership with the Lord. The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father’s work, and the Savior’s work, but also our work. The least of us, the humblest, is in partnership with the Almighty in achieving the purpose of the eternal plan of salvation*” (Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, Oct. 1934, 189).

Baptisms for the dead are a work of the heart as illustrated by the story of some youth in Idaho. “After researching more than 400 names, both male and female, the Young Women of the Meridian [Idaho] 15th Ward invited the Young Men to go with them to the Boise [Idaho] Temple to do baptisms. The temple arranged for the names to be kept in a file for their ward. Heather Bennett, 15, said, ‘*The best part was being baptized for them. The names sounded familiar to me. That was the neatest thing about the whole project. We did work for people that otherwise wouldn’t have been done. They might have been forgotten.*’” Cori Christensen, another member of the group, said, “*While we were sitting in the baptistery in the temple, we had this totally good feeling. It was a feeling of victory. We’d given them a chance*” (New Era, Feb. 1994, 32)

The Prophet Joseph Smith called the work of redeeming the dead the “most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel.” As faithful Saints, we should seek to do all that we can to redeem our dead and offer salvation and exaltation to all of our brothers and sisters.

Historical background for D&C 127 and 128

In the summer of 1842, a group of men were seeking to unjustly imprison the Prophet. Because of this persecution, Joseph left Nauvoo, saying, *“I have thought it expedient and wisdom for me to leave the place for a season, for my own safety and the safety of this people”* (D&C 127:1). In spite of difficult circumstances, he wrote joyful words in letters to the Saints. In D&C 128:1 we find that the subject of baptism for the dead was very much on the Prophet’s mind during this time.

The importance of record keeping

D&C 127:5-9; 128:1-9 record the Lord’s command to the Saints to keep careful records of baptisms for the dead. D&C 128:6-8, 24 - When the Savior returns in the Second Coming, those very records will be presented to Him and the dead will be judged from these books.

“Sealed...for Time and for All Eternity”

Lesson 31 – D&C 131:1-4; 132:4-33

Eternal Marriage is essential in Heavenly Father’s plan

D&C 131:1-4; 132:4-33 contain revelations about eternal marriage.

Elder Parley P. Pratt, when he recalled his feelings when he first heard about these doctrines from the Prophet Joseph Smith, said: *“I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul...I felt that God was my heavenly Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion...In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also”*

(Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt [1975], 298)

President Boyd K. Packer taught: *“The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of our Heavenly father”* (Ensign, May 1995, 8)

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: *“Marriage, as understood by Latter-day Saints, is a covenant ordained to be everlasting. It is the foundation for eternal exaltation, for without it there could be no eternal progress in the kingdom of God”* (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954-56], 2:58)

D&C 132:15-18 explains that when a husband and wife are married only by civil law, their marriage will not be valid beyond the grave—no matter how many vows they have made to be together forever nor how much they may love one another.

D&C 131:1-4; 132:19-24, 30-31 give insight into the **blessings received by those who make an eternal marriage covenant in the temple by the proper authority:**

- They will be together “in time, and through all eternity”. Their children may also be part of their eternal family. The receipt of these blessings is dependent upon our continued faithfulness to the covenants after making them.
- D&C 131:1-3; 132:23-24 promise that the faithful will be exalted in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- They will “inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities,...powers, [and] dominions” (D&C 132:19)
- They will continue to have seed, or spirit children, throughout eternity (D&C 132:19, 30-31)
- “They shall be gods, because they have all power” (D&C 132:20-21)

Temple marriage also brings blessings in mortality.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin said: *“The sweet companionship of eternal marriage is one of the greatest blessings God has granted to His children. Certainly, the many years I have shared with my beautiful companion have brought me the deepest joys of my life. From the beginning of time, marital companionship of husband and wife has been fundamental to our Heavenly Father’s great plan of happiness. Our lives are touched for good, and we are both edified and ennobled as we savor the sweet blessings of association with dear members of the family”* (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 32)

Youth should prepare now for eternal marriage

Young people should be encouraged to prepare themselves for the blessings of a temple marriage. This is one of the most important decisions they will ever make, so our leaders emphasize temple marriage as a vital goal for each young man or woman.

Elder Richard G. Scott, speaking of eternal marriage, said: *“An essential priority of a prospective wife is the desire to be a wife and mother. She should be developing the sacred qualities that God has given His daughters to excel as a wife and mother: patience, kindness, a love of children, and a desire to care for them rather than seeking professional pursuits. She should be acquiring a good education to prepare for the demands of motherhood. ... A prospective husband should also honor his priesthood and use it in service to others. Seek a man who accepts his role as provider of the necessities of life, has the capacity to do it, and is making concerted efforts to prepare himself to fulfill those responsibilities”* (Ensign, May 1999, 26)

After a husband and wife are sealed in the temple, they must abide in the covenant to receive the promised blessings

A sister related: “I was just sure the first ten years would be bliss. But during our first year together I discovered...there were a lot of adjustments. Of course, they weren’t the kind of thing you ran home to mother about. But I cried into my pillow now and again. The problems were almost always related to learning to live on someone else’s schedule and to do things someone else’s way. We loved each other, there was no doubt about that. But we also had to get used to each other. I think every couple has to get used to each other.”

It takes love, work, and dedication to have a successful marriage. The blessings promised during the sealing ceremony are only in effect if the couple “abide in [the] covenant” (D&C 132:19). There are some specific things that we should do to “abide in [the] covenant”.

D&C 42:22 applies equally to men and women. Love between spouses means loving with all your heart. President Spencer W. Kimball explained: *“When the Lord says all thy heart, it allows for no sharing nor dividing nor depriving... The words ‘none else’ eliminate everyone and everything. The spouse then becomes preeminent in the life of the husband or wife, and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any other interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse... Marriage presupposes total allegiance and total fidelity. Each spouse takes the partner with the understanding that he or she gives totally to the spouse all the heart, strength, loyalty, honor, and affection, with all dignity. Any divergence is sin; any sharing of the heart is transgression. As we should have ‘an eye single to the glory of God’, so should we have an eye, an ear, a heart single to the marriage and the spouse and family”* (Faith Precedes the Miracle [1972], 142-43).

President Gordon B. Hinckley gave this simple counsel to married couples: “Be fiercely loyal one to another.” (Ensign, Feb. 1999, 4)

The marriage covenant in the temple requires you to be true to one another and to be true to the Lord.

Some things couples can do to strengthen their love for each other and for the Lord include:

- Praying and reading scriptures together
- Seeking to be guided by the Spirit together
- Holding Family Home Evening
- Going on dates together
- Talking to one another
- Helping one another around the house,
- Attending the temple together

Is there something special or noteworthy that your spouse does to strengthen your marriage that might be a good idea for others?

Faithful Saints will not be denied the blessings of eternity. For those who are single, Elder Dallin H. Oaks counseled: *“We know that many worthy and wonderful Latter-day Saints currently lack the ideal opportunities and essential requirements for their progress. Singleness, childlessness, death, and divorce frustrate ideals and postpone the fulfillment of promised blessings. In addition, some women who desire to be full-time mothers and homemakers have been literally compelled to enter the full-time workforce. But these frustrations are only temporary. The Lord has promised that in the eternities no blessing will be denied his sons and daughters who keep the commandments, are true to their covenants, and desire what is right. Many of the most important deprivations of mortality will be set right in the Millennium, which is the time for fulfilling all that is incomplete in the great plan of happiness for all of our Father’s worthy children. We know that will be true of temple ordinances. I believe it will also be true of family relationships and experiences”* (Ensign, Nov. 1993)

Plural Marriage

The Lord’s purpose for commanding his people to practice plural marriage was given through the prophet Jacob in the Book of Mormon: “If I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people” (Jacob 2:30)

The revelation to practice plural marriage in this dispensation was obeyed by some early Saints when the Lord commanded it.

Church leaders regulated the practice. Those entering into it had to be authorized to do so, and the marriages had to be performed through the sealing power of the priesthood.

The Church’s position on plural marriage today is simple—anyone practicing it will be excommunicated. We as a Church have nothing to do with those practicing polygamy.

“To Seal the Testimony”
Lesson 32 – D&C 135; Our Heritage pgs. 62-66

Martyrs in the scriptures include John the Baptist, Abinadi, Zacharias, and Stephen. They were all martyred because of their commitment to the truth. Today’s lesson reviews the latter-day martyrdom of the brothers, Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

The Prophet Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood

In Nauvoo, at least for a few years, the Saints prospered as the Church grew rapidly, the Saints labored on the temple, and the heavens were opened with numerous revelations being given to the Prophet Joseph Smith for the benefit of the Church. But animosity grew and during 1843-44, the opposition to the Church grew more intense and violent. Enemies arose both outside and inside the Church and their efforts to destroy the Church increased. The climax came on 27 June 1844. (Special report on pages 62-63, “The Martyrdom” in Our Heritage)

D&C 135:4-5. D&C 135 was written by Elder John Taylor, who was wounded in the mob’s attack on Carthage Jail and the Prophet.

The Prophet was reported to be as “calm as a summer’s morning” even though he knew that he might be slain at Carthage. He and Hyrum might have received comfort from Ether 12:36-38.

D&C 135:1-2 tells us the bare facts about the martyrdom. Elder Willard Richards, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and a close friend of the Prophet, was present at the jail during the mob’s attack and gave this account, which begins as the mob arrived just after 5:00pm on 27 June 1844: *“A shower of musket balls were thrown up the stairway against the door of the prison in the second story, followed by many rapid footsteps...A ball was sent through the door, which passed between us, and showed that our enemies were desperados... Joseph Smith, Mr. Taylor, and myself sprang back to the front part of the room, and...Hyrum Smith retreated two-thirds across the chamber directly in front of and facing the door. A ball was sent through the door which hit Hyrum on the side of his nose, when he fell backwards, extended at length, without moving his feet. From the holes in his [clothing], it appears evident that a ball must have been thrown from without, through the window, which entered his back on the right side, and passing through, lodged against his watch...At the same instant the ball from the door entered his nose. As he struck the floor, he exclaimed emphatically, “I am a dead man.” Joseph looked towards him and responded, ‘Oh, dear brother Hyrum!’ and opening the door two or three inches with his left hand, discharged one barrel of a six shooter (pistol) at random in the entry...A ball [from a musket of one of the mob] grazed Hyrum’s breast, and entering his throat passed into his head, while other muskets were aimed at him and some balls hit him. Joseph continued snapping his revolver round the casing of the door into the space as before..., while Mr. Taylor with a walking stick stood by his side and knocked down the bayonets and muskets which were constantly discharged through the doorway...When the revolver failed, we had no more firearms, and expected an immediate rush of the mob, and the doorway full of muskets, half way in the room, and no hope but instant death from within. Mr. Taylor rushed into the window, which is some fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. When his body was nearly on balance, a ball from the door within entered his leg, and a ball from without struck his watch...in his vest pocket near the left breast, ... the force of which ball threw him back on the floor, and he rolled under the bed which stood by his side... Joseph attempted, a the last resort, to leap [from] the same window from whence Mr. Taylor fell, when two balls pierced him from the door, and one entered his right breast from without, and he fell outward, exclaiming, ‘Oh Lord, my God!’ ... He fell on his left side a dead man”* (History of the Church, 6:619-20).

Elder John Taylor was shot four times but recovered from his wounds. A year before the martyrdom, the Prophet had accurately prophesied that Elder Willard Richards would escape unharmed. Elder Richards recalled that in this prophecy, the prophet had said that *“the time would come that the balls would fly around him like hail, and he should see his friends fall on the right and on the left, but that there should not be a hole in his garment”* (History of the Church, 6:619).

Before the Prophet’s father, Joseph Smith, Sr. died, he gave his son a blessing: *“You shall live to finish your work... You shall live to lay out the plan of all the work which God has given you to do”* (History of Joseph Smith, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 309-10)

Think about what most impressed you about the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.

The Prophet Joseph Smith did more for the salvation of men in this world than anyone except Jesus D&C 135:3 records some of the Prophet’s major achievements. He did *“more save Jesus for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it”*, because his work blessed not only the Saints in this dispensation, but also billions who lived at other times who were unable to receive the gospel blessings. **We will appreciate his contributions more if we think of how much they bless our daily lives and prepare us for eternity:**

- Truths about the Godhead
D&C 130:22-23. In the King Follett sermon given 7 April 1844, the Prophet taught: *“God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible, —I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form of man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, and talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another”* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 345)
- The Authority of the Priesthood
Through the prophet Joseph Smith, heavenly messengers restored the Aaronic Priesthood, the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the keys of the priesthood. Then, the Lord gave revelations about priesthood offices, organization, covenants, ordinances, duties, and blessings. Without those revelations, we would not understand the priesthood power or its operations.
- Truths about our origin and our relationship to God
D&C 76:23-24; Abraham 3:22-28 teach that we are literally children of God and that we lived with him before we came to this earth as mortals. Think about how this knowledge affects your daily life.
- Scriptures
While serving in the Quorum of the Twelve, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“[Joseph Smith] translated and published the Book of Mormon, a volume of 522 pages which has since been retranslated into [many] languages and which is accepted by millions across the earth as the word of God. The revelations he received and other writings he produced are likewise scripture to these millions. The total in book pages constitutes the equivalent of almost the entire Old Testament of the Bible, and it came through one man in the space of a few years”* (Ensign, May 1977, 65)
- Truths about the plan of salvation
Lessons 19 and 20 provided information in detail about what the Prophet revealed about the plan of salvation.
- Truths about the salvation of the dead

The Prophet taught that those who died without an opportunity to receive gospel ordinances and covenants would have an opportunity to accept or reject these ordinances and blessings just as if they had had the opportunity in this life. He also taught that we need our dead and they need us for the whole human family to be joined together as the Father intended. See D&C 128:18.

