

That we may always remember the source of our blessings, and that we may prove ourselves worthy of him who is their Author, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

The congregation will now join with the Combined Choruses of the Brigham Young University in singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet."

The congregation and the Combined Choruses united in singing the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet."

President David O. McKay:

We shall now hear from Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder John Longden.

## ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My beloved brothers and sisters, first I should like to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord to me.

As I heard the President speak of the converts of the past year, I tried to visualize four huge tabernacles, or one twice as wide and long, as this one, full of all new converts from last year only.

I am conscious this morning of three empty places among our Brethren. I am thinking today of Brother Oscar Kirkham, a great man who has influenced youth tremendously and has given a long life of service. I am remembering Elder Thomas Evans McKay as one like Nathanael, a man without guile. And my mind returns to Elder Adam S. Bennion, our very close colleague, and I think of the scripture which says, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40.) And then when they went down to Nazareth, it was said of the Lord, again, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God." (*Ibid.*, 2:52.) An already great man, Elder Bennion increased in wisdom, greatness, spirituality. We express to the families of these three men our affection and our sympathy.

In the moments allotted to me may I address my remarks to any here and in the radio and television audience who have not experienced the glow, the warmth, the peace which come to those who see the eternal path clearly and know positively of its correctness, and who are courageously toiling toward those eternal goals.

In experiences of mortality we sometimes suffer from optical illusions; we hear noises that do not exist; we experience nocturnal adventures quite unreal, and distorted; but in the spiritual realm one can have positive certainty, for the Lord has repeated numerous times the definite promise here expressed:

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17. *Italics added.*)

In courts of law the witness is asked to take an oath that the information he is about to give is "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and the statements made are called his "testimony." In spiritual matters, we may likewise have a testimony. This sureness of the spiritual is unique and pertains to the realness of a personal God; the continued active life of the Christ, separate from but like his Father; the divinity of the restoration of the organization and doctrines of God's Church on the earth and the power of the divine, authoritative priesthood given to men, through revelations from God. These can be known as surely as that the sun shines, by every responsible person, and to fail to attain this knowledge is to admit that one has not paid the price. Like academic degrees it is obtained by intense strivings. That soul who is clean through repentance and the ordinances receives it if he desires and reaches for it, investigates conscientiously, studies, and prays faithfully.

Friday, April 4

First Day

A sure knowledge of the spiritual is an open door to rewards attainable and joys unspeakable. To ignore the testimony is to grope in caves of impenetrable darkness; to creep along in fog over hazardous highways. That person is to be pitied who may still be walking in darkness at noonday, who is tripping over obstacles which can be removed and who dwells in the dim flickering candlelight of insecurity and skepticism. The testimony is the electric light illuminating the cavern; the wind and sun dissipating the fog; the power equipment removing boulders from the road. It is the mansion on the hill replacing the shack in the marshes; the harvester shelving the sickle and cradle; the tractor, train, automobile, and plane displacing the ox team. It is the rich nourishing kernels of corn instead of the husks in the trough. It is much more than all else, for—

... this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (*Ibid.*, 17:3.)

Eternal life is the greatest gift. To obtain it is not easy. The price is high.

Nicodemus of old inquired the price. The answer perplexed him. Let us interview that good man who came so near and yet evidently missed the mark.

Your name is Nicodemus? You are a member of the powerful sect of the Pharisees? You are a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin? You knew the person from Nazareth called Jesus Christ? You heard his sermons and witnessed his miracles? You looked into his eyes and heard his voice?

You are a good man, Nicodemus, honorable and just, for you will yet defend our Lord before your colleagues, asking he be not condemned without a hearing. You are also generous, for you will yet bring one hundred weight of aloes and myrrh to his burial. You have at least some faith, but have you courage enough to face criticism? You are identified as one who came under cover of darkness. In your senatorial seat you and your colleagues have impressive powers, making laws and controlling destinies.

It is night now. You have not been seen. You are addressing our Lord:

Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (*Ibid.*, 3:2.)

His ready answer wrinkles your brow. This is the simple total answer to the weightiest of all questions.

Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. (*Ibid.*, 3:3.)

You are well versed in the law, Nicodemus, but what of the gospel? To gain eternal life there must be a rebirth, a transformation, and an unburdening self of pride, weaknesses, and prejudice. You must begin as a little child, clean, teachable. You seem not to understand.

"How can a man be born when he is old?" (*Ibid.*, 3:4.) Your question is strange for a learned man. Must you reduce all to human logic? Must everything be rational to your finite, materialistic mind?

He says:

Come unto me, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and . . . ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Matt. 11:28-29.)

