

And crown you with our welcome as
with flowers!"

When we sing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," my beloved friends, it is not just for a prophet of the past, but with a great gratitude in our hearts for the prophet of God that he has given us in this day, for whose leadership I acknowledge with you my gratitude to God, and also the literal divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the appearance of him and his Father to a Prophet of the last dispensation, even Joseph Smith.

I have a great respect for all men and their beliefs, but think it not a

strange thing that in a kingdom, the kingdom of God, there should be specific requirements and commandments, and a way that God has given for our realizing the highest happiness and peace and progress.

May we follow that way, may we share it, may we keep faith, I pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve. Our concluding speaker will be Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve.

ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

When I was a little boy in Primary and Sunday School there was one song we sang almost more than any other. One verse and chorus go like this:

"O Galilee! sweet Galilee! Where Jesus
loved so much to be;
Oh Galilee! blue Galilee! Come, sing
thy songs again to me.

"And when I read the thrilling lore
Of him who walked upon the sea
I long, oh, how I long once more
To follow him in Galilee."

And at last after many years, that longing was fulfilled, and I saw his beloved Galilee. Would you like to make a little hurried trip with us to the land of milk and honey, the land our fathers loved?

We stand on the steepened hill rising north from the blue, blue sea of Galilee. We are hundreds of feet below sea level. It is winter, and the air is crisp, and our top coats are little enough. Our guide points out locations, at least some of which are authentic. Here, he says, sat the multitude while the Master expounded the never-dying "Sermon on the Mount." Below us lies the sea he loved. It is smaller than we expected. We can see the whole of it in one glance. It is not unlike a great heart in shape or function for its fluid has

been the life blood of millions of people through many ages.

This is the sea of miracles. We see it calm and placid, and again, rough and boisterous. Countless fish from it have fed countless peoples. It was crossed numerous times by the Savior in little boats, in larger ships; and in its cool waters, tired feet were cooled. Its wild waves were calmed by his single command: "Peace, be still!" He walked on its surface; he preached from its shores. Not far to our left gathered the thousands whose hunger was satisfied on the miracled increase of loaves and fishes.

And we can almost see the disciples gathering up twelve baskets of residue after 5,000 had fed on five loaves and two fishes. We seem to see the four special fishermen with their nets and boats. Here Peter grappled with a fish which had in its mouth a coin for taxes. Down there he walked on the water; and when his faith waned, it was supplemented by that of the Lord. With our Testament open we read of the ministry of Christ, for this was the scene of much of it. We ask for the cities in which he lived and performed so many miracles, for we remember that in this area of but a few miles much of his work was done, much of his ministry was accomplished. We would like to walk through the triplet cities

Saturday, April 8

Second Day

so often visited: Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum. We see no spires nor towers, nor walls. We ask our guide: "Where is Chorazin?" He shakes his head. There is no Chorazin. We conclude it must have been on those hills above where now are sprouting grain and vegetables and dry weeds.

"Then where is Bethsaida?" we ask. "Where is that noted city where so many sick were healed and the lame were made to walk; where deaf could hear and lepers lost their curse? Where is his favorite place he often lodged, the home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip, his dearest friends? Where is old Bethsaida, the house of fishers, the place of miracles, the seat of gospel teachings, where fishermen became apostles?" In these very few miles much of interest happened. "Where is Bethsaida?" Our guide shakes his head again. There is no Bethsaida. "Capernaum, then?" we ask, "Where is that important place, the port where fish were loaded, traded, marketed?" He shakes his head again, then smiles as he thinks it through and changes the accent, and "Oh, you mean CAPERNAUM." He shows us the ruins of a large synagogue.

If this was of the Messianic period, it is the sole survivor. A back wall, great stones tumbled in disarray, some olive presses are mute reminders of long ago. But that can't be Capernaum, his own city, the great Capernaum, the haughty, wicked, rebellious, Capernaum!

Now we realize that we should not have expected to see these cities, for were they not doomed 1,900 years ago? Have we forgotten the prophetic curse of the Master? In their unrepentant attitudes toward the Savior of the world and his exalting message, Christ warned: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

"But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." We found that Tyre and Sidon still exist on the Mediterranean coast.

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought

down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." (Matt. 11:21-24.)

And then we remember that only prophets and angels had visited Sodom to call that people to repentance, but for these tri-cities the Creator, the Lord, the Christ had come in person and for nearly three years had dwelt among them and performed the miracles and taught the gospel. They had ignored and rejected him. (We cannot remember ever reading about any Church branches in these cities.) Sodom and Gomorrah went up in smoke "as the smoke of a furnace." If these cities were more rebellious than Tyre and Sidon, more corrupt than Sodom, and more wicked than Gomorrah, we think we understand.

We bathe our tired feet in the rippling waters of the shoreline. We look for remains of former cities. A few stones lapped by the water are rounded or squared. Could they have been a part of a synagogue, the home of Peter, the remains of a stone harbor, the walls of the centurion's place?

We move to the Jordan, the deepest ditch in the world, the liquid backbone of Palestine. "The river that goes down" is an appropriate name, for it descends in many streams from snow-covered Mt. Hermon in thousands of leaps and falls and gurgles to saunter through the valley of Hula and take a kind hospitable rest in the blue of Galilee. It tears and twists ever more swiftly downward in an almost incredibly sinuous manner from the sweet waters of the fountains and melting snow to the bitter dead waters of the salt sea, 2,500 feet lower.

This Jordan is not so unlike our own Jordan in this Salt Lake Valley. Squirming, twisting, burrowing madly, reversing, side to side, turning, writhing like a serpent, meandering like a lazy tide-water stream but in places pushing, hurrying swiftly down its circuitous way. It loops in quarter, half, and three quarter turns and travels two hundred miles of river in a sixty mile distance,

covered three to ten feet deep and ninety to one hundred feet wide. It flows swiftly, some of the way through its whirlpools, cascades, and winding through the jungle growth. And we are on its banks not many miles from where it spreads gently into the sea, where it also dies.

The Jordan—the famous Jordan! (We open our Bibles and read.) Across and beyond, not many miles is Mt. Pisgah. We fancy we see an old bearded man whose “eye was not dim nor his natural force abated.” He climbs the heights as commanded:

“Get thee up into the top of Pisgah,” said the Lord, “and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.” (Deut. 3:27.) It is a little land. Moses could see Mt. Hermon to the far north, the Mediterranean to the west, south and east to the deserts and the country in between. Miles are short unless one travels on foot or by donkey as did the Savior. From Dan to Beersheba he can see almost the whole of Palestine spread out before him like a huge elephant hide, wrinkled in hills and valleys and thicker and heavier on top and thinning at the edges where are the Jordan and the Mediterranean.

We fancy we can see the hordes of Israelites coming from the south, four decades earlier released from Egypt's thralldom. They come with their families and burdens to this river, too deep to ford. Moses has been left behind, but Joshua commands, and the Jordan dries as did the Red Sea before them. And Israel with their bundles, animals, burdens, flocks, and families crossed this winding muddy river to the promised land on which we stand. We turn westward. About three miles are Gilgal ruins, the first camp of Israel on the west. And a little farther is Jericho, the old and the new. The ancient one is in ruins and its tumbling walls, buried for ages, are now excavated. These crumbling walls fell when the ram horns of the people of Joshua rent the air and when the tramping of hordes of feet seemed to shake them. Beyond is the precipitous mountain between here and Jerusalem where, tradition

claims, is the Mount of Temptation, where the divine voice commanded, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

We are back on the banks of the Jordan where it is narrower and swifter. We fancy we see Elijah and Elisha cross the miraculously drained river bed. From here we see the towers of Jerusalem on the crest of the high western hills. The river still intrigues us. Abraham, Lot, and Jacob waded it; Joshua and Israel crossed it; its fords were fought over; it was a barrier against enemies and a hiding place for fugitives; in it the Syrian captain left his leprosy; here Elijah crossed dry shod, and here Elisha received Elijah's mantle. Here John preached, and here was the Lord baptized to fulfil all righteousness. We tread lightly, for this is sacred ground. We reabsorb the story as we read. We fancy we see in the muddy water two people and one is immersed. A holy voice speaks, and we hear impressive words, “This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

We climb the sharp hills to the west, reluctantly leaving the sacred spots made holy by the presence and works of the Master. Perhaps these very hills may be the ones in which he sought solitude so often as he climbed the mount apart.

Through grain fields, over hilly areas, and through the great valley of Jezreel, with a distance less than from Salt Lake City to Ogden, we come to Megiddo. Let us stand on this abrupt eminence, for from here we can see much of Galilee. This steep hill goes back near the beginning. History grew up here. Many civilizations have come and gone, and the debris tells scientists that the ruins of the 20th civilization is the one on which we tread. This is Megiddo or Armageddon—Megiddo, the ancient—Megiddo, the scene of mighty conflicts—“Battle Mountain,” it could be called. This hill has witnessed the caravans of traders for many centuries—caravans laden with treasures for trade around the fertile crescent and the East. This hill has seen armies of great nations, training, camping, fighting, bleeding—Egyptians, Assyrians, Canaanites, Israelites, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Crusaders, the Turks, and the British.

Saturday, April 8

Second Day

Soil here was fertilized with human bodies—soil here was drenched with human blood.

We climb the ramp walk on the farther side and pick gorgeous scarlet poppies as we climb. Did not the Savior say something about Solomon in all his glory not being arrayed like one of these?

Here Solomon stabled his horses and stored his chariots. Here are the excavated silo pits in which their barley and other feed was stored; here certainly were some of Solomon's "forty thousand stalls for horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen." (1 Kings 4:26.) Below us is the fertile, watered valley of Esdraelon, where grew the barley and the straw stored in the silos for the king's horses and dromedaries. His horses were prized ones, costing in Egypt 150 shekels of silver, and a chariot, four times the amount. They must have the best food and lodging. Below in the checkered valley grew the barley, the vegetables, the fruits, the grapes.

Beneath us is the brook Kishon. To our left is the Carmel range, and here was Elijah in his memorable contest with the priests of Baal. Mt. Carmel stones made the altar, Mt. Carmel wood was the fuel. Mt. Carmel saw the defeat and route of 400 idolatrous priests of Baal and the great triumph of the prophet of the God of Israel.

Across the little valley in a clump of green is Endor. Just those few miles away. Disguised King Saul and the witch of Endor were here. What consternation must have enveloped the perturbed Saul as he was told his army would be captured; he and his sons would be killed. The Lord could have walked here many times. It is near Nazareth.

A little to the right is Nain. We fancy we see the large crowd of people with the Master at the head walking into the little village. A funeral procession is en route to the cemetery, and they meet at the city's gate. A few minutes pass, and the mourners turn around and return to their homes. A miracle has happened—a dead man is now a living soul. The widow is overjoyed. The restored lad is speaking.

The Nazarene may have been acquainted with and sympathetic with this widow, for Nain is but a few miles from Nazareth. Across to the left is the rounded Mt. Tabor. It looks like a gigantic basketball with its lower seventy percent buried. It is wooded. We read our New Testament again. Here is reputed to be the Mount of Transfiguration. If that be true then up these steepening slopes walked the Lord with Peter, James, and John. There they would meet in conference with Moses and Elias, and three humble fishermen apostles would hear from the overshadowing cloud the voice of the Eternal Father in heaven introducing his Son Jesus Christ as his Beloved Son in whom he was well pleased; and here would Peter say: ". . . let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias," and here would unspeakable things be told and authority be given.

Beyond Tabor, not very far is Cana, the place of the miracle of the wedding feast. Jesus and his family might have been well acquainted in nearby Cana.

To the left of Tabor and across the valley of Jezreel, in the cup in the cluster of hills, is the boyhood home of the Savior. That is Nazareth toward the top of the long canyon draw, the city of gnarled olive trees and threshing floors. There are the old stone houses of the ages past. There are the caves in which he played, the hills he climbed, the places where he worked.

And this is Galilee, and in a glance we can see the haunts of Jesus' growing-up years and his ministry. He likely knew every hill and vale, every creek and valley. He surely knew many of the people, for distances were not great and people not too numerous. Here and in the plains below he must have learned the many lessons of his parables. Birds of the air, the foxes in their holes, the lilies of the valley, the olive press, the plow, the waving grain, the wine press, the watchmen towers. It would be from one of these sharp hills that his townspeople would have thrown him to death—perhaps the only inhabitant which would ever be prominent enough to be remembered by history. Perhaps in those very caves or tombs was he

able to escape from their fury to leave forever the city of his growing up.

We stand upon Mt. Olivet, the mile-long mountain above Jerusalem. It is a long, rugged way to its top, but the Lord must have climbed it numerous times. Behind the mount but a few short miles is Bethany where he visited his loved friends Mary and Martha and Lazarus whom he brought out of the tomb when four days dead by the single authoritative command, "Lazarus, come forth."

Below us is the Kidron Valley, deepening sharply down to the Pool of Siloam where the fountain water comes forth from the mountain on which the city stands. Here the blind man came to see, when he washed the clay and spittle from his eyelids in response to the command, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam."

Above are the high up, irregular city walls and within them the narrow streets, the cave-like shops, the dark passages, the wailing wall. Nearest us are the temple precincts, where the courts and towers were so important in those centuries when history was being made. Beyond is Golgotha, the place of the skull, the hill of crucifixion. There he suffered and bled and died. Not far from the mount is the garden tomb thought to be the sacred one where the lifeless body of the Redeemer lay, and immediately outside of it the garden into which he emerged from the tomb where he said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my father." (John 20:17.)

At the foot of this mount is Gethsemane where his sufferings were beyond all mortal comprehension. We climb this lofty Mount of Olives to its rounded top and stand on sacred ground. Here Christ's earthly ministry was completed; here the apostles gathered about him, saw the overshadowing cloud receive him out of their sight, and breathless, stood in awe and wonder as the angels said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11.)

To visit the places where such momentous happenings affected the eterni-

ties of us all was most interesting and intriguing and added color to our picture, but we did not need to walk through the Holy Land to know eternal truth.

We realized it is not so important to know whether Mt. Hermon or Mt. Tabor was the transfiguration place but to know that on the summit of a high mountain was held a great conference of mortal and immortal beings where unspeakable things were said and authoritative keys were delivered and approval was given of the life and works of his only Begotten Son when the voice of the Father in the overshadowing cloud said: "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 17:5.)

Not so important to know upon which great stone the Master leaned in agonizing decision-prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane, as to know that he did in that area conclude to accept voluntarily crucifixion for our sakes. Not so needful to know on which hill his cross was planted nor in what tomb his body lay nor in which garden he met Mary, but that he did hang in voluntary physical and mental agony; that his lifeless, bloodless body did lie in the tomb into the third day as prophesied, and above all that he did emerge a resurrected perfected one—the first fruits of all men in resurrection and the author of the gospel which could give eternal life to obedient man.

Not so important to know where he was born and died and resurrected but to know for a certainty that the Eternal, Living Father came to approve his Son in his baptism and later in his ministry, that the Son of God broke the bands of death and established the exaltation, the way of life, and that we may grow like him in knowledge and perfected eternal life. And this I know, and give my solemn witness, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

Tonight at seven o'clock the General