- The building of temples and the performance of temple ordinances
The receipt of endowments and the sealing of families together forever were revealed through Joseph so that we might enjoy the blessings of eternal families.
- Other contributions included:
 - The Church was restored through him
 - He began the gathering of Israel and the missionary work to spread the gospel throughout the earth
 - The Law of Consecration, a celestial principle, was revealed through him
 - The Lord's law of health, the Word of Wisdom, was revealed through him
 - We learned about the future building of latter-day Zion and the New Jerusalem through him
 - He wrote the Articles of Faith

The Articles of Faith

President Spencer W. Kimball asked: *"How many of you know the Articles of Faith? ...Do you know them? Have you repeated them? You are always prepared with a sermon when you know the Articles of Faith. And they are basic, aren't they? I would think it would be a wonderful thing if [we] would learn them word-perfect. That means that you don't miss and you don't forget"* (Ensign, Nov. 1975, 79)

“President Brigham Young Leads the Saints”

Lesson 33 – D&C 107:22-24; Our Heritage pgs. 66-71

When the Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred, many expected the Church to disintegrate and scatter because they thought that the Church was simply a group of Joseph Smith’s followers. They failed to understand important principles pertaining to the leadership of the Church. President Joseph Fielding Smith said: *“No man of himself can lead this church. It is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ; he is at the head... He chooses men and calls them to be instruments in his hands to accomplish his purposes, and he guides and directs them in their labors. But men are only instruments in the Lord’s hands, and the honor and glory for all that his servants accomplish is and should be ascribed unto him forever. If this were the work of man, it would fail, but it is the work of the Lord, and he does not fail”* (Improvement Era, June 1970, 26)

Following the martyrdom of Joseph, Brigham Young became the leader of the Church in an inspired process of succession in the Presidency that continues today. As one president passes away, the senior apostle becomes the leader of the Church and exercises the proper keys.

The Prophet Joseph Smith gave the Twelve the keys of the kingdom and taught the principles of succession in the Presidency

In Nauvoo from 1843-44, the Prophet Joseph Smith gave the members of the Quorum of the Twelve their temple endowments and taught them the responsibilities of their callings. He expressed concern that he did not want to die without having bestowed the keys of the kingdom on other brethren.

Wilford Woodruff quoted the Prophet as saying: *“Now, brethren, I thank God that I have lived to see the day that I have been enabled to give to you your endowments, and I have now sealed upon your heads all the powers of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and Apostleship, with all the keys and powers thereof, which God has sealed upon me; and I now roll off all the labor, burden and care of this Church and Kingdom of God upon your shoulders, and I now command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to round up your shoulders, and bear off this Church and Kingdom of God before heaven and earth, and before God, angels, and men”* (Messages of the First Presidency, [1965-75], 3:134).

D&C 107:22-24 contains an important principle of succession in the Presidency. While the authority and power of the quorum of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve is equal, the quorum of the First Presidency is designated as the presiding quorum.

It is important to understand this relationship between the Quorums. President Harold B. Lee said: *“The Prophet Joseph Smith declared that ‘where the president is not, there is no First Presidency.’ Immediately following the death of a President, the next ranking body, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, becomes the presiding authority, with the President of the Twelve automatically becoming the acting President of the Church until a President of the Church is officially ordained and sustained in his office”* (Improvement Era, June 1970, 28).

After Joseph Smith’s martyrdom, the Twelve presided over the Church until Brigham Young was sustained as President

Upon the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the First Presidency was dissolved, and the Quorum of the Twelve became the presiding body. See “Succession in the Presidency”, pages 66-67, Our Heritage.

Sidney Rigdon failed to understand Church leadership. While Bro. Rigdon wanted to assume leadership, Bro. Young was only interested in knowing the will of the Lord on the matter. This should be an example for us to note and follow. We should always be willing to seek and follow the Lord’s guidance rather than seeking to promote and gain acceptance of our opinions. Following an afternoon

discussion session on Church leadership, Brigham Young prophesied that only the Apostles would be successful in building the Kingdom of God, but those who did not follow the Twelve Apostles would fail. This has proven true through the years. As the meeting concluded, the Saints unanimously voted to sustain the Quorum of the Twelve as the leaders of the Church. The Quorum presided until the 27th of December in 1847, some three and one-half years later, when the quorum of the First Presidency was formed under President Young.

Before leaving Nauvoo, the Saints received temple ordinances

In 2001, work continues on the new Nauvoo Temple. In 1845-46 as the Saints prepared to depart from Nauvoo, they kept their commitment to finish the temple. Once the House of the Lord was ready, the Saints anxiously assembled to receive their endowments in the temple. Of this occasion, President Young wrote in his journal: *“This morning there was an immense crowd at the reception room waiting for admission... One hundred twenty-one persons received ordinances”* (History of the Church, 7:565). *“Such has been the anxiety manifested by the saints to receive the ordinances [of the Temple], and such the anxiety on our part to administer to them, that I have given myself up entirely to the work of the Lord in the Temple night and day, not taking more than four hours of sleep, upon an average, per day, and going home but once a week. Elder Heber C. Kimball and the others of the Twelve Apostles were in constant attendance but in consequence of close application some of them have had to leave the Temple to rest and recruit their health.”* (History of the Church, 7:567).

The ordinances of the temple were planned to end in February 1846 so that the Saints could leave Nauvoo because the persecution had escalated, but those who had not yet received the temple ordinances were not willing to depart. President Young wrote: *“Notwithstanding that I had announced that we would not attend to the administration of the ordinances, the House of the Lord was thronged all day, the anxiety being so great to receive, as if the brethren would have us stay here and continue the endowments until our way would be hedged up, and our enemies would intercept us. But I informed the brethren that this was not wise, and that we should build more Temples, and have further opportunities to receive the blessings of the Lord, as soon as the saints were prepared to receive them. In this Temple we have been abundantly rewarded, if we receive no more. I also informed the brethren that I was going to get my wagons started and be off. I walked some distance from the Temple supposing that the crowd would disperse, but on returning I found the house filled to overflowing. Looking upon the multitude and knowing their anxiety, as they were thirsting and hungering for the word, we continued to work diligently in the House of the Lord. Two hundred and ninety-five persons received ordinances”* (History of the Church, 7:579). It was important that the Saints receive the ordinances so that they would have the necessary knowledge and strength to face the trials of their journey west. Temple work continued for the remainder of the week, but then the temple was finally closed. Nearly 6000 Saints had received their endowments before they began the westward trek.

The Saints experienced trials and miracles as they began journeying west

Some of the Saints left Nauvoo on 4 February 1846. See Our Heritage, pgs. 69-70 “Preparing to Leave Nauvoo” and “The Trials of a Winter Trek”.

Because they were leaving in the winter and their preparations had been rushed, they were in for a difficult journey. One memorable event occurred at Sugar Creek, about seven miles from Nauvoo, across the Mississippi River in Iowa. During the very first night of encampment at Sugar Creek, nine infants were born. The available shelter was inadequate against the extreme cold of the Iowa winter night. Eliza R. Snow wrote: *“Mothers gave birth to offspring under almost every variety of circumstances imaginable, except those to which they had been accustomed; some in tents, others in*

wagons—in rainstorms and in snowstorms. I heard of one birth which occurred under the rude shelter of a hut, the sides of which were formed of blankets fastened to poles stuck in the ground, with a bark roof through which the rain was dripping. Kind sisters stood holding dishes to catch the water as it fell, thus protecting the new-comer and its mother from a shower-bath, ... Let it be remembered that the mothers of these wilderness-born babes were not...accustomed to roam the forest and brave the storm and tempest... Most of them were born and educated in the Eastern States—had there embraced the gospel as taught by Jesus and his apostles, and, for the sake of their religion, had gathered with the saints, and under trying circumstances had assisted, by their faith, patience and energies, in making Nauvoo what its name indicates, 'the beautiful'. There they had lovely homes, decorated with flowers and enriched with choice fruit trees, just beginning to yield plentifully. To these homes... they had just bade a final adieu, and with what little of their substance could be packed into one, two, and in some instances, three wagons, had started out, desertward” (The Women of Mormondom [1877], 307-8).

In September 1846, the majority of Saints had abandoned their beautiful city and settled in temporary locations all across Iowa as they prepared for another winter. With a fierce determination to rid Nauvoo of all remaining Mormons, mobs looted and burned houses and drove the remaining residents down to the river. Some escaped the mobs with only the clothes on their backs and no supplies. The really unfortunate were those who were caught and beaten, or thrown into the Mississippi by the mobs.

Along the riverbank, refugee camps of 500-600 homeless men, women, and children were established. Blankets or simply brush served as shelter and there was precious little for many to eat. Some died and many were too ill for traveling. Bishop Newel K. Whitney distributed some flour that he had purchased, but it was insufficient to sustain the assembled saints. But the Lord provided for them in a miraculous way:

- On 9 October, when food was in especially short supply, several large flocks of quail flew into camp and landed on the ground and even on tables. Many of them were caught, cooked, and eaten by the hungry Saints. To the faithful, it was a sign of God’s mercy to modern Israel as a similar incident had been to ancient Israel. (Comprehensive History of the Church, 3:135-36.)

The adversary’s opposition to temple work was evident because great opposition was experienced as the temple construction progressed. In discussing that opposition to temple building, Elder Boyd k. Packer said: *“The opposition was leveled at the Saints because the adversary was afraid of the temple. He would do anything to prevent their construction of it”* (The Holy Temple [1980], 175).

Additional Information on Succession in the Presidency of the Church

The steps in the succession of a new Presidency include the following:

- A man who has been foreordained to preside one day over the Church is called by revelation to become an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve.
- His association with the members of the Twelve and the First Presidency, and the assignments he receives and fulfills, provide the necessary training for his future calling. As he outlives other members of the Quorum, he advances in seniority until he becomes the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. At that point, only the President of the Church has served as an Apostle longer than he has.

- When the President of the Church dies:
 - The First Presidency is dissolved
 - Counselors in the First Presidency return to their places in the Quorum of the Twelve (if they were members of the quorum)
 - The Quorum of the Twelve becomes the presiding quorum in the Church
 - The President of the Twelve becomes the presiding authority in the Church
 - Members of the Twelve assemble in the temple while fasting and praying. Guided by revelation, they come to a unanimous decision regarding the reorganization of the First Presidency. They then sustain the senior member of the Twelve as the President of the Church. They then lay hands upon his head and ordain him and set him apart as President of the Church.
 - The new President of the Church chooses two men to serve with him as his counselors. In most cases, these are members of the Twelve.
 - Vacancies in the Twelve are filled.

“Faith in Every Footstep”

Lesson 34 – D&C 136; Our Heritage, pgs. 71-77

The Saints journey west parallels in some ways our journey back to our Heavenly Father. To get back to our eternal home, we will make sacrifices just as the pioneers did.

Speaking of the early pioneers in this dispensation, Elder Russell M. Ballard said: *“Their journeys parallel our own. There are lessons for us in every footstep they took—lessons of love, courage, commitment, devotion, endurance, and, most of all, faith”* (Ensign, May 1997, 59). We are trying to obtain a “promised land” just as groups of the Lord’s people have done at many times in the past. Such places have been called a land of peace, a choice land, and a land of inheritance. Groups led to these lands included the Jaredites, the families of Lehi and Ishmael, the children of Israel, and the pioneers led by President Brigham Young.

The Lord instructed the Saints regarding their physical preparations for their journey

Even as the Saints suffered greatly from illness and difficulties during the time at Winter Quarters, they prepared diligently for their westward trek. Because they exhibited a dedication and determination, they were blessed with an easier journey and the opportunity to assist others who followed after them. We can have similar blessings in our lives today.

D&C 136 is the revelation President Young received at Winter Quarters in January 1847. It gives instructions from the Lord on preparing for the journey to the Salt Lake Valley. The following specifics were given:

- D&C 136:2 – Make a “covenant and promise” to obey the commandments and laws of the Lord.
- D&C 136:3 – Organize with the Twelve at the head, have a president with two counselors, and designate captains over hundreds, fifties, and tens. Today we are organized in wards and stakes.
- D&C 136:5 – Be self-sufficient. Provide yourself with all that you can.
- D&C 136:6 – Make preparations for those who will be left behind. See D&C 136:7, 9.
- D&C 136:8 – Care for the needy, widows, and orphans.
- D&C 136:10 – Use your influence and property to get the saints to “a stake of Zion”.

The Lord instructed the Saints regarding their conduct

D&C 136:17-33 includes instructions from the Lord on both physical and spiritual preparations as well as their behavior toward other saints.

Instructions about their conduct included:

- D&C 136:19 warns against pride and encourages humility
- D&C 136:21 instructs us concerning proper reverence and respect for deity
- D&C 136:23-24 tell us that contention and speaking ill of others must cease. We have a responsibility and opportunity to instruct and improve others
- D&C 136:25-26 counsel us concerning respect for others’ property
- D&C 136:27 reminds us to be wise stewards over that with which we have been entrusted
- D&C 136:28 instructs the Saints on appropriate types of recreation.

Elder David O. McKay taught: *“On the plains, after a day’s march, the wagons were drawn up in a circle, a man with a violin would take his place by the campfire and there on the prairie the sturdy Pioneers would join hands in a dance, opening it by prayer, and participate in amusement that fostered the spirit of the gospel...President Brigham Young...once said, in*

substance, 'The atmosphere of the dance should be such that if any elder be called from the party to go to administer to a sick person, he could leave with the same spirit that he would go from his elders' quorum meeting' " (Conference Report, April 1920, 117).

- D&C 136:32-33 give the Lord's counsel to develop wisdom by striving for humility and praying for enlightenment from our Father.

Under the direction of President Brigham Young, the Saints journeyed to the Salt Lake Valley

Some two years before the martyrdom, the Prophet Joseph Smith prophesied of the westward expansion of the Church. Specifically, he said that *"the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains,"* and that some of the Saints would *"live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains"* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 255). In the years from 1847 to 1869, some 70,000 Church members from all over the globe migrated to Utah and fulfilled his prophecy. (See the map in the Class Member Study Guide on page 31).

There were many stories that capture the faith and courage exhibited by the pioneer Saints. See Our Heritage: "The Brooklyn Saints" (pgs. 74-75); "The Gathering Continues" (Pgs. 75-76); and "This Is the Right Place" (pgs. 76-77).

We can learn lessons and principles from the pioneers' trek that can assist us in returning to our Heaven Father. Elder Russell M. Ballard said: *"Life isn't always easy. At some point in our journey we may feel much as the pioneers did as they crossed Iowa—up to our knees in mud, forced to bury some of our dreams along the way. We all face rocky ridges, with the wind in our face and winter coming on too soon. Sometimes it seems as though there is no end to the dust that stings our eyes and clouds our vision. Sharp edges of despair and discouragement jut out of the terrain to slow our passage. ...Occasionally we reach the top of one summit in life, as the pioneers did, only to see more mountain peaks ahead, higher and more challenging than the one we have just traversed. Tapping unseen reservoirs of faith and endurance, we, as did our forebears, inch ever forward toward that day when our voices can join with those of all pioneers who have endured in faith, singing, 'All is well! All is well!' "* (Ensign, May 1997, 61).

Our quest for eternal life is similar to the pioneers' quest for freedom and safety in the West. They laid the foundation of the work and it is up to us to complete the tasks. As President James E. Faust testified, *"Faith in every future footstep will fulfill prophetic vision concerning the glorious destiny of this Church"* (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 42).

Elder Russell M. Ballard said: *"We are the inheritors of a tremendous heritage. Now it is our privilege and responsibility to be part of the Restoration's continuing drama, and there are great and heroic stories of faith to be written in our day. It will require every bit of our strength, wisdom, and energy to overcome the obstacles that will confront us. But even that will not be enough. We will learn, as did our pioneer ancestors, that it is only in faith—real faith, whole-souled, tested and tried—that we will find safety and confidence as we walk our own perilous pathways through life"* (Ensign, May 1997, 61).

Sacrifices made by the pioneers

Elder Thomas S. Monson: *"Mormon pioneers by the hundreds suffered and died from disease, exposure, or starvation. There were some who, lacking wagons and teams, literally walked the 1,300 miles across the plains and through the mountains, pushing and pulling handcarts. In these groups, one in six perished. For many the journey didn't begin in Nauvoo, Kirtland, Far West, or New York, but rather in distant England, Scotland, Scandinavia, and Germany...Between the safety of home and*

the promise of Zion stood the angry and treacherous waters of the mighty Atlantic. Who can recount the fear that gripped the human heart during those perilous crossings? Prompted by the silent whisperings of the Spirit, sustained by a simple, yet abiding faith, they trusted in their God and set sail on their journey... On board one of those overcrowded and creaking vessels [ships] of yesteryear were my great grandparents, their tiny family, and a few meager possessions. The waves were so high, the voyage so long, the quarters so cramped. Tiny Mary [their daughter] had always been frail, but now, with the passage of each day, her anxious mother knew the little one was becoming especially weak. She had taken seriously ill... Day after day worried parents peered for land, but there was no land. Now Mary could not stand... The end drew near. Little Mary peacefully passed beyond this veil of tears. As the family and friends gathered on the open deck, the ship's captain directed the service, and that precious, ever-so-small body, placed tenderly in a tear-stained canvas, was committed to the angry sea. Strong father, in emotion-choked tones, comforted grieving mother, repeating, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. We'll see our Mary again!' " (Improvement Era, June 1967, 55).

“A Mission of Saving”

Lesson 35 – D&C 4:3-7; 18:10-16; 52:40; 81:5-6; 138:58; Our Heritage, Pgs. 77-80

We regularly repeat pioneer experiences and use them as examples to be followed. President Hinckley points out why that is done:

- *“Stories of the beleaguered Saints and of their suffering and death will be repeated again and again. Stories of their rescue need to be repeated again and again. They speak of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ”* (Ensign, Nov. 1996, 86). He also said: *“I will never get over being thankful to them; I hope you never get over being thankful to them. I hope that we will always remember them... Let us read again and again, and read to our children or our children’s children, the accounts of those who suffered so much”* (Church News, 31 July 1999, 5).

This lesson concentrates on the lessons that can be learned from the Martin and Willie handcart companies.

President Brigham Young guided the rescue of the Martin and Willie handcart companies

President Gordon B. Hinckley: *“I take you back to the general conference of October 1856. On Saturday of that conference, Franklin D. Richards and a handful of associates arrived in the valley. They had traveled from Winter Quarters with strong teams and light wagons and had been able to make good time. Brother Richards immediately sought out President Young. He reported that there were hundreds of men, women, and children scattered over the long trail...They were in desperate trouble. Winter had come early. Snow-laden winds were howling across the highlands...Our people were hungry; their carts and their wagons were breaking down; their oxen dying. The people themselves were dying. All of them would perish unless they were rescued. I think President Young did not sleep that night. I think visions of those destitute, freezing, dying people paraded through his mind. The next morning he came to the old Tabernacle which stood on this square. He said to the people: ‘I will now give the subject and the text for the Elders who may speak...It is this...Many of our brethren and sisters are on the plains with handcarts, and probably many are now seven hundred miles from this place, and they must be brought here, we must send assistance to them. The text will be, “to get them here.”... That is my religion, that is the dictation of the Holy Ghost that I possess. It is to save the people....I shall call upon the Bishops this day. I shall not wait until tomorrow, not until the next day, for 60 good mule teams and 12 or 15 wagons. I do not want to send oxen. I want good horses and mules. They are in this Territory, and we must have them. Also 12 tons of flour and 40 good teamsters, besides those that drive the teams... I will tell you all that your faith, religion, and profession of religion, will never save one soul of you in the Celestial Kingdom of God, unless you carry out just such principles as I am now teaching you. Go and bring in those people now on the plains.’ (Handcarts to Zion [1960], 120-21) “That afternoon, food, bedding, and clothing in great quantities were assembled by the women. The next morning, horses were shod and wagons were repaired and loaded. The following morning, ...16 mule teams pulled out and headed eastward. By the end of October, there were 250 teams on the road to give relief”* (Ensign, Nov. 1996, 85-86). The Martin and Willie handcart companies had done all they could on their own, but they needed the rescue efforts of those willing parties who journeyed to save them...otherwise, they would have died. President Hinckley shared this account of the rescue: *“It was in...desperate and terrible circumstances—hungry, exhausted, their clothes thin and ragged—that [the handcart companies] were found by the rescue party. As the rescuers appeared on the western horizon breaking a trail through the snow, they seemed as angels of mercy. And indeed they were. The beleaguered emigrants shouted for joy, some of them. Others, too weak to shout, simply wept and wept and wept. There was now food to eat and some warmer clothing. But the suffering was not over, nor would it*

ever end in mortality. Limbs had been frozen, and the gangrenous flesh sloughed off from the bones. The carts were abandoned, and the survivors were crowded into the wagons of the rescuers. The long rough journey of three hundred even five hundred miles between them and this valley was especially slow and tedious because of the storms. On November 30, 104 wagons, loaded with suffering human cargo, came into the Salt Lake Valley. Word of their expected arrival had preceded them. It was Sunday, and again the Saints were gathered in the Tabernacle. Brigham Young stood before the congregation and said: 'As soon as this meeting is dismissed I want the brethren and sisters to repair their homes...The afternoon meeting will be omitted, for I wish the sisters to...prepare to give those who have just arrived a mouthful of something to eat, and to wash them and nurse them...Some you will find with their feet frozen to their ankles; some are frozen to their knees and some have their hands frosted...; we want you to receive them as your own children, and to have the same feeling for them' (quoted in Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, p. 139)" (Ensign, Nov. 1991, 54)

The Savior rescues us through His atoning sacrifice

After sharing the story of the handcart companies, President Hinckley testified of the rescuing mission of the Savior: *"It is because of the sacrificial redemption wrought by the Savior of the world that the great plan of the eternal gospel is made available to us, under which those who die in the Lord shall not taste of death but shall have the opportunity of going on to a celestial and eternal glory. In our own helplessness, He becomes our rescuer, saving us from damnation and bringing us to eternal life. In times of despair, in seasons of loneliness and fear, He is there on the horizon to bring succor and comfort and assurance and faith. He is our King, our Savior, our Deliverer, our Lord and our God"* (Ensign, Nov. 1991, 54).

As Latter-day Saints, we are to rescue those in need

President Thomas S. Monson: *"Let us for a moment join Captain Edward Martin and the handcart company he led. While we will not feel the pangs of hunger which he felt or experience the bitter cold that penetrated their weary bodies, we will emerge from our visit with a better appreciation of hardship borne, courage demonstrated, and faith fulfilled. We will witness with tear-filled eyes a dramatic answer to the question 'Am I my brother's keeper?'* The handcarts moved on November 3 and reached the [Sweetwater] river, filled with floating ice. To cross would require more courage and fortitude, it seemed, than human nature could muster. Women shrank back and men wept. Some pushed through, but others were unequal to the ordeal. *'Three eighteen-year-old boys belonging to the relief party came to the rescue; and to the astonishment of all who saw, carried nearly every member of that ill-fated handcart company across the snow-bound stream. The strain was so terrible, and the exposure so great, that in later years all the boys died from the effects of it. When President Brigham Young heard of this heroic act, he wept like a child, and later declared publicly, "That act alone will ensure C. Allen Huntington, George W. Grant, and David P. Kimball an everlasting salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of God, worlds without end"*' (Handcarts to Zion [Glendale, CA: The Arthur Clark Co., 1960], pp. 132-33). *"Our service to others may no be so dramatic, but we can bolster human spirits, clothe cold bodies, feed hungry people, comfort grieving hearts, and lift to new heights precious souls"* (Ensign, May 1990, 46-47).

We have a rescue mission today.

"Our mission in life, as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, must be a mission of saving..." said President Gordon B. Hinckley. (Ensign, Nov. 1991, 59) Referring to the suffering of the Martin and Willie handcart companies, President Hinckley said: *"I am grateful that those days of pioneering are behind us. I am thankful that we do not have brothers and sisters stranded in the snow, freezing and dying, while trying to get to this, their Zion in the mountains. But there are people, not a few, whose circumstances are desperate and who cry out for help and relief. There are so many who are hungry*

and destitute across this world who need help... Ours is a great and solemn duty to reach out and help them, to lift them, to feed them if they are hungry, to nurture their spirits if they thirst for truth and righteousness. My brethren and sisters, I would hope, I would pray that each of us...would resolve to seek those who need help, who are in desperate and difficult circumstances, and lift them in the spirit of love into the embrace of the Church, where strong hands and loving hearts will warm them, comfort them, sustain them, and out them on the way of happy and productive lives” (Ensign, Nov. 1996, 86)

We have counsel in the D&C on how we can be involved in a mission of saving:

- D&C 4:3-7 list qualities which can help us rescue those in need (desire to serve God, faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God...faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, humility, and diligence)
- D&C 18:10-16 counsel us about opportunities to teach the gospel and the doctrine of repentance (remember the worth of souls and your eternal joy with those you save through missionary service)
- D&C 52:40 tell us what to do for those in need (remember and serve them in their need)
- D&C 81:5-6 command us to care for physical needs...and spiritual needs also.
- D&C 138:58 counsel us to remember the opportunity to save the dead (through temple ordinances)

As we consider our responsibilities as rescuers, we should remember the example set in rescuing the handcart company—do not delay your efforts (start now), put aside your concerns in favor of those who need your assistance, and put your faith in God to help you do what is required.

As we struggle to save others, we must never give up hope. We must be selfless, compassionate, humble, and loving as we reach out to assist others in their lives.

“We became acquainted with [God] in our extremities”. See Our Heritage, pg. 77-78, and think about how you have become acquainted with God during trials and difficult circumstances.

“If the world is going to be saved, we have to do it”.

It is our responsibility and opportunity to rescue those in need. As President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“Our message is so imperative, when you stop to think that the salvation, the eternal salvation of the world, rests upon the shoulders of this Church. When all is said and done, if the world is going to be saved, we have to do it. There is no escaping from that. No other people in the history of the world have received the kind of mandate that we have received. We are responsible for all who have lived upon the earth. That involves our family history and temple work. We are responsible for all who now live upon the earth, and that involves our missionary work. And we are going to be responsible for all who will yet live upon the earth”* (Church News, 3 July 1999, 3).

“The Desert Shall Rejoice, and Bloom as the Rose”

Lesson 36 – Our Heritage, pgs. 81-96

When you look at the Salt Lake Temple, you don't see deep into the ground where a strong foundation of stone blocks provides support for the temple walls. That stone foundation has supported the temple for the last 150 years. Just as the temple needs a strong, deep foundation, so do our lives.

This lesson will not only discuss the building of the Salt Lake Temple, but it will also present principles upon which the pioneers built their lives—a good example for us to follow.

The Salt Lake Temple Site

Just four days after their entry into the Salt Lake Valley, President Young chose the site of the Salt Lake Temple. Sticking his cane on the ground, he said, “*Right here will stand the temple of our God*” (Deseret Evening News, 25 July 1888, 2). Then, the sacrifices required and the attendant blessings of constructing a third temple began. Less than a week later, surveys for the new city layout commenced, centering the city on the planned temple.

Elder John A. Widtsoe said, “*The pioneers were hungry and weary; they needed food and rest; a hostile desert looked them in the face; yet in the midst of such physical requirements they turned first to the building of temples and to the spiritual food and strength that the temples provide*” (Conf. Rpt., Apr. 1943, 38).

The temple should be more central to our lives.

President Howard W. Hunter taught: “*We...emphasize the personal blessings of temple worship and the sanctity and safety that are provided within those hallowed walls. It is the house of the Lord, a place of revelation and of peace. As we attend the temple, we learn more richly and deeply the purpose of life and the significance of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us make the temple, with temple worship and temple covenants and temple marriage, our ultimate earthly goal and the supreme mortal experience... May you let the meaning and beauty and peace of the temple come into your everyday life more directly*” (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 87-88).

After thousands of hours of excavation—done laboriously by hand—the cornerstones of the large foundation were laid on 6 April 1853. Years of foundation preparation and construction were halted for a while because of problems with the U.S. government.

Motivated by reports that the Mormons were rebelling, the President sent army troops to the Salt Lake Valley. The Saints covered the temple's foundation during that time so that the temple site appeared to be an ordinary field. Later, when the sandstone foundation was unearthed, cracks had appeared in the foundation, so President Young had the foundation replaced with solid granite blocks—consistent with Pres. Young's insistence that only the best be incorporated into the House of the Lord. He said: “*I want to see the temple built in a manner that it will endure through the Millennium. This is not the only temple we shall build; there will be hundreds of them built and dedicated to the Lord...and when the Millennium is over, ... I want that temple still to stand as a proud monument of the faith, perseverance and industry of the Saints of God in the mountains, in the nineteenth century*” (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 395).

During the many years of quarrying, transporting, and shaping the granite for the temple, the Saints struggled for survival. They suffered crop losses, were called to serve foreign missions, and left home to establish colonies in remote areas of the west. Despite the constant challenges, their perseverance and the Lord's assistance let them win the battle. Dedicated in 1893, it had taken some 40 years to build the temple after the cornerstones had been laid. There's a lesson there! Jeffrey R. Holland, BYU

President, compared building our lives to the temple's building effort: *"The prestigious Scientific American referred to [the Salt Lake Temple] as a 'monument to Mormon perseverance.' And so it was. Blood, toil, tears, and sweat. The best things are always worth finishing. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?' (1 Corinthians 3:16) Most assuredly we are. As long and laborious as the effort may seem, we must keep shaping and setting the stones that will make our accomplishments 'a grand and imposing spectacle.' We must take advantage of every opportunity to learn and grow, dream dreams and see visions, work toward their realization, wait patiently when we have no other choice, lean on our sword and rest a while, but get up and fight again... We are laying the foundation of a great work—our own inestimable future"* (However Long and Hard the Road [1985], 127).

Obedient Saints settled and colonized the Salt Lake Valley and the surrounding territory

See Our Heritage, pages 82-84, "The First Year in the Valley" and "Explorations". From these stories we learn the characteristics which helped overcome great difficulties in the first years in the valley. We also learn how the Saints were blessed while enduring adversities.

See "Callings to Colonize", Our Heritage, pages 86-89. The stories of Charles Lowell Walker and Charles C. Rich teach valuable principles—including the tremendous value of obedience. Our Church history and the scriptures teach the value and blessings of obedience to the Lord and His servants.

Think about what each of these passages teaches about this principle:

- D&C 58:2-4. We will be "crowned with much glory" for keeping the commandments and faithfully obeying the Lord's direction
- D&C 64:33-34. The willing and obedient in Zion reap blessings in the last days
- D&C 82:10. The Lord will assuredly bless us when we obey the commandments
- D&C 93:1. The repentant who come to the Savior and keep the commandments will see Him
- D&C 130:19-21. Knowledge and intelligence gained here through diligent obedience will give us an advantage in the eternal life we seek after mortality.

Sacrifices were willingly made by missionaries as they went to teach the gospel throughout the world

With a responsibility to preach the gospel to the world, President Young wasted no time in calling missionaries to serve in North America and throughout the world. See Our Heritage, pages 84-86, "Missionaries Answer the Call". In these accounts we see the areas of the world in which the gospel was preached; the sacrifices required of the early Saints to support the work; and how the faith and prayers of Elder Lorenzo Snow helped open the hearts of the people in Italy to the gospel. For some 33 years, President Young presided over the Church. Following his death in 1877, he was succeeded by John Taylor, President of the Twelve. After three years, President Taylor was sustained as the third President of the Church in 1880 at October Conference. President Taylor continued to send missionaries across the globe to preach and teach—see "Missionary Work", Our Heritage, pages 93-96.

Be prepared for class discuss on the following items from your reading:

- More areas of the world were opened while President Taylor directed the work.
- Milton Trejo was guided through his life to be able to participate in building the kingdom.
- We can learn from the stories of Elder Thomas Biesinger, Elders Kimo Pelio and Sameula Manoa, Elder and Sister Dean, and Jonathan and Kitty Napela.

In the Salt Lake Valley, a strong foundation for the temple was complemented by building a strong foundation for the lives of the Saints. Are we following that example of faith, perseverance, diligence, obedience, willingness to share the gospel, and enduring to the end?

“We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet”

Lesson 37 – Our Heritage, 131; D&C 1:38; 21:4-6, 43:2; 68:3-4; 20:1, 21-26; 101:43-54; 107:91-92

In our study of this material, we should learn to more fully appreciate the need for a prophet, be more knowledgeable about his role and responsibility, and seek to be more obedient to his counsel.

The need for a living prophet

President Hugh B. Brown shared the following experience that occurred before he was called as a General Authority:

While working as an attorney, a barrister, in England just before the start of World War II, he befriended a member of the English House of Commons. This gentleman was a prominent member of the legal community and a former justice of the supreme court of Britain. As friends, they discussed a variety of subjects of mutual interest. One day in 1939, as it became apparent that WWII would soon commence, his English friend asked Bro. Brown to speak in defense of his religious beliefs—just as if they were discussing a legal issue. In a general conference address, Pres. Brown recounted the essence of their exchange. “I began by asking, ‘May I proceed, sir, on the assumption that you are a Christian?’ ‘I am.’ ‘I assume that you believe in the Bible—the Old and New Testaments?’ “‘I do.’ ” His friend affirmed his belief in the biblical accounts of the Lord speaking to prophets. However, he maintained that such communication had stopped soon after the Resurrection of Christ. The conversation continued with another question from Bro. Brown: “‘Why do you think it stopped?’” “ ‘I can’t say.’ “‘You think that God hasn’t spoken since then?’ ‘Not to my knowledge.’ “ ‘May I suggest some possible reasons why he has not spoken. Perhaps it is because he cannot. He has lost the power.’ “‘He said, ‘Of course that would be blasphemous.’ “ ‘Well, then, if you don’t accept that, perhaps he doesn’t speak to men because he doesn’t love us anymore. He is no longer interested in the affairs of men.’ “ ‘No,’ he said, ‘God loves all men, and he is no respecter of persons.’ “ ‘Well, then, ...the only other possible answer as I see it is that we don’t need him. We have made such rapid strides in education and science that we don’t need God any more.’ “‘And then he said, and his voice trembled as he thought of impending war, ‘Mr. Brown, there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God was needed as it is needed now. Perhaps you can tell me why he doesn’t speak.’ “‘My answer was, ‘He does speak, he has spoken; but men need faith to hear him’ ” (Improvement Era, Dec. 1967, 36-37). Of course, it is the testimony of all faithful Latter-day Saints that God does speak today through a living prophet, even Gordon B. Hinckley.

A living prophet is needed because he helps us cope with and overcome the significant and important problems and concerns of our times. While President of the Quorum of the Twelve, Pres. Ezra Taft Benson said: *“The most important prophet, so far as we are concerned, is the one who is living in our day and age. This is the prophet who has today’s instructions from God to us today. God’s revelation to Adam did not instruct Noah in how to build the ark. Every generation has need of the ancient scriptures plus the current scripture from the living prophet. Therefore, the most crucial reading and pondering which you should do is of the latest inspired words from the Lord’s mouthpiece”* (Conference Report, Korean Area Conference 1975, 52).

Roles of the living prophet

While all the brethren serving in the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are sustained by the membership (and the Lord) as prophets, seers, and revelators, only the President of the Church—the senior Apostle on the earth—is authorized to receive revelation that is binding on the entire Church. He alone is authorized to exercise all the priesthood keys necessary to govern the Church.

Scriptural references indicating the roles of the living prophet include:

- D&C 1:38; 21:4-5; 43:2; 68:3-4 **The prophet reveals the will of the Lord and speaks for Him.**
Note: We have received guidance from the prophet on the importance of building strong families, temple building and temple worship, retaining newly converted members, managing finances to avoid debt, and the importance of studying the Book of Mormon.
- D&C 20:21-26; Mosiah 13:33. **The prophet testifies of Jesus Christ and teaches the gospel.**
- D&C 21:1; Mosiah 8:13-18. **The prophet is a seer**—one upon whom God bestows great power to know the past and the future; one who can know of things that are not known or are hidden. Seers also have the power to translate ancient records.
- D&C 101:43-54 (a parable). Think about how this parable teaches us a lesson about **giving attention to the counsel of the President of the Church.**
- D&C 101:54. **The prophet can see coming danger and warn us in advance.**
- D&C 107:91-92. **The prophet is the presiding authority over the Church.** He is chosen by God and receives direction, inspiration, and guidance from God for the Church. It is our opportunity and responsibility to sustain the prophet by word and deed--See D&C 107:22.

Giving heed to the words and counsel of the living prophet

D&C 21:4-6 teach about members' responsibility to give diligent heed to the prophet and promise us certain blessings if we are obedient and faithful in following his inspired counsel.

President Harold B. Lee taught: *"The only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized [see D&C 21:4-5]... There will be some things that take patience and faith. 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' [D&C 21:6]"* (Improvement Era, Dec. 1970, 126).

Inspired counsel from the prophet can be found in General Conference talks, First Presidency messages, and other articles in the Church publications as well as any direction given in Church meetings that is passed along from the First Presidency.

Closing one general conference, President Ezra Taft Benson said, *"For the next six months, your conference edition of the Ensign should stand next to your standard works and be referred to frequently"* (Ensign, May 1988, 84).

This is similar counsel as that given by Elder Harold B. Lee in 1946 when he stated that the conference report should *"be the guide to [our] walk and talk during the next six months"* (Conf. Rpt., April 1946, 68).

We never fail to gain blessings when we follow the counsel of the prophet, as demonstrated in this story related by Elder Bruce D. Porter of the Seventy when he was a young married college student in Boston: *"My [home teaching] companion and I arrived at their modest apartment one evening to home teach them. They had just completed a home evening with their little baby. I made a mental note that it would be a good idea for my wife and I to start holding home evenings so...when a child arrived we would already have the habit. Then they eagerly showed us their Book of Remembrance in which they had collected many names of ancestors from both sides of their family. I remembered that it had been a long time since I had looked at my Book of Remembrance. After our lesson they took us out to the screened back porch where were stacked ice cream buckets filled with wheat, sugar, flour, and other food—a complete year's supply of food. I had supposed, somehow, that as students that*

counsel didn't apply to us! By now I was feeling very humble. I had come to teach them, but they were teaching me in every point. As we left their little apartment I noticed a picture of the temple hanging near their door. I remembered that Pres. Spencer W. Kimball said that every Latter-day Saint family should have a picture of the temple prominently displayed in their home, and I remembered that we didn't have one... I went home, filled with a spirit of repentance, and found a small picture of the Swiss Temple in a mission brochure. I cut it out and taped it to our wall. Since that time we have always had a picture of the temple in our home. Every time I look at it, it reminds me of a young convert couple who taught us what it meant to 'follow the prophet'." (address given in Bountiful Mueller Park Stake conference, 17 Jan. 1999).

Latter-day prophets exemplify Christlike love

Prophets serve selflessly and because of their great love for the Lord and their fellowmen. That is an example worth following.

Here is an example from the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

- John Lyman Smith and his family came to Nauvoo when it was first being settled by the Saints. The only place the family could find to live at first was a stable made of logs. Everyone in the family except the mother soon came down with fevers as a result of living in the swampy area. John Lyman Smith said of the experience: *"The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum visited us and administered to all of us, father being delirious from the effects of the fever. Their words comforted us greatly, as they said in the name of the Lord 'you all shall be well again.' Upon leaving the hovel, Joseph placed his slippers upon my father's feet and sprang upon his horse from the doorway and rode home barefoot. The next day Joseph removed father to his own house and nursed him until he recovered"* (Stories about Joseph Smith the Prophet: A Collection of Incidents Related by Friends Who Knew Him, comp. Edwin F. Parry [1934], 33-34).
- Elder Ezra Taft Benson taught, *"Keep your eye on the Prophet, for the Lord will never permit his Prophet to lead this Church astray"* (Improvement Era, Dec. 1966, 1145).
- President Joseph F. Smith taught: *"If [the President of the Church] should become unfaithful, God would remove him out of his place. I testify in the name of Israel's God that he will not suffer the head of the Church, whom he has chosen to stand at the head, to transgress his laws and apostatize; the moment he should take a course that in time would lead to it, God would take him away. Why? Because to suffer a wicked man to occupy that position would be to allow, as it were, the fountain to become corrupted, which is something he will never permit"* (Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed. [1939], 44-45).

In 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith gave a prophecy and revelation on war. It foretold, almost thirty years before it came to pass, the War Between the States (a.k.a., the U.S. "Civil War") that began in 1861.

“In Mine Own Way”

Lesson 38 – D&C 38:30; 42:30-31, 42; 58:26-28; 104:13-18;
Our Heritage, pgs. 108-109, 111-114.

As Latter-day Saints, we should commit ourselves to greater self-reliance and service to those in need.

Develop Spiritual self-reliance

D&C 38:30 teaches that we should be self-reliant and that—if we prepare as instructed—we will have no need to fear.

The goal of spiritual self-reliance is to have the strength to resolve difficult problems in our own lives and strengthen others in their times of spiritual need. Elder Boyd K. Packer said: *“We have been taught to store a year’s supply of food, clothing, and, if possible, fuel—at home... Can we not see that the same principle applies to inspiration and revelation, the solving of problems, to counsel, and to guidance? We need to have a source of it stored in every home... If we lose our emotional and spiritual independence, our self-reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially”* (Ensign, May 1978, 91-92).

Do you have insight as to how we can teach children spiritual self-reliance?

Develop Temporal self-reliance

To be temporally self-reliant, we must assure that we can use the temporal blessings the Lord has given us to provide for ourselves and our families. When we are capable of doing this for ourselves, we should not shift the burden of our care to others in or outside our family.

Developing temporal self-reliance includes learning to work effectively, storing food and other essential supplies for a time of need, managing our finances carefully and prudently, and gaining a good education.

Work

President Brigham Young wanted the Saints to exemplify and practice industry in their new home in the Salt Lake Valley and to work together for the common good, so the region was given the name, “Deseret”, a Book of Mormon word for “a honey bee” (Ether 2:3).

We should also work together for the common good and be industrious. *“To become self-reliant, a person must work. Work is physical, mental, or spiritual effort. It is a basic source of happiness, self-worth, and prosperity. Through work, people accomplish many good things in their lives”* (Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 2, [1998], 257).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said, *“Work is always a spiritual necessity even if, for some, work is not an economic necessity”* (Ensign, May, 1998, 38).

Storage of food and other necessities

Obviously, those who follow the oft-repeated counsel of multiple latter-day prophets to acquire and maintain a year’s supply of food, clothing, and other necessities where possible, will be blessed in time of need by their ability to be self-reliant in their basic temporal needs.

The Church Handbook of Instructions explains: “*Church leaders have not given an exact formula for what to store. Rather, they suggest that Church members begin by storing what would be required to keep them alive if they did not have anything else to eat... Through careful planning, most Church members can store a year’s supply of the basic items needed to sustain life. However, some members do not have the money or space for such storage, and some are prohibited by law from storing a year’s supply of food. These members should store as much as they can according to their circumstances. All members can provide themselves with added security by learning to produce and prepare basic food items*” (Book 2, 258).

Personal Financial Security

To be self-reliant, it is important to know how to manage your finances prudently. Poor money management can seriously impair individual and family life. The Church Handbook of Instruction explains: “*To become self-reliant in resource management, Church members should pay tithes and offerings, avoid unnecessary debt, save for the future, and satisfy all of their personal obligations. Members also should use their resources, including their time, frugally and avoid wasting them*” (Book 2, 258).

President Gordon B. Hinckley warned against the dangers of debt: “*I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage... If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your wives and children and peace in your hearts*” (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 54).

Care for the poor and those in need

The Doctrine and Covenants contains numerous passages that clearly emphasize the Lord’s desire that we care for the needy.

- D&C 42:30-31. We are giving unto the Lord when we give to the poor.
- D&C 44:6. We are required to visit and succor the poor and needy.
- D&C 52:40. We cannot claim to be disciples of the Lord unless we remember the poor, the needy, and the sick and afflicted.
- D&C 56:16. If we are rich and do not share with the poor, our riches will canker our souls.
- D&C 88:123. We should love one another and give to each other, as the gospel requires.
- D&C 104:18. We will dwell in torment if we do not impart of our abundance to the poor.
- D&C 104:13-18. These verses explain the Lord’s “own way” of providing for his children’s temporal needs. His way requires that we give according to that which we have received. As we have received freely and lovingly, we should acknowledge openly the blessings we have received from Father and use them as He would—to bless those around us according to their needs.
- Necessary help should be accepted with gratitude and humility. Help should be used wisely to overcome limitations and sustain development of one’s potential. Then, when the needy have overcome their need, they are responsible to help others less fortunate than they.

We meet much of our responsibility to the poor through the Church when we give a generous fast offering that the Bishop can use to relieve the needs of those in our ward and stake. “*The Church designates one Sunday each month as a fast day. On this day Church members go without food and drink for two consecutive meals. They...give to the Church a fast offering at least equal to*

the value of the food they would have eaten. If possible, members should be very generous and give more than the value of two meals” (Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 2, 256).

Giving to the Church’s organized humanitarian assistance program is another avenue for helping those in need.

President Monson reported results of some humanitarian efforts: *“In 1992 a devastating hurricane... struck the east coast of Florida, leaving a path of ruin behind it, with homes battered, roofs gone, people hungry. Our members were there to help. Home after home was cleaned and repaired without charge. It mattered not the faith or color of the person who occupied the home...”* He continued... *“Far away in the foothills on the western slopes of Mount Kenya, along the fringe of the colossal Rift Valley, pure water is now coming to the thirsty people. A potable (drinkable) water project has changed the lives of more than 1,100 families. When we originally became aware of the need for pure water, we were able to help fund a project in cooperation with TechnoServe, a private voluntary organization. With villagers providing the labor, drinkable water now flows through 25 miles of pipes to waiting homes in a 15-village area. The simple blessing of safe drinking water recalls the words of the Lord, ‘I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink’ [Matthew 25:35]”* (Ensign, June 1998, 37).

D&C 58:26-28 counsels us about our personal responsibility to be actively engaged in an effort to help the poor and needy on an individual basis—not just through Church programs.

The Church welfare program

The First Presidency established the inspired welfare program of the Church during the Great Depression. It was designed to promote self-reliance and provide a method of helping the needy among the Saints. The creation of this program is summarized in Our Heritage, Pgs. 108-9.

As communicated by the First Presidency at the time, *“Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership”* (Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3).

Education is a basic foundation for self-reliance. Since the earliest times of this dispensation, leaders have counseled the Saints to educate themselves as well as possible and avail themselves of educational opportunities throughout their lives. In the first year of settling in the Salt Lake Valley, the pioneers established a school for children in a tent. In subsequent years, every ward was directed to establish a school to educate the children. The University of Deseret was created in 1850 for the provision of higher

education. Note: The Deseret alphabet was an interesting product of education in the pioneers’ new home in the West. For examples of the Deseret alphabet and information about it, go to the following URL -- <http://people.delphi.com/deseret/home/home.htm> and click on “Deseret Alphabet” near the bottom of the page.

“The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn to Their Fathers”

Lesson 39 – D&C 2; 110:13-16; 138; Joseph Smith—History 1:37-39;
Our Heritage, Pgs. 98-99, 101-2, 105-7

Introduction: Fredrick William Hurst was working as a gold miner in Australia when he first heard LDS missionaries preach the restored gospel. He and his brother Charles were baptized in January 1854. He tried to help his other family members become converted, but they rejected him and the truths he taught. Fred settled in Salt Lake City four years after joining the Church, and he served faithfully as a missionary in several different countries. He also worked as a painter in the Salt Lake Temple. In one of his final journal entries, he wrote: *“Along about the first of March, 1893, I found myself alone in the dining room, all had gone to bed. I was sitting at the table when to my great surprise my elder brother Alfred walked in and sat down opposite me at the table and smiled. I said to him (he looked so natural): ‘When did you arrive in Utah?’ ‘He said: ‘I have just come from the Spirit World, this is not my body that you see, it is lying in the tomb. I want to tell you that when you were on your mission you told me many things about the Gospel, and the hereafter, and about the Spirit World being as real and tangible as the earth. I could not believe you, but when I died and went there and saw for myself I realized that you had told the truth. I attend the Mormon meetings.’ He raised his hand and said with much warmth: ‘I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart. I believe in faith, and repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, but that is as far as I can go. I look to you to do the work for me in the temple... You are watched closely... We are all looking for you as our head in this great work. I want to tell you that there are a great many spirits who weep and mourn because they have relatives in the Church here who are careless and are doing nothing for them”* (Diary of Frederick William Hurst, comp. Samuel H. and Ida Hurst [1961], 204).

Elijah: “The keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands.”

The angel Moroni told the Prophet Joseph Smith that Elijah would “plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers” (D&C 2:2; Joseph Smith—History 1:39). Note: “Fathers” refers to our ancestors.

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: *“What was the promise made to the fathers that was to be fulfilled in the latter days by the turning of the hearts of the children to their fathers? It was the promise of the Lord made through Enoch, Isaiah, and the prophets, to the nations of the earth, that the time should come when the dead should be redeemed”* (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954-56], 2:154).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said, *“God made those promises to the ancient patriarchs—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and so forth—and we undoubtedly made them to our own lineal fathers and mothers, those who came to earth before the gospel was restored but whom we promised to provide its saving ordinances”* (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], 297).

D&C 110:13-16. Elijah’s purpose when he visited Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836 was to confer the sealing power of the priesthood on Joseph Smith. This empowered the Prophet to perform eternal marriages, sealings of families, and temple ordinance work for the dead.

D&C 138:47-48; Joseph Smith—History 1:37-39. Since one of the prime purposes of mortal existence in the plan of salvation is to establish eternal family relationships, the earth would be “utterly wasted” without the sealing power.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that without the sealing power, *“no family ties would exist in the eternities, and indeed the family of man would have been left in eternity with ‘neither root*

[ancestors] nor branch [descendants].’ Inasmuch as ... a sealed, united, celestially saved family of God is the ultimate purpose of mortality, any failure here would have been a curse indeed, rendering the entire plan of salvation ‘utterly wasted’ “ (Christ and the New Covenant, [1997], 297-298).

President Wilford Woodruff: **“Somebody has got to redeem them.”**

President Woodruff was devoted to redeeming the dead and preserving family relationships through the priesthood ordinance of sealing. During his ministry, many served genealogical missions and a genealogical society was created. (See Our Heritage, page 101)

Elder Russell M. Nelson said, *“events of that historic year [1894] established family history research and temple service as one work in the Church”* (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 85).

The urgency of temple work for the dead

For a period of time, President Woodruff served as the temple president in St. George, Utah. There, endowments for the dead were first performed in this dispensation. During his service in that temple, President Woodruff was visited by the spirits of many “eminent men” who had died. As President Woodruff recounted: *“The spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, ‘You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we...remained true to it and were faithful to God.’ These were the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and they waited on me for two days and two nights... I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon Brother McAllister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others”* (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 160-61). From this account, we should learn that the spirits waiting for us to do their work feel a sense of urgency about having ordinances performed for them.

Elder Wilford Woodruff taught: *“For the past eighteen hundred years, the people that have lived and passed away never heard the voice of an inspired man, never heard a Gospel sermon, until they entered the spirit-world. Somebody has got to redeem them, by performing such ordinances for them in the flesh as they cannot attend to themselves in the spirit, and in order that this work may be done, we must have Temples in which to do it”* (Journal of Discourses, 19:228-29).

President Joseph F. Smith: “The eyes of my understanding were opened.”

President Wilford Woodruff said: *“[President Brigham Young] accomplished all that God required at his hands. But he did not receive all the revelations that belong to this work; neither did President Taylor, nor has Wilford Woodruff”* (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 153-54).

President Joseph F. Smith, the sixth President of the Church, also received a revelation on redeeming the dead. In the October 1918 general conference, he said: *“I have been undergoing a siege of very serious illness for the last five months. ...I have not lived alone these five months. I have dwelt in the spirit of prayer, of supplication, of faith and of determination; and I have had my communication with the Spirit of the Lord continuously”* (Conference Report, Oct. 1918, 2). The day previous to making this statement, Pres. Smith had received what is now the 138th section of the Doctrine and Covenants—a record of the Savior’s visit to the spirit world while His body was entombed. This revelation was received while Pres. Smith pondered the scriptures and the Atonement of Christ. During his pondering, he was led to read 1 Peter 3 and 4 about Christ’s ministry in the postmortal spirit world.

D&C 138: 12-19. **The Savior visited the spirits** who:

- “Had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus...” (12)
- “Had offered sacrifice...” (13)

- “Had suffered tribulation...” (13)
- Had departed mortality with a firm testimony of the resurrection (14)
- Were joyful that their deliverance was at hand. (15)

D&C 138: 20-21, 27-37. The Savior did NOT go to those who had died in their sins, but He did organize missionary efforts to have the gospel preached to those in the spirit prison. D&C 138:57 teaches that the faithful of this generation teach in the spirit world when they pass into it.

D&C 138:22-24, 57-59 teaches that those who have been faithful in this life will enter a paradise where they will enjoy their labors; while those who have not been faithful in this life will enter into darkness and bondage in the spirit prison.

President Gordon B. Hinckley: *“We are determined... to take the temples to the people.”*
President Joseph F. Smith prophesied that the time would come when the land would “be dotted with temples” (Our Heritage, page 106).

When President Hinckley was sustained in 1995, 47 temples were in operation. He made this announcement in 1997: *“We will construct small temples in some of these [remote] areas, buildings with all of the facilities to administer all of the ordinances. They would be built to temple standards, which are much higher than meetinghouse standards. They would accommodate baptisms for the dead, the endowment service, sealings, and all other ordinances to be had in the Lord’s house for both the living and the dead... We are determined ...to take the temples to the people and afford them every opportunity for the very precious blessings that come of temple worship”* (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 49-50). This year (2018) we have over 160 temples in operation and more under construction.

We have more opportunity to do service for others than any other people in history have enjoyed. It is up to us to personally commit ourselves to accomplishing the temple and family history work that needs to be done.

Youth participation in temple work – Elder J. Ballard Washburn of the Seventy related this encounter: *“After a stake conference, I was talking with a family with teenage children. I said to them, ‘You must live righteously so that someday you can go to the temple with your parents.’ A sixteen-year-old daughter responded, ‘Oh, we go to the temple with our parents almost every week. We go and do baptisms for our family file names.’ I thought, What a wonderful thing, for families to go to the temple together.”* (Ensign, May 1995, 11)

“Finding Joy in Temple and Family History Work”

Lesson 40

Participating in Family History and temple work helps us develop a greater appreciation of the importance and blessing of being part of an eternal family. Hearts of descendants are turned to their ancestors, the hearts of ancestors are turned to their descendants, and hearts of parents and children turn to one another in love and fellowship that binds them together in happiness.

In our previous lesson, we discussed temple attendance and performance of priesthood ordinances for loved ones. Now, we will review other ways in which we can expand our participation in temple and family history activities to benefit ourselves and others.

The Spirit of Elijah prompts individuals to turn their hearts toward their ancestors

Simply expressed, when we as Latter-day Saints speak of the “Spirit of Elijah”, we are referring to the desire people possess to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers” (D&C 110:15). This desire is so named because Elijah was the restorer of the sealing keys which he gave to Joseph Smith (D&C 110:13-16). By virtue of that priesthood power, families may be sealed together for eternity.

The Spirit of Elijah influences members to:

- Receive temple ordinances for ourselves
- Perform family history research
- Attend the temple to receive ordinances on behalf of the deceased

President Gordon B. Hinckley emphasized: *“All of our vast family history endeavor is directed to temple work. There is no other purpose for it. The temple ordinances become the crowning blessings the Church has to offer”* (Ensign, May 1998, 88).

Throughout the world, genealogy has become a popular hobby, especially since the Internet has improved the ability of individuals and groups to research and exchange information online without leaving their homes. The Spirit of Elijah is motivating people to engage in family history research. Just in 2001, the Church announced the completion of multi-year projects which computerized records that contain all of the names of those who came through Ellis Island in New York, and the African-American treasure of almost 500,000 family records associated with the Freedman’s Bank in Washington, D.C. Both helped open records to millions of descendants.

Members of the Church can participate in Family History and temple work

President Boyd K. Packer said, *“No work is more of a protection to this church than temple work and the genealogical research that supports it. No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power”* (Ensign, Feb. 1995, 36).

Some way to participate in family history research and temple work is available to each of us throughout all stages of our lives. Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: *“In the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and...all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time...Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something”* (Ensign, June 1989, 6).

Keep a current temple recommend and attend the temple often

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“I urge our people everywhere, with all of the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein. I am satisfied that every man or woman who goes to the temple in*

a spirit of sincerity and faith leaves the house of the Lord a better man or woman. There is need occasionally to leave the noise and the tumult of the world and step within the walls of a sacred house of God, there to feel His spirit in an environment of holiness and peace” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 53).

Even where circumstances do not permit frequent attendance at the temple, we should hold a current temple recommend.

President Howard W. Hunter said: *“It would please the Lord if every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families”* (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 8).

Parents can teach children about the importance of the temple by:

- Attending the temple regularly or actively working toward attending (set an example)
- Teach children about the temples and the blessings that are available at the temple
- Give children 12 or older to the temple to be baptized for deceased ancestors

Prepare to have temple ordinances performed for your deceased relatives

- Identify deceased relatives
- List those whom you remember
- Examine family records
- Interview parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, for information on ancestors
- Use FamilySearch.org at home and the Family History Centers to help

Petition the Lord to have the Spirit help you to identify deceased relatives

- Exercise faith and be persistent and diligent
- Record the information found on family history forms, pedigree charts, and family group sheets
- If an ancestor was the recipient of priesthood ordinances before death, record the dates of those ordinances
- Ask family history consultants in the ward and stake to help prepare information for temple submission. Local priesthood leaders should also have information on how to prepare records.

Elder Richard G. Scott counseled: *“Arrange to participate for deceased ancestors in the sealing and other ordinances...I find it helpful when receiving ordinances for another to try and relate to that person specifically. I think of him and pray that he will accept the ordinance and benefit from it. Do these things with a prayer in your heart that the Holy Spirit will enhance your understanding and enrich your life. Those worthy prayers will be answered”* (Ensign, May 1999, 27).

Learn about the lives of your ancestors

Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander told of his responsibility to teach his children and grandchildren about his family’s history: *“Not one of my children has any recollection of my grandparents. If I want my children and grandchildren to know those who still live in my memory, then I must build the bridge between them. I alone am the link to the generations that stand on either side of me. It is my responsibility to knit their hearts together through love and respect, even though they may never have known each other personally. My grandchildren will have no knowledge of their family’s history if I do nothing to preserve it for them. That which I do not in some way record will be lost at my death, and that which I do not pass on to my posterity, they will never have. The work of gathering and sharing eternal family keepsakes is a personal responsibility. It cannot be passed off or given to another”* (Ensign, May 1999, 83-84).

Keep a journal or personal history or family history

This effort will bless us in later life if we can refer back to faith-promoting events in our own lives and it will bless our descendants as they are able to read our testimony as they experience challenges in their lives.

Numerous resources are provided by the Church to help us in our efforts

- A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work (34697)
- Family History forms (pedigree charts and family group sheets)
- Resources on the Internet such as www.familysearch.org
- Family History Centers

“Every Member a Missionary”

Lesson 41 – D&C 1:4-5, 30; 65; 88:81; 109:72-74; Our Heritage, pages 116-17, 124-25

President Spencer W. Kimball said: *“When I read Church history, I am amazed at the boldness of the early brethren as they went out into the world. They seemed to find a way... As early as 1837 the Twelve were in England fighting Satan, in Tahiti in 1844, Australia in 1851, Iceland [in] 1853, Italy [in] 1850, and also in Switzerland, Germany, Tonga, Turkey, Mexico, Japan, Czechoslovakia, China, Samoa, New Zealand, South America, France, and Hawaii in 1850. ...Much of this early proselyting was done while the leaders were climbing the Rockies and planting the sod and starting their homes. It is faith and super faith”* (Ensign, Oct. 1974, 6).

Even in the early years of this dispensation, Church leaders sought to meet the Lord’s charge to take the gospel to all the world. President Kimball had faith in our ability to continue the effort successfully: *“Somehow, ...I feel that when we have done all in our power that the Lord will find a way to open doors. That is my faith”* (Ensign, Oct. 1974, 7).

This lesson will discuss some efforts in progress to continue the missionary efforts.

The Church is coming forth out of obscurity

Past lessons in this year’s study have shown that the Church began small and in obscurity. Now, almost every country in the world is represented in the Church’s membership. There has been a dramatic increase in the visibility of the Church that would have been difficult to imagine had we lived during those early years when the members struggled, suffered persecution, and endured poverty.

But the Lord revealed the destiny of His Church to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

- D&C 1:30. Leaders of the Church shall have power to bring it out of obscurity
- D&C 65:1-6. The gospel will fill the whole earth. The recipients of the gospel will be prepared for the Second Coming.
- D&C 109:72-74. The Church will come out of the wilderness and “shine forth...clear as the sun.”

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, *“No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done”* (History of the Church, 4:540).

Latter-day Prophets challenge the membership to take the gospel to all the world

The missionary efforts of each individual member are one important way of moving the gospel forward. We have been challenged by our latter-day prophets to increase our participation and effectiveness in missionary service. President David O. McKay became well known for the saying: *“Every member a missionary.”* (See Our Heritage, Pages 116-17.)

President Spencer W. Kimball became identified with the challenge to members to *“lengthen your stride”*. He requested the prayers of the Saints to have the Lord open new lands for the missionaries and help us prepare sufficient numbers of missionaries to take advantage of the new opportunities. President Kimball addressed the regional representatives about the missionary opportunity and we are seeing his vision come to fruition. (See Our Heritage, 125).

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke about our responsibility to faithfully do the work: *“Now what of the future? What of the years ahead? It looks promising indeed. People are beginning to see us for what we are and for the values we espouse... If we will go forward, never losing sight of our goal,*

speaking ill of no one, living the great principles we know to be true, this cause will roll on in majesty and power to fill the earth. Doors now closed to the preaching of the gospel will be opened. The Almighty, if necessary, may have to shake the nations to humble them and cause them to listen to the servants of the living God. Whatever is needed will come to pass. The key to the great challenges facing us and to the success of the work will be the faith of all who call themselves Latter-day Saints”
(Ensign, Nov. 1997, 68).

“Every member a missionary.”

D&C 1:4-5 and D&C 88:81 teach our responsibility to share the gospel. Think about what you personally can do to share the gospel this week. Some of the ways we can support the work include:

- Prepare to serve a full-time mission. President Kimball said: *“When I ask for more missionaries, I am not asking for more testimony-barren or unworthy missionaries. I am asking that we start earlier and train our missionaries better in every branch and every ward in the world... Young people [should] understand that it is a great privilege to go on a mission and that they must be physically well, mentally well, spiritually well, and that ‘the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance’ [D&C 1:31]”* (Ensign, Oct. 1974, 7).
- Parents should help youth prepare by teaching them to be worthy and ready for a mission call at the proper time, sharing missionary experiences with them, teaching them of the blessings of missionary work, telling your own conversion story to them, starting missionary funds for them, and teaching them to work hard.
- Serve a full-time mission. Who fulfill a full-time call to service? Elder David B. Haight counseled: *“The goal of every physically able couple in the Church, just as it is for every nineteen-year-old young man in the Church, should be to serve a mission. No finer example can be given, no finer testimony can be borne by parents to children or grandchildren, than through missionary service in their mature years”* (Ensign, May 1987, 61).
- Support the full-time missionaries. President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“My brethren and sisters, we can let the missionaries try to do it alone, or we can help them. If they do it alone, they will knock on doors day after day and the harvest will be meager. Or as members we can assist them in finding and teaching investigators”* (Ensign, May 1999, 107). We can support missionaries by remembering them in our prayers, writing encouraging letters, contributing to the missionary funds, and by helping find and teach investigators in our area.
- Share the gospel throughout your life as a part of your normal daily life:
 - Set a good example for family, friends, neighbors, and work associates
 - Share copies of the Book of Mormon
 - Give referrals to the full-time missionaries and have them taught in your home
 - Share your feelings about the gospel with people
 - Invite people to Church meetings, activities, socials, and firesides
 - Invite people to family home evenings and to neighborhood activities
 - Invite people to visit the Family History Center with you
 - Invite friends to baptismal services where the Spirit can touch them

President Spencer W. Kimball said: *“It seems to me that the Lord chose his words when he said [that the gospel must go to] ‘every nation’, ‘every land’, ‘uttermost bounds of the earth’, ‘every tongue’, ‘every people’, ‘every soul’, ‘all the world’, ‘many lands’. Surely there is significance in these words! ... I wonder if we are doing all we can. Are we complacent in our approach to teaching all the world? ... Are we prepared to lengthen our stride? To enlarge our vision?”* (Ensign, Oct. 1974, 5).

President Kimball also said: *“Our great need, and our great calling, is to bring to the people of this world the candle of understanding to light their way out of obscurity and darkness and into the joy, peace, and truths of the gospel. I believe we must not weary in our well-doing. I believe it is time*

again to ask ourselves the question, what can I do to help take the gospel to others and to the inhabitants of the world?" (Ensign, Feb. 1983, 5).

President Hinckley has asked each priesthood leader to be responsible for finding and friendshipping investigators, see that it is discussed in sacrament, and assure that priesthood, Relief Society, Young Women, Primary, ward council, and stake council meetings be used to plan member missionary activities.

Every new convert needs to be nurtured by the members

President Gordon B. Hinckley: *"Any investigator worthy of baptism becomes a convert worthy of saving"* (Ensign, May 1999, 109). At the current rate of growth, hundreds of thousands of new converts are baptized into the Church. It is our individual and collective responsibility to assure that each one is nurtured and strengthened by all of us.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke about the difficulty new converts have in staying active: *"It is not an easy thing to become a member of this Church. In most cases it involves setting aside old habits, leaving old friends and associations, and stepping into a new society which is different and somewhat demanding"* (Ensign, May 1999, 47).

President Hinckley taught what we can do to help every convert to the Church:

"...every new convert needs three things:

- 1. A friend in the Church to whom he can constantly turn, who will walk beside him, who will answer his questions, who will understand his problems.*
- 2. An assignment. Activity is the genius of this Church. It is the process by which we grow. Faith and love for the Lord are like the muscle of my arm. If I use them, they grow stronger. If I put them in a sling, they become weaker. Every convert deserves a responsibility...*
- 3. Every convert must be 'nourished by the good word of God' (Moro. 6:4). It is imperative that he or she become affiliated with a priesthood quorum or the Relief Society, the Young Women, the Sunday School, or the Primary. He or she must be encouraged to come to sacrament meeting"* (Ensign, May 1999, 108).

“Continuing Revelation to Latter-day Prophets”

Lesson 42 – D&C 1:38; 68:1-4; 84:109-10; 107:25,34, 93-98; 132:8;
Official Declaration 2 (pgs. 293-94 in the D&C); Our Heritage, 117-19, 125-27.

President Harold B. Lee shared the following story: “Elder John A. Widtsoe of the Council of the Twelve once told of a discussion he had with a group of stake officers. In the course of the discussion someone said to him, ‘Brother Widtsoe, how long has it been since the Church received a revelation?’ Brother Widtsoe rubbed his chin thoughtfully and said in reply ‘Oh, probably since last Thursday’ ” (Stand Ye in Holy Places [1974], 132-33).

Declaring that **the Church continues to receive regular revelation and guidance**, President Kimball said: “We testify to the world that revelation continues and that the vaults and files of the Church contain these revelations which come month to month and day to day. We testify that there is, since 1830 when the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, and will continue to be, so long as time shall last, a prophet, recognized of God and his people, who will continue to interpret the mind and will of the Lord... Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the constant flow of revealed communication. I say, in the deepest of humility, but also by the power and force of a burning testimony in my soul, that from the prophet of the Restoration to the prophet of our own year, the communication line is unbroken, the authority is continuous, a light, brilliant and penetrating, continues to shine. The sound of the voice of the Lord is a continuous melody and a thunderous appeal. For nearly a century and a half there has been no interruption” (Ensign, May 1977, 78).

D&C 1:38 and 68:1-4. The members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve are latter-day prophets, seers, and revelators. They continue to receive revelations which guide the Church. Their direction is “*the will of the Lord, ...the mind of the Lord, ...the word of the Lord, the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation*” (D&C 68:4).

Church Correlation (see Our Heritage, pages 117-18)

Church correlation was initiated and continues today by revelation from the Lord and his prophets. Church correlation preserves “the right way of God” (Jacob 7:7). It helps accomplish the Church’s mission to invite all people to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32).

Correlation includes:

- Maintaining purity of doctrine
- Emphasizing the importance of the family and the home
- Placing all of the work of the Church under priesthood direction
- Establishing proper relationships among the organizations of the Church
- Achieving and maintaining unity and order in the Church
- Ensuring simplicity of Church programs and materials

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said that correlation is a process “*in which we take all the programs of the Church, bring them to one focal point, wrap them in one package, operate them as one program, involve all members of the Church in the operation—and do it under priesthood direction*” (Let Every Man Learn His Duty [pamphlet 1976], 2).

Importance of the family: Correlation emphasizes the importance of the family in many ways—establishment of Family Home Evening is one. Monday evenings are reserved for FHE (*changes announced Oct. 2018) so that we can strengthen and teach our families. In addition, the correlation effort has emphasized that “*The most important place for gospel teaching and leadership is in the family and the home... Quorums, auxiliaries, programs, and activities in the Church should strengthen and*

support the family. They should enhance gospel-centered family activities, not compete with them” (Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders [1998], 299). The correlation effort also emphasizes that Church programs and activities should not make unnecessary demands on the effort, time, or other resources of Church members. ***Note: Sunday Meetings changed to 2-Hour blocks as of January 2019 – emphasizing more responsibility on home-centered teaching and learning**

Operation of Church auxiliaries: One important role of correlation is to unify and coordinate the auxiliaries—relief Society, Primary, Sunday School. While once independent with their own magazines and conferences, these organizations grew to become increasingly complex and often duplicative in some functions. Correlation has reduced complexity and duplication and priesthood direction has helped these auxiliaries function in a complementary manner.