He expects you to divest yourself of every foreign thought, act, and inclination, and accept him and live his plan. And the "rest," which is exaltation, will be your glory.

But you still do not seem to understand, Mr. Pharisee. Is it so complex? Are you afraid of what your brother Pharisees may think of you, fearful of losing your exalted place in the Sanhedrin? Or, do you not see? Certainly a little glimpse has been given you. You acknowledged the miracle worker must be sent from God, but the curtain so slightly opened will close again if you do not act upon the new knowledge being offered you.

You are highly educated, my good man. Many sit at your feet to learn. Does your superior training blind you? Must a prophet or a God be measured in the test tubes of a physical laboratory? Can you not accept anything you cannot prove by the rules of the schools in which you studied?

You are not accepting it. The Lord

is postulating again the necessary requirements:

*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* (John 3:3; italics added.)

That total answer came in one sentence of thirteen small words. You are wondering, weighing, Mr. Rationalizer. You seem impressed, but you are bound. How much you do not realize! Did you expect it in eloquent, impressive words? Is it frustrating in its simplicity? You are rationalizing, Sir. You cannot weigh this on the scales of your secular knowledge and training. They are too crude, mundane. You need finer mechanism.

Your question about returning to the mother's womb for rebirth—was it intended as a question, Mr. Intellectual, or to prove your superior logic; or to point out that Christ was irrational; or was it mere perplexity? He knows your professional background and culture and the analytical training you have had. He is so kind and patient. He will explain further in eighty-nine words, sixty-five of which are one-syllable ones:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (*Ibid.*, 3:5-8.)

How beautiful—how forceful—how positive! Is there excuse to question, to hesitate, to reject? O Nicodemus, this moment of crisis cannot last long. You are on a perilous summit. Your decision can mean the difference between exaltation and a deprivation greater than you know. You had a spark of desire. Why did you extinguish it?

What made you refer to our Master as "a teacher come from God"? Do you not believe in prophets? Have you not all your life waited for a Redeemer? After all his sermons, testimonies, and

miracles, is he still only an inspired teacher to you? Could he not be the long-awaited Christ? Have you tried to believe and accept, or are you bound down with fetters of tradition, chains of materialism, and handcuffs of losable prestige? O timid one, awaken, exert yourself, draw back the curtains your training and background have hung over the windows of your soul! You are speaking to no ordinary man, no common philosopher, no mere prophet. You are in the presence of the real Messiah, the great physician, the master psychiatrist, the very Christ. You are questioning the maker of heaven and earth, the Son of God.

Open the curtains, my skeptic brother. Rid yourself of your intellectual conservatism. This is a crucial moment. You are being offered a gift priceless beyond your imagination. Will you let it pass? Talking with Christ, you should be awed to a tremble, quaking in shoeless feet on such holy ground, and on your knees in reverent humility. This is your Lord, your Savior, your Redeemer. Can't you understand, O ye of little faith? Can't you feel his love and kindness and see the sadness and disappointment in those penetrating eyes as he notes your withdrawal? He is saying:

Set aside your pride and arrogance. Cast from you all worldly burdens. Repent of your transgressions, purify your hands, and mind, and heart, believe that I am the bread of life, the waters from the pure spring. Accept me and my gospel; go down into the waters in proper baptism.

Can you envision the cleanliness as one emerges from the watery grave, washed, and the freedom and joy and glory of it? But after all this you still ask, "How can these things be?" Your question astonishes us and brings from the Master this chastisement:

Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? (John 3:10.)

O my brother, opportunity's doors are closing. Why can't you understand? Too many materialistic obstacles? He knows your influence, wealth, erudition, your exalted place in community, in government, in the powerful church group.

Friday, April 4

First Day

He offers you not a dependent, decadent kingdom like your doomed and dying Judah. He invites you to rule, not as emperor of a temporary world power like Rome, which is destined to crumble as clay, but is offering you citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, eventually to rise in stature and authority until you are a king in your own right with a dominion greater than the combined empires of all the earth.

Your decision seems weighted with earthly treasures and the plaudits of men and the conveniences of affluence. My heart weeps for you, friend Nicodemus. You seem such a good man, philanthropic, kind, generous. You could have been such a power in the Lord's kingdom. You had a spark of desire. It could have been kindled into a living flame. You might have been one of his seventies, to proselyte as an advance agent, or an apostle, or even the President of his Church. You might have filled the vacancy when Matthias was called or have been an apostle to the gentiles with Paul and suffered with him in his perils of the sea, among robbers, in prisons, in his beatings and stonings, and even in his death. How little we realize the doors of opportunity which we oft close with one wrong decision. But the price was too high, wasn't it, man of wealth?

