

ELDER MILTON R. HUNTER

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My dear brethren and sisters, as I look into the faces of this vast congregation I feel indeed very humble. I ask our Father in heaven if he will direct the things I say.

DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Whenever I hear the song sung, "I Know that My Redeemer Lives," I thrill throughout my entire body. This morning I would like to bear testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ and point out a few highlights of his great mission. I know as I know that I am standing here this morning—and I am certainly thoroughly convinced of that fact—that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, our Redeemer, our Lord, our Advocate with the Father, the Master of the plan of salvation, the Judge of this earth; and, in conjunction with the Father, he is our Lord, our God, and our King.

We read in modern revelation that Jesus Christ was and is our elder brother, the "Firstborn" unto the Father. We accept, as Latter-day Saints, the teachings of the prophets to the effect that Jesus of Nazareth was the Only Begotten Son of the Eternal Father in the flesh; therefore, the revelation I referred to points back to a previous birth, a birth in the spirit world. You and I were sons and daughters of our Eternal Parents in the spirit world. In fact, all the people in this world were of that family, and Jesus Christ was the Firstborn.

PRE-MORTAL LIFE

During his pre-mortal life Jesus Christ rose to the status of Godhood. At that time he was foreordained to be the Savior of this world. Father Abraham was privileged to see in vision the grand council in heaven that was held prior to the peopling of this earth, and he saw, as the Lord showed him, "many of the noble and great ones." The Lord pointed out:

These I will make my rulers. . . . Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. (Abraham 3:23.)

Joseph Smith tells us that at that grand council the head God of all the Gods called the council, and the purpose was to present a plan whereby his children were to come into mortal earth and have the experience of mortality and then return back into the presence of God. The Eternal Father explained to his children that mortal beings would forget their pre-mortal experiences and the gospel truths after they had come from the presence of God and, therefore, they would have to have a Savior in order that they might be taught the Gospel truths again. He also declared that they would not have the power to break the bands of death and bring about resurrection and that they would have to have a Savior for that purpose also.

As he explained these things, he asked whom he should send to be the Savior. Abraham saw that there stood one in the midst of the group in the grand council in heaven "like unto God." That one answered and said: "Here am I, send me." He said that he would come down to this earth and give men their free agency

And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; . . .
and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon
their heads for ever and ever (Abraham 3:26.)

and all the honor and the glory should go to the Father.

MISSION OF JESUS CHRIST

Abraham saw that the Eternal Father was very pleased with this one like unto him and said that he would send him. At that time he ordained Jesus Christ, we say "foreordained" him, for his great mission. He ordained him to be the first great high priest over this earth and gave unto him the keys of the priesthood. God gave the Only Begotten the same power that he the Eternal Father enjoyed, the power to do all of the works of the Father with and for the Father. Elohim named that priesthood after his Only Begotten Son. In the relationship to this earth, it was to be called

. . . the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God. (D. & C. 107:3.)

It bore that name among mortals down to the time of Abraham and Melchizedek.

The Eternal Father also told his Son that he would name the plan of salvation after him. Thereupon he named it the gospel of Jesus Christ. And on that occasion an eternal decree went forth from the throne of God that there would be no other name given under heaven whereby mankind could be saved, save the name of Jesus Christ. With that eternal decree going forth, we know that the true Church must bear that name throughout all ages.

There are two great factors in atonement or in the assignment given to the Savior. One was to break the bands of death and give every man immortality, i.e., resurrection. The other was to teach a gospel plan whereby if you and I and all other mortals would render obedience, we would not only receive immortality, but we would be also brought back into the presence of God. There we would receive exaltation along with him, sharing with our Father and his Only Begotten Son all the same type of glory, power, honor, and happiness that they enjoy.

GOSPEL PLAN REVEALED

Shortly after Adam and Eve became mortal beings, or at that time, Jesus Christ began his active mission upon this earth as the Savior of this world, as a mediator between the heavens and the earth, as the one to bring the gospel to mankind; in other words,

he began his work to bring about the atonement. He did so by revealing to Father Adam and Mother Eve the gospel plan of salvation. As they had passed into mortality, a veil had been drawn over their minds, as the Lord had predicted would be; therefore, they had become spiritually dead; i. e., they forgot their pre-mortal experiences and the gospel doctrines and were banished from the presence of God. They became spiritually alive by applying the message that they received from their Savior. During Adam's period and throughout Old Testament days, Jesus was known as Jehovah. He spoke at times to Adam from the Garden of Eden. At times he appeared to the first man, and on other occasions he sent angels to teach the father of the human family eternal truths, until Adam had a fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, just the same as you and I as Latter-day Saints enjoy a fulness of the gospel in our dispensation. On one occasion, after Adam had been commanded to offer sacrifices, this particular event occurred. To quote:

And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me.

And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

Wherefore, thou do all thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore. (Moses 5:6-8.)

SALVATION THROUGH JESUS

Shortly after that event occurred, the voice of the Lord came to Adam, as is recorded in *The Pearl of Great Price*, and told him that in the Meridian of Time that his Only Begotten would come into the world, would live and teach man how to live, would die and break the bands of death, and bring about the atonement. And then the voice of God pointed out to Adam that the name of his Only Begotten would be

. . . Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come to the children of men. (Moses 6:52.)

Therefore even in the beginning, in the first dispensation of the gospel, that same eternal decree went forth that the name of Jesus Christ would be the one whereby you and I could expect salvation, or even more than that, exaltation in the kingdom of God.

Following the days of Adam, Jesus Christ continued to serve as the mediator between the heavens and the earth by revealing the gospel to the numerous prophets during the various gospel dispensations. On a number of occasions he even appeared to some of the great prophets.

EARTHLY MISSION

Finally, as the holy prophets had predicted, in the Meridian of Time Jesus Christ came into this world. Latter-day Saints accept the

doctrine that he was actually and literally the Son, heir in the flesh, of God the Eternal Father. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He was the only man in this life who was born into mortality of the Eternal Father. As I have already stated, you and I are all sons and daughters of God in the spirit world, but Christ's mortal birth, being actually the Son of God, gave him that extra power of godliness needed to be the Savior of the world. In other words, being the Only Begotten gave him power to be the one to break the bands of death. Thus he was endowed by the Father with power within himself over life and death. Also, he is the only perfect man who ever lived, showing us the way whereby you and I might become perfect if we will follow his example.

After living thirty-three years of that type of perfect life, three years of which were devoted to intensive missionary work, the Man of Galilee was crucified. Three days later he rose from the grave, as the prophets had foretold, thereby becoming the "first fruits" of the resurrection. He broke the bands of death and not only made it possible for all men to be resurrected, but he also made it absolutely necessary. No matter how righteously people live here in mortality or no matter how wickedly they live, every man, woman, and child is promised immortality, i.e., resurrection. They must come forth from the grave and stand before the seat of Jesus Christ to be judged for the actions they committed while they lived here on this earth.

CHURCH ORGANIZED

As Brother Benson very beautifully pointed out yesterday, while Christ was here living among mortals, he organized a church. It became a great church, especially in numbers. But, as Brother Benson pointed out, as time passed this church dropped into darkness. Thousands and thousands of pagans joined this church, and they brought into it their pet pagan practices, ideas, and doctrines, which were man-made and many of which were quite crude. Thus they mingled paganism with the teachings that the Savior had given, thereby adulterating Christianity. The result was the bringing about of what is known as the great apostasy. Naturally the Savior could not accept that adulterated church as his. Thereupon he withdrew his Holy Priesthood, leaving the world to grope in darkness for hundreds and hundreds of years.

RESTORATION OF GOSPEL

But the prophets had looked down through the stream of time and had predicted that in the latter days God would stretch forth his hand again to restore the gospel upon the earth; the gospel dispensation known as the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, the day when all the ordinances, principles and doctrines, powers and priest-hoods that had been in the world from the beginning, would be restored preparatory to the coming of the Lord.

I bear solemn testimony, as have others here today, that that restoration took place approximately a hundred years ago. It began on that memorable spring morning in 1820 when the Prophet Joseph Smith went into the Sacred Grove to pray. In answer to that prayer, God the Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son appeared to that boy-prophet in their glory. The Father pointed to the Son and said, "*This is My Beloved Son. Hear him!*" Thereupon Jesus Christ again took his rightful place as the Mediator between the Father and mankind, as the Savior of this world, by conversing with Joseph Smith and by telling him that the true Church was not upon the earth and that if he lived the right kind of life, he had been chosen and fore-ordained to be the instrument in the hands of God through which that Church would be established. Christ also told Joseph that the ministers ("professors") of the world drew near to God with their lips but their hearts were far from him; and that they were teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

FURTHER REVELATIONS

After this glorious vision had taken place, and I might say that it was one of the most glorious manifestations that has ever happened here upon this earth, Jesus of Nazareth continued to function in accordance with his appointment as the Savior of mankind by appearing to the Prophet several other times and also by sending great angels—men who had lived upon this earth in the past—to give to the Prophet Joseph Smith all the keys and powers and authority that had been enjoyed in other dispensations. Revelation after revelation came to the Prophet Joseph Smith until the fulness came, as had been predicted. On one of these occasions when Joseph Smith had the privilege of seeing a vision, the great revelation known as "The Vision," or "The Degrees of Glory," Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon looked into the three degrees of glory and also into perdition and recorded some of the things that are there. I would like to read a few words from Joseph's testimony:

And while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about.

And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;

And saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever.

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God. (D. & C. 76:19-24.)

THE SECOND COMING

Latter-day Saints are looking forward to the day, as predicted by the prophets, when Jesus Christ shall come upon the earth to reign as the Lord of lords and the King of kings. We are looking forward to the day when this earth shall be cleansed of its wickedness, when righteousness shall prevail, and when children shall be born in righteousness and will grow up without sin. At that time they shall live, rear their children, and when they become the age of a tree pass from mortality into immortality in the twinkling of an eye.

At the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ to reign upon the earth as the Lord and God "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" will take place. It will be a great day for the righteous and a dreadful day for the wicked. The prophets predicted that at that day the earth "shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble;" also, "the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

We as members of the true Church are looking forward to that great day when Jesus Christ shall come to his own, and when the devil shall be bound for one thousand years and cease to have power, as was explained yesterday, that he does at the present time, over the hearts of the children of men. At the close of that one thousand years' time, the devil will be loosed for a short season, and wickedness will again prevail throughout the world. Then will come the day when Lucifer and all his evil hosts will be cast off this earth. They shall go into perdition and dwell as lost souls forever.

SANCTIFIED EARTH

At that day the earth shall be sanctified. It shall die, so the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and be resurrected. It shall become a new world. It shall become the celestialized orb prepared for the members of "the Church of the Firstborn." Jesus Christ will judge all inhabitants of this earth. Those who have lived worthy lives from Adam's day on down to the end of the millennium will be assigned to dwell upon this earth forever, to dwell as celestialized beings with Jesus Christ; thus they will be assigned to their celestial glory. All who have inhabited this earth will stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ and will be assigned to their future world in which to live forever. Some will be assigned to terrestrial glory, some to celestial glory, and others even to perdition. Many Latter-day Saints will not attain the celestial glory because they did not abide by the commandments of God; therefore, they will be very unhappy because they did not gain celestial life which could have been theirs.

The Father will say to his Only Begotten Son, "This is your world because of the great work that you did in being its Redeemer. You shall now be the Lord, you shall be the God, you shall be the king of this world forevermore. This is your kingdom." Under the

direction, then, of the Father who has many other kingdoms, Jesus Christ will preside here as your God and my God if we live worthy of celestial glory.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are heirs to this great kingdom on condition that we obey the teachings of the gospel as revealed to earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith. As Brother Romney very beautifully pointed out yesterday, today is the day for you and me to prepare for that great judgment day when this earth shall become the celestialized orb. Then if we are found worthy, we will hear the voice of Jesus Christ say to us to enter into our exaltation and dwell with him forever here upon this earth.

May you and I live clean and pure, be prayerful, be humble, live according to every word that has come from the mouth of God in order that this might be our happy lot, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

The congregation now filling this historic building beyond its seating capacity will join in singing, "Zion Stands With Hills Surrounded."

The congregation sang the hymn, "Zion Stands With Hills Surrounded."

ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

Of the First Council of the Seventy

If the Holy Ghost will give me utterance, I should like to say some things to you about how I think the message of the restoration can be carried to the world with power and effect.

MESSAGE OF THE RESTORATION

This message is, first, foremost, and above all other things: that Jesus Christ is the son of the Living God; that he is the Savior of the world and the Redeemer of men; that salvation was and is and is to come, in and through his name only. We believe that he came into the world to do the will of his Father and work out the infinite and eternal atonement, and that by virtue of this atonement all men who believe and obey the gospel laws will be raised in immortality unto eternal life. It is only by obedience to his laws and his ordinances that we may gain the celestial kingdom.

This message is, secondly, that Joseph Smith, Jr., is the chosen prophet through whom the fulness of the everlasting gospel has been restored in this dispensation. He was chosen by Christ to be the re-