Preparation of Church publications: Lesson manuals and magazines and Gospel Library resources are produced to assist members in living Christ-like lives and learning gospel principles. Correlation helps assure that the written and digital publications are scripture-based, doctrinally accurate, and appropriate for the intended audience. The Church’s publications are planned, prepared, reviewed, approved, and implemented under the direction of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. As a result, both adult Gospel Doctrine and Youth classes and most Primary classes study the same book of scripture during the year (**using the “Come Follow Me” format and resources in 2019**), so family discussions of that scripture are facilitated and encouraged by the bond of common, concurrent study by family members. If planned by the parents, lessons taught at home are reinforced by lessons taught in Church classes.

Home Teaching:(2018) Ministering: D&C 20:53-55. Visits to members’ homes have been part of the inspired Church program since the beginning of this dispensation. In the 1960’s these visits were reemphasized and began to be called **“home teaching” (changed in 2018 to “ministering)** —a vital responsibility and opportunity for priesthood holders. Priesthood leaders have long taught their quorum members the purposes and importance of fulfilling ~~home teaching~~ ministering assignments faithfully and diligently.

D&C 84:109-10; D&C 132:8. These scriptures teach our mutual dependence on each other and the divine wisdom and order of the Church’s correlated approach to church programs and activities.

Revelation extending the blessings of the priesthood to every worthy male member Official Declaration 2 was announced by President Kimball in June 1978. This revelation has been a great blessing to the Church and all worthy male members. Our Heritage, pages 125-127 reveal details about the reception of this important revelation.

Publication of Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures

Under the direction of the First Presidency, a new edition of Bible was published in 1979 after years of careful work. The Bible has the same text as the King James Version, but it is supplemented with study aids such as the Topical Guide, the Bible Dictionary, and LDS footnotes that reference other Standard Works and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. Then, in 1981, a new edition of the triple combination (Book of Mormon, D&C, and Pearl of Great Price in a single volume) was published with expanded footnotes and index entries. Read Ezekiel 37:15-19 and you will see that the new editions of the LDS scriptures help the sticks of Joseph and Judah become one. Elder Boyd K. Packer observed: *“The stick or record of Judah—the Old Testament and the New Testament—and the stick or record of Ephraim—the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ—are*

now woven together in such a way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands” (Ensign, Nov. 1982, 53).

Elder Boyd K. Packer prophesied: *“With the passing of years, these scriptures will produce successive generations of faithful Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are disposed to obey His will...The revelations will be opened to them as to no other [generation] in the history of the world. Into their hands now are placed the sticks of Joseph and Judah. They will develop a gospel scholarship beyond that which their forebears could achieve. They will have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ and be competent to proclaim Him and to defend Him”* (Ensign, Nov. 1982, 53).

Additional Quorums of the Seventy

As the Church has grown to 11 (in 2018 it is 16) million members, the Lord revealed how Church administration should change to meet the needs of the members across the face of the earth. Especially visible has been the additional of Quorums of the Seventy.

Responsibilities of the Seventy are found in D&C 107:25, 34. For many years, there were only seven General Authorities who served as Seventies. They made up the First Council of the Seventy. In 1975 as others were called, they served in the First Quorum of the Seventy. Expanded again in 1989, the Second Quorum of Seventy was formed. In April 1995, President Hinckley announced the calling of Area Authorities. In 1997, it was announced that the Area Authorities would be ordained Seventies and form the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums of the Seventy. Area Authority Seventies serve in the area in which they live and continue in their present employment. These expansions of the Quorums of the Seventy are fulfillment of instruction in D&C 107:93-97. President Hinckley said: *“With these respective quorums in place, we have established a pattern under which the Church may grow to any size with an organization of Area Presidencies and Area Authority Seventies, chosen and working across the world according to need. Now, the Lord is watching over His kingdom. He is inspiring its leadership to care for its ever growing membership”* (Ensign, May 1997, 6).

“Take upon You My Whole Armor”

Lesson 43

D&C 3:8 refers to temptations as “the fiery darts of the adversary”. (Also see Ephesians 6:16; 1 Nephi 15:24; D&C 27:17). In this lesson, we will focus on the adversary’s attempts to entice us to break the Lord’s commands concerning chastity, honesty, and proper language.

Put on the whole armor of God

D&C 76:25-28 and Moses 4:3. Leaders of two forces involved in the War in Heaven had conflicting objectives. On earth, the battle continues between Satan and the Savior. In the battle against the forces of evil, the Lord has not left us unprotected.

D&C 27:15-18 describe the whole armor of God:

- Loins girt about with truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace
- Shield of faith
- Helmet of salvation
- Sword of God’s Spirit and His word through revelation

We put on this armor through sincerely and regularly praying, studying the word of God, keeping the Sabbath holy, attending the temple, and honoring the priesthood.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin warned us that Satan “*seeks to find any chink in the armor of each person. He knows our weaknesses and knows how to exploit them if we allow him to do so. We can defend ourselves against his attacks and deceptions only by understanding the commandments and by fortifying ourselves each day through praying, studying the scriptures, and following the counsel of the Lord’s anointed*” (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 35).

Live the Lord’s law of chastity

D&C 42:22-24; 59:6; 63:16. The Lord’s law of chastity prohibits lustful thoughts or actions and adultery.

The First Presidency stated: “*The Lord’s law of moral conduct is abstinence outside of lawful marriage and fidelity within marriage. Sexual relations are proper only between husband and wife appropriately expressed within the bonds of marriage. Any other sexual contact, including fornication, adultery, and homosexual and lesbian behavior, is sinful*” (First Presidency letter, 14 Nov. 1991).

Elder Richard G. Scott taught: “*Any sexual intimacy outside of the bonds of marriage—I mean any intentional contact with the sacred, private parts of another’s body, with or without clothing—is a sin and is forbidden by God. It is also a transgression to intentionally stimulate these emotions within your own body*” (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 38).

Consequences of violating the law of chastity are spiritual and physical, immediate and long-term. It affects the individual and others.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught: “*One of the most pervasive deceptions in recent years is the notion that immorality is normal and acceptable and has no negative consequences. In truth, immorality is the underlying cause of much suffering and many other problems that are prevalent today, including rampant disease, abortion, broken families, families without fathers, and mothers who themselves are children*” (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 76).

Blessings of being obedient to the law of chastity are consistent with those enumerated in D&C 121:45-46. In addition, we feel increased peace and joy, love for our spouse and other family members, self-respect and respect for others, the opportunity for the companionship of the Holy Ghost, ability to partake of the sacrament worthily, and opportunity to receive priesthood ordinances.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke about ways to avoid Satan's temptations when he warned: *"You must not fool around with the Internet to find pornographic material. You must not dial a long-distance phone number to listen to filth. You must not rent videos with pornography of any kind. This salacious stuff simply is not for you. Stay away from pornography as you would avoid a serious disease. It is destructive. It can become habitual, and those who indulge in it get so they cannot leave it alone. It is addictive"* (Ensign, May 1998, 49).

D&C 63:16. Keep in mind that the Lord expects and requires purity of thought as well as purity of action. Impure thoughts cause us to lose the Spirit and break our covenants with the Savior. Elder Boyd K. Packer counseled that avoiding evil thoughts is achieved by putting *"something edifying in their place"* (Ensign, Nov. 1977, 60). Something edifying could be a favorite scripture, a sacred hymn, or thinking of our love for our family.

Be honest

Elder James E. Faust taught: *"Honesty is more than not lying. It is truth telling, truth speaking, truth living, and truth loving"* (Ensign, Nov. 1996, 41).

D&C 42:21, 51:9, 97:8 teach us to avoid lying, deal honestly with everyone, and to be acceptable to the Lord through being honest.

To be honest with the Lord, we should keep our covenants and other promises we have made to Him, fulfill our callings as received from Him, renew our covenants of the sacrament worthily, and pay an honest tithing and generous offerings.

Use language that reverences God and is edifying

D&C 63:60-62; 136:21 concern taking the name of the Lord in vain by using it disrespectfully, using it in a common or casual way, or using it in association with coarse thoughts or evil acts.

In addition to taking the Lord's name in vain, we should avoid vulgar, obscene, crude, or degrading speech. President Hinckley said: *"Don't swear. Don't profane. Avoid so-called dirty jokes. Stay away from conversation that is sprinkled with foul and filthy words. You will be happier if you do so, and your example will give strength to others"* (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 48).

If we fail to follow the Prophet's counsel, we may offend God, offend associates, degrade ourselves, and lose the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Learning to control our language and speech is essential to our spiritual growth. As we develop the habit of controlling our language, we will find that we can avoid other temptations more easily. In addition to controlling our own language, we should, whenever possible, leave situations in which foul or inappropriate language is being used and we can raise objections to its use in our presence.

D&C 52:16; 136:24; Ephesians 4:29 counsel us about the Lord's expectations and desires for our language. He desires that we edify one another and be meek.

Elder Harold B. Lee explained: *"[The] armoured man hold[s] in his hand a shield and in his other hand a sword. ...That shield was the shield of faith and the sword was the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God. I can't think of any more powerful weapons than faith and a knowledge of the scriptures in...which are contained the Word of God. One so armoured and one so prepared with*

those weapons is prepared to go out against the enemy” (“Feet Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace”, BYU Speeches of the Year [9 Nov. 1954], 7).

When we follow our Heavenly Father’s counsel to put on his whole armor, we gain protection from temptations. Our lives are truly better when we obey the law of chastity, exemplify honest in all things, and use language that is edifying.

“Being Good Citizens”

Lesson 44 – D&C 58:21-22, 26-28; 98:4-10; 134; Articles of Faith 1:12
Our Heritage, pgs. 133-134

In 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower, newly elected as President of the United States, formed his cabinet. In the process of looking for the best-qualified people to serve, he requested that Elder Ezra Taft Benson, who was then serving in the Quorum of the Twelve, accept the post of Secretary of Agriculture. David O. McKay, President of the Church, encouraged Elder Benson to accept the assignment.

Elder Benson served well as a Cabinet Secretary. In his first general conference address after becoming Secretary of Agriculture, he stated: *“I have been happy in the privilege to serve, in a small way at least, this great country and the government under which we live. I am grateful to the First Presidency and my brethren that they have been willing, not only to give consent, but also to give me their blessing as I have responded to the call of the chief executive”* (Conference Report, Apr. 1953, 40).

Elder Benson was encouraged to accept the post of Secretary of Agriculture because Church leaders have encouraged us to be good citizens and strengthen our communities and nations. Ways to accomplish this include participating in government or political processes, obeying and support the law, and rendering civic service in our communities. This lesson will discuss the Lord’s teachings on government and good citizenship.

Participating in government

D&C 134, a declaration of beliefs about government, was unanimously approved by a general assembly of the Church at Kirtland, Ohio, in the summer of 1835.

D&C 134:1, 6-8, and 11 list the purposes of civil governments:

- “For the good and safety of society” (134:1)
- “For the protection of the innocent and the punishment of the guilty” (134:6)
- “For the protection of all citizens in the free exercise of their religious belief” (134:7)
- “For the redress of all wrongs and grievances” (134:11)

Each of us as a citizen has a responsibility to support civil government in the fulfillment of these divinely-approved purposes. Elder L. Tom Perry said: *“As Church members, we live under the banner of many different flags. How important it is that we understand our place and our position in the lands in which we live! We should be familiar with the history, heritage, and laws of the lands that govern us. In those countries that allow us the right to participate in the affairs of government, we should use our free agency and be actively engaged in supporting and defending the principles of truth, right, and freedom”* (Ensign, Nov. 1987, 72).

D&C 134 teaches that we as members have a special responsibility to seek after and support leaders who *“Administer the law in equity and justice”* (134:3). Further counsel comes in D&C 98:10 that we should look for honesty and wisdom in civic leaders. It is up to us to take this seriously and prepare ourselves to choose wisely as we participate in political selection processes or go to the polls.

It is important to note that *“the Church is politically neutral. It does not endorse political parties, platforms, or candidates. Candidates should not imply that they are endorsed by the Church or its leaders. Church leaders and members should avoid statements or conduct that might be interpreted as Church endorsement of political parties or candidates”* (Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders [1998], 325).

Obedience to the laws of the land

We find instruction in D&C 58:21-22; 98:4-6; 134:5-6; Articles of Faith 1:12 regarding our responsibility to obey the laws of the land.

- Obey the laws—there is no need to break them—and be subject to the lawful powers
- Constitutional law is justifiable before the Lord. It maintains rights and privileges, so we are justified in “befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land”.
- We are bound to support governments which protect our rights through the laws they enact. The governments have the right to enact laws which secure the public interest while holding sacred the freedom of conscience. We owe respect and deference to the laws (which provide peace and harmony). Laws are instituted to regulate our interests as individuals and nations.
- “We believe... in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law”.
- It is also a sacred responsibility to teach our children their responsibilities toward the civil laws and its associated institutions.
- It is our responsibility to actively seek, support, select, and honor law enforcement and other civil officers in the performance of their duties.

The relationship between church and state should be in accordance with the teachings of D&C 134:4, 9. The state should not impose laws upon religion unless religious exercise infringes upon the rights and liberties of others.

Strengthen your community

The Church Handbook of Instructions states: *“Members should do their civic duty by supporting measures that strengthen society morally, economically, and culturally. Members are urged to be actively engaged in worthy causes to improve their communities and make them wholesome places in which to live and rear families”* (Book 2, page 325).

- **Serve Others:** Participate in community service projects and invite others in the Church to join you in those projects. If you are aware of a worthy project that needs support, inform appropriate ward leaders (quorum leaders, YW Presidency / advisors, Relief Society Presidency, etc.) of the need and the opportunity to see if they and their group would be interested in supporting the activity. Through personal and group support, the community benefits from our service(s). We too are blessed in many ways by serving others.
- **Serve in elected or appointed public service positions:** The First Presidency has counseled us: “We strongly urge men and women to be willing to serve on school boards, city and county councils and commissions, state legislatures, and other high offices of either election or appointment” (First Presidency letter, 15 Jan. 1998). Good people in such positions are able to be an influence for good upon many in the community.
- Support worthy causes or activities: D&C 58:27 urges us to be “anxiously engaged” in good causes by taking individual responsibility for things that need to be done. This account of one LDS sister’s contribution and its impact: *“While Dolina Smith was serving as Young Women president in the Toronto Ontario Stake in 1986, she asked an expert to speak at a fireside about the growing problem of pornography. Later she became involved with a nationwide group called Canadians for Decency, which mobilizes thousands of anti-pornography Canadians to contact their elected officials as specific concerns about pornography arise... In 1990 her involvement increased when she was named chairperson of Canadians for Decency. In this new role she has given numerous presentations before the provincial and federal governing bodies that make and change pornography laws. She has also spoken to many groups of citizens who work with local governments to clamp down on the spread of pornography in their communities”* (Donald S. Conkey, “Together We Can Make a Difference”, Ensign, Feb. 1996, 68).

As Latter-day Saints, we are expected to find worthy causes that we can support locally. It is up to us to make our communities better by fighting evil influences that would otherwise prevail.

Challenges to community service include the time commitment required. If at all possible, try to do something that the whole family can be involved in so that community service time is also family time.

Elder M. Russell Ballard said: *“In the Church, we often state the couplet, ‘Be in the world but not of the world.’ ...Perhaps we should state the couplet...as two separate admonitions. First, ‘Be in the world.’ Be involved; be informed. Try to be understanding and tolerant and to appreciate diversity. Make meaningful contributions to society through service and involvement. Second, ‘Be not of the world.’ Do not follow wrong paths or bend to accommodate or accept what is not right... Members of the Church need to influence more than we are influenced. We should work to stem the tide of sin and evil instead of passively being swept along by it. We each need to help solve the problem rather than avoid or ignore it”* (Ensign, May 1989, 80).

Regardless of the nation or community in which we live, Latter-day Saints have a responsibility to be good citizens. We must support good government, good civic leaders, worthy causes, and efforts which strengthen our communities.

“The Family Is Ordained of God”

Lesson 45 – “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102)

Our hymn, “*Families Can Be Together Forever*”, contains the line, “*I always want to be with my own family, / And the Lord has shown me how I can*”—which reminds us of the great blessing of having the opportunity of forming an eternal family. Today, we will discuss the Lord’s teachings, as revealed through the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, regarding the family. Giving heed to these teachings strengthens and unifies families in this life and prepares us to live as eternal families.

The family is central to God’s plan of salvation

At a meeting of the Relief Society in September 1995, President Hinckley presented “*The Family: A Proclamation to the World*”. In the six years since then, it has been widely distributed throughout the world in numerous languages. Government leaders in many countries have also been presented with the Proclamation.

(See the title, subtitle, and first two paragraphs of the Proclamation.) President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: “*Why do we have this proclamation on the family now? Because the family is under attack. All across the world families are falling apart. The place to begin to improve society is in the home. Children do, for the most part, what they are taught. We are trying to make the world better by making the family stronger*” (Ensign, Aug. 1997, 5).

The proclamation states that marriage and family are “*ordained of God*” and “*central to [His] plan for the eternal destiny of His children.*” D&C 131:1-4 teaches that an eternal family is required for exaltation in the celestial glory.

Genesis 1:26-27 says that we were created in the image of God and the Proclamation states that we are all spirit children of God.

- This knowledge reveals the potential that each of us has as a member of Heavenly Father’s family.

Priesthood ordinances make it possible for our families to be together eternally

See paragraph 3 of the Proclamation... “In the premortal realm...”. This paragraph reminds us of the purpose of mortality and indicates that we are to obtain a body, gain experience and knowledge, progress to perfection, merit eternal life, establish eternal family relationships, and enter into and faithfully observe the covenants which enable us to return to Father with our family.

We know that to be an eternal family, we must receive the sealing ordinance in the temple and keep the covenants associated with that sealing ordinance. We should pay strict attention to those covenants and strengthen our commitment to keeping them. Because we make covenants to be bound together forever, our behavior toward family members should be influenced by our covenants.

The power to create mortal life is sacred

See paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Proclamation. Elder Henry B. Eyring taught: “*Children are the inheritance of the Lord to us in this life and also in eternity. Eternal life is not only to have forever our descendants from this life. It is also to have eternal increase... We can understand why our Heavenly Father commands us to reverence life and to*

cherish the powers that produce it as sacred. If we do not have those reverential feelings in this life, how could our Father give them to us in the eternities?" (Ensign, Feb. 1998, 15).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught: *"The body is an essential part of the soul... We declare that one who uses the God-given body of another without divine sanction abuses the very soul of that individual, abuses the central purpose and processes of life... In sexual transgression the soul is a stake—the body and the spirit"* (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 76).

In teaching our children about this sacred power, review For the Strength of Youth [34285] or A Parent's Guide [31125].

Parents have a sacred duty to care for each other and teach their children

See paragraph 6 of the Proclamation. Married couples should strengthen their love for each other. As President Hinckley taught: *"When you are married, be fiercely loyal to one another. Selfishness is the great destroyer of happy family life. If you will make your first concern the comfort, the well-being, and the happiness of your companion, sublimating any personal concern to that loftier goal, you will be happy, and your marriage will go on throughout eternity"* (Ensign, Dec. 1995, 67). Children are blessed when they have parents who love and care for each other.

D&C 68:25-28; 93:40 remind us of principles which parents are required to teach their children. Teaching of families can be accomplished in varied settings such as family home evenings, family prayers, mealtimes, bedtime, traveling together, and working together at home or in the community.

The role of the Church in teaching children was stated by President Spencer W. Kimball: *"It is the responsibility of the parents to teach their children. The Sunday School, the Primary, [the Mutual], and other organizations of the Church play a secondary role"* (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 332).

Observance of Righteous principles is the foundation of successful marriages and families

See paragraph 7 of the Proclamation. Another teaching of the Proclamation is that *"happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."* It further states that *"successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities."*

The Proclamation points out specific responsibilities of fathers—to preside over the home, provide the necessities of life, and provide protection. D&C 121:41-46 gives direction on how this is to be accomplished in righteousness.

Primary responsibilities for mothers are also given—and mothers should be teaching their daughters how to nurture through their daily example. President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: *"If there is to be a return to old and sacred values, it must begin in the home. It is here that truth is learned, that integrity is cultivated, that self-discipline is instilled, and that love is nurtured... Sisters, guard your children... Nothing is more precious to you as mothers, absolutely nothing. Your children are the most valuable thing you will have in time or all eternity. You will be fortunate indeed is, as you grow old and look at those you brought into the world, you find in them uprightness of life, virtue in living, and integrity in their behavior"* (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 99).

While prime responsibilities are assigned to each parent, fathers should help nurture and the best parents work together as equal partners.

It is everyone's responsibility to strengthen families

See the final two paragraphs of the Proclamation. Its conclusion warns of serious consequences when families are allowed to disintegrate. It then calls upon everyone to strengthen the family. Speaking to a gathering of mayors and other public officials, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *"To you men and women of great influence, you who preside in the cities of the nation, to you I say that it will cost far less to reform our schools, to teach the virtues of good citizenship, than it will to go on building and maintaining costly jails and prisons... But there is another institution of even greater importance than the schools. It is the home. I believe that no nation can rise higher than the strength of its families"* (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 109).

It is incumbent upon us as parents or future parents to think about how we would answer these questions: Do all my family members sense my love for them? Are we striving to live as an eternal family? What can I do to strengthen my family?

The Proclamation on the Family is filled with truth. We need to study and apply its teachings.

Recognize and avoid abuse: We have been warned that those *"who abuse spouse or offspring...will one day stand accountable before God."* Our prophets have spoken out strongly in opposition to abuse of any kind. President Gordon B. Hinckley counseled brethren: *"Never abuse your wives. Never abuse your children. But gather them in your arms and make them feel of your love and your appreciation and your respect. Be good husbands. Be good fathers"* (Ensign, June 1999, 2).

“Zion—The Pure in Heart”

Lesson 46 – D&C 57:1-3; 64:33-43; 82:14-15; 97:8-28; 105:1-12;
Moses 7:12-19, 61-63, 68-69; Articles of Faith 1:10; Our Heritage, pages 37-38, 145-146

If you were asked to write down the five most important things you would like to accomplish in life, what would they be? The Prophet Joseph Smith said: *“We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object... The time is soon coming, when no man will have peace but in Zion and her stakes”* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 160-61). As you look at the five things that you wrote down, how many items help build up Zion? Today’s lesson will consider the Lord’s instructions about building up Zion and what we must do to accomplish it.

Meanings of “Zion”

Not all references to Zion in the scriptures have the same meaning. See the following passages:

- D&C 97:21 – Zion refers to the pure in heart
- D&C 82:14 – Zion refers to the Church and its stakes
- Moses 7:19 – Zion refers to the city of Enoch
- 2 Samuel 5:6-7; 1 Kings 8:1 – Zion refers to the ancient city of Jerusalem
- D&C 45:66-67; 57:1-2; Articles of Faith 1:10 – Here Zion means the New Jerusalem to be built in Missouri in North America
- Hebrews 12:22-23 – Zion refers to the dwelling place of the exalted

Zion, therefore, may refer to a people, a specific place, or both. In this lesson, building “Zion” will refer to making our hearts pure so that our dwelling places may be called “Zion”.

Zion in previous dispensations

The city of Enoch is one example of Zion in a previous dispensation.

Characteristics of Enoch’s City of Holiness, even “Zion”, are found in Moses 7:12-19, 68-69.

- The Lord dwelt with his people (16)
- The people dwelt in righteousness (16)
- The glory of the Lord was upon his people and they did flourish (17)
- The people were of “one heart and one mind” (18)
- There were no poor among them (18)
- Enoch and all his people walked with God (69)
- The city was taken into God’s bosom (69)

Moses 7:61-63 teaches that in the Millennium, Enoch’s city will return to earth and become one with the New Jerusalem. By becoming familiar with the account of the city of Enoch, we can see what will happen to its people and we can become aware of what we must do to become a Zion people and establish holiness within our cities. The city of Enoch is both an inspiration and a challenge to us.

The command to the Saints in latter-days to establish Zion

The establishment and building up of the latter-day Zion is a frequently mentioned subject in the Doctrine and Covenants with over 200 references. It was so important a subject that even before the Church’s formal organization, a number of brethren were directed by the Lord to “seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion”. (D&C 6:6

(Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey); 11:6 (Hyrum Smith); 12:6 (Joseph Knight, Sr.); 14:6 (David Whitmer)).

For the early Saints of this dispensation, establishing Zion meant becoming pure in heart, living in unity and harmony, and building the city of Zion, or New Jerusalem in Missouri.

- Independence, Mo, was revealed as the center place (D&C 57:1-3) for the city of Zion.
- Saints gathered to Missouri after D&C 57 was received, but they failed to become pure in heart and live in harmony, so they proved unworthy at that time. As a consequence of their failure to live up to the Lord's standards, mobs formed and drove the Saints from their homes in November 1833.
- Later, in July 1834, D&C 105 was received and the Saints were told the redemption of Zion must "wait".

(Note: See Lessons 12 and 27 for more about Zion in Missouri.)

D&C 101:6-8 indicates that the Saints in Missouri were contentious, envious, lustful, covetous, and that they polluted their inheritance. They were slow to hear the Lord and ignored him in peaceful times.

D&C 105:1-12 tells us that the Saints who failed to establish Zion were disobedient, full of all manner of evil, stingy and uncharitable, and divided.

Zion—whether it is the city, the stakes, or our homes—requires that we develop the Zion qualities of pure hearts, unity, and selflessness.

We have been continually counseled to establish Zion in our hearts, stakes, and homes. President Harold B. Lee said: *"The borders of Zion, where the righteous and pure in heart may dwell, must now begin to be enlarged. The stakes of Zion must be strengthened. All this so that Zion may arise and shine by becoming increasingly diligent in carrying out the plan of salvation throughout the world"* (Ensign, July 1973, 3).

D&C 82:14-15 records the Lord's commands to Zion to "arise and put on her beautiful garments." Saints were required to covenant with the Lord to increase in holiness.

Specifics of what has to be done to build Zion include:

- D&C 97:21. Strive to be pure in heart. See Moroni 7:47-48; 10:32 for instructions which include: Develop charity, pray fervently and be filled with the love of God, be a true follower of Christ, become a son (or daughter) of God, be pure like our Savior, come unto Christ and be perfected, deny all ungodliness, love God with all your might, mind, and strength, and do not deny the power of God.
- D&C 38:27. Become unified—be of "one heart and one mind"—because if we are not unified, we are not God's people.
- D&C 64:34-35; 105:3, 5-6. We must be obedient to gospel principles.
- D&C 105:3. We must care for the poor and the afflicted.
- D&C 97:10-16. Build temples and participate in the ordinances thereof.
- D&C 105:10. We must teach one another and learn our duties more perfectly.
- D&C 133:8-9. We must preach the gospel to the world and call people out of Babylon (the world).

Scriptural promises concerning the future of Zion

In the D&C, we find the Lord's promises of many blessings associated with Zion in the latter days.

- D&C 97:18. Zion will spread and become glorious and great.
- D&C 97:19. Zion will be honored by the nations of the earth.
- D&C 97:20. The Lord will be Zion's salvation.
- D&C 97:21. Zion will rejoice.
- D&C 97:22-25. Zion will escape the Lord's vengeance.

According to D&C 97:25, to enjoy these blessings, we must observe all the Lord's commandments.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: *"The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with particular delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; ...we are the favored people that God has [chosen] to bring about the Latter-day glory"* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 231).

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *"I see a wonderful future in a very uncertain world. If we will cling to our values, if we will build on our inheritance, if we will walk in obedience before the Lord, if we will simply live the gospel, we will be blessed in a magnificent and wonderful way. We will be looked upon as a peculiar people who have found the key to a peculiar happiness. 'And many people shall go forth and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord...; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem' (Isaiah 2:3). Great has been our past, wonderful is our present, glorious can be our future"* (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 69).