Unwilling that you slip back in your darkness without having every opportunity, Christ will bear you his testimony again. He will not leave you guiltless. You cannot escape the condemnation of this testimony, Mr. Rationalizer. Hear him:

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. (*Ibid.*, 3:12, 17, 11; italics added.)

O Nicodemus, why did you receive not his witness? Why did you not open your heart to understanding? Why did you hesitate when the Redeemer of the world so condescended? Had you humbly taken the first step of repentance

and then proper baptism, then would have come to you the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands by one of his apostles, or he himself might have done it.

The Holy Ghost would have abided with you so long as you merited and would have whispered to you so that you, too, could have exclaimed with your Redeemer,

*We speak that [which] we do know, and testify that [which] we have seen. (Ibid., 3:11; italics added.)*

And John wrote:

... what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. (*Ibid.*, 3:32.)

O my disbeliever brother, the New Testament could have recorded your name countless times instead of thrice. You could have lived forever in the minds and hearts of countless millions. Because of your many abilities you might have been one chosen to walk up the slopes of the Holy Mount of Transfiguration, to have unspeakable revelations, to join others in martyrdom, and rule eternally with Christ.

You might have walked where Jesus walked and stayed where he was staying;  
You might have eaten bread and sop and knelt where he was praying;  
He might have washed your weary feet and wiped them with his dryer;  
He might have laid his precious hands upon your head with Fire.

You might have eased his weary way and wiped away his bleeding;  
You might have helped in his defense when he was sorely needing;  
Most disappointing words are oft expressed by tongue and writing;  
The saddest words, "It might have been" are always the most biting.

Now, my beloved, listening friends, you too are generous and kind. You too are prayerful and religious. But are you also like Nicodemus, burdened down with preconceived and prejudiced notions? Do you think that no good thing can come out of Nazareth, or Palmyra, or Salt Lake City? Are you too biased to accept new truth? Too wealthy and fettered with the cares of this world to accept the difficult de-

mands of Christ's Church? Are you so influential as to fear to prejudice your position or local influence? Are you too weak to accept and carry a load of service? Are you too busy to study and pray and learn of Christ and his program? Are you too materialistically trained to accept the miracles, visions, prophets, and revelations?

If any of you, my listeners, is a modern Nicodemus, I beg of you to grasp the new world of truths. Your Lord Jesus Christ pleads with you:

My true Church is restored to earth with my saving doctrines.

I have placed in authoritative positions apostles and others divinely called, and in leadership a prophet who today receives my divine revelations.

Churches are many, but they are churches of men, not mine.

Credo's are numerous, but they are not of my authorship.

Organizations are everywhere, but they are not organized nor accepted by me.

Pretended and usurping representatives are legion, but I called them not; nor do I recognize their ordinances.

My second coming is near at hand.

. . . I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne. . . .

He that hath an ear let him hear. (Rev. 3:20-22.)

This testimony I bear, in the name of Jesus Christ our Master. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Spencer W. Kimball has just spoken to us. He was preceded by Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve. We shall now hear Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve.

## ELDER JOHN LONGDEN

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Much has been said this morning regarding the Spirit, and I feel that we have felt the Spirit of the Lord here this morning. In order to feel the Spirit of the Lord we must understand God; he must be known to us, and not unknown.

I should like to draw from Holy Writ two experiences, one in the life of the Apostle Paul on Mars' hill and the other in the life of Moses.

You will recall that when Paul visited Mars' hill he said:

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. (Acts 17:23.)

The following experience in the life of Moses is recorded in Exodus 32:1-8. Moses delayed in coming down from the mount. The children of Israel became restless and said unto Aaron, "Make us gods which shall go before us; this Moses, we know not where he is." So Aaron persuaded them to bring their jewelry, and he fashioned it with a graving tool and made a molten calf.

"These be thy Gods!" And so Aaron built an altar and proclaimed, "We feast, drink and play."

Then the Lord said unto Moses,

Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: [they have made them a "golden calf."] (Exodus 32:7-8.)

From both these experiences—the prophet Moses, and the Apostle Paul on Mars' hill—we learn these lessons: The people had their devotions, built altars, worshiped an unknown God, and worshiped in ignorance. In each case, as today, authorized servants taught the true and living God.

We have heard this morning about the spiritual and the carnal. May I say that the golden calf is the carnal or the carnal may be likened unto the worship of the golden calf, or the material things of life—feasting, drinking, and playing, and forgetting the spirit?

It is essential to know God and to worship him in truth, for Jesus said: