

unable to enter the building we announce that these services are being seen and heard in the Assembly Hall over television. This afternoon many radio stations throughout the western part of the United States will carry the proceedings of this session. Television stations in Utah, Idaho, Montana will also televise this concluding session. The proceedings of both sessions today will be rebroadcast to far distant places by radio station KSL Monday, October 7, from one o'clock to five o'clock a.m.

The General Priesthood Meeting, which was the fifth session of this Conference, was held in this Tabernacle, with an overflow meeting in the Assembly Hall. The proceedings of this Priesthood Meeting were relayed by closed circuit wire originating in the Tabernacle to members of the Priesthood assembled in 370 locations in all parts of the United States, including Alaska and Canada. It is estimated that 70,000 men and boys participated in this meeting by direct wire, in addition to the 12,000 present in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall.

We extend a cordial welcome to all present this afternoon—special guests, educational leaders, our stake presidencies from far and near, temple presidencies, bishoprics, members of General Auxiliary Boards, and members of the Church and friends everywhere who are listening in by radio and television.

The music for this session will be

rendered by the Tabernacle Choir, with Richard P. Condie and Jay E. Welch conducting. Alexander Schreiner is at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Lovely Appear," with Brother Jay E. Welch conducting. The invocation will be offered by Elder Ruder G. Smith, president of the Phoenix North Stake.

The Tabernacle Choir sang as an opening number, "Lovely Appear," conducted by Jay E. Welch.

Elder Ruder G. Smith, president of the Phoenix North Stake, offered the invocation.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation was offered by President Ruder G. Smith of the Phoenix North Stake. The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Lord, Hear Our Supplication," conducted by Richard P. Condie. After the singing Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will address us.

Selection by the Choir, "Lord, Hear Our Supplication."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder ElRay L. Christiansen.

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brothers and sisters and friends:

Because of disturbing trends and alarming conditions in this country of ours which are of great concern to every loyal, patriotic citizen, I desire to draw related analogies between the nation of ancient Israel and our own nation in the light of the revelations of Almighty God concerning both nations.

To each nation, God gave promises of blessings or cursings, depending upon the faithfulness of the people. In all the recorded history of man upon the

earth, the God of heaven has established only two nations with basic divine purposes. One is the nation of Israel which the Lord by his mighty power led out of Egypt under the guidance of his prophet Moses.

The other nation is the United States of America. Prophets in early times foretold the events leading to the establishment of this mighty gentile nation and its promised destiny among the nations of the earth—if its people are

faithful in keeping the commandments of God.

Moses counseled the newborn nation of Israel to serve the Lord and to keep his laws and statutes. He informed them of God's plans and purposes concerning his chosen people and also outlined his promises for faithful obedience to his laws and commandments and the cursings which would befall them if they became disobedient and sinful.

From Deuteronomy, I quote the following teachings and admonitions of Moses to the children of Israel:

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, . . .

"And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way . . . to go after other gods, which ye have not known." (Deut. 11:26-28.)

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

"And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; . . ." (*Ibid.*, 28:1, 13.)

Regardless of the many prophets, Israel was periodically blessed with following the death of the great lawgiver, Moses, the continued disobedience and the contentions among its tribes not only divided them as a people but also destroyed them as a nation; and true to his warning, God scattered Israel among all the nations of the earth.

With these few pronouncements of God to Israel in mind, I turn to the second nation of destiny, the United States of America—a nation established by God in these latter days in fulfillment of prophecy, with wonderful promises for obedience to the commandments of the Lord and cursings if it fails to keep his commandments.

There were two groups of people before the time of Christ who were led away from eastern lands by the Lord to the Americas, and they became, in

time, quite numerous. Eventually, however, because of disobedience and wickedness, they were destroyed, except a remnant of the second group who are the progenitors of the American Indian. These two migrations of people to the Americas received knowledge by revelation through their prophets concerning a powerful gentile nation which was to be established in the latter days upon this land by the hand of God.

Now let us briefly examine the revelations and prophecies as recorded in the Book of Mormon, foretelling America's discovery, its peopling from the European gentile nations, the events leading to the break with Great Britain, the Revolutionary War which secured independence for the colonies from the tyranny of oppression of an unjust king and nation. An angel showed to Nephi, an American prophet who lived about six hundred years before Christ, the many waters which separated the gentile nations from the seed of his brethren. He recorded this vision as follows:

"And it came to pass that the angel said unto me: Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren.

"And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and . . . the Spirit of God . . . came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.

"And . . . I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters.

"And . . . I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise; . . .

"And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance; . . .

"And . . . the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them.

"And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the

waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them.

"And I beheld that the power of God was with them, and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle.

"And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations.

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; . . ." (1 Nephi 13:11-20.)

From your knowledge of early American history, you will recognize Columbus as the man who went forth upon the many waters and discovered the Americas. The other facts of this prophecy and its fulfillment are also known to you from America's recorded history. This same prophet, speaking of the house of Israel being scattered and confounded, predicted:

". . . that the Lord God will raise up a mighty nation among the Gentiles, yea, even upon the face of this land; . . ." (*Ibid.*, 22:7.)

Lehi, the father of Nephi, and himself a prophet, speaking to his descendants and followers, declared that the land of America is a land of promise, choice above all other lands.

"Wherefore, I, Lehi, prophesy according to the workings of the Spirit which is in me, *that there shall none come into this land save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord.*

"Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever." (2 Nephi 1:6-7. Italics added.)

Jacob, the brother of Nephi, in an inspirational discourse to his people, reaffirmed the Lord's promises to the gentiles upon this land. He declared:

". . . the promises of the Lord are great unto the Gentiles, . . .

". . . and the Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land.

"And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles.

"And I will fortify this land against all other nations." (*Ibid.*, 10:9-12.)

During the Savior's visit to the Nephites in the Americas after his resurrection and ascension to glory, he, speaking of the gentiles upon this land, promised that he would pour out the Holy Ghost upon the gentiles, "*which blessing upon the Gentiles shall make them mighty above all. . .*" (3 Nephi 20:27. Italics added.)

When God confounded the language of the people at the tower of Babel, he separated a group known as the Jaredites, and under the direction of a prophet, led them to the land of the Americas. He revealed to this ancient prophet:

"Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, *if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.*" (Ether 2:12. Italics added.)

The Lord also emphasized to this early prophet that whatsoever nation shall possess this land of promise shall serve God or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity. "This," said the prophet, "is an everlasting decree of God." (*Ibid.*, 2:8-10.)

Thus, from ancient American prophets, we learn that this United States of America was established by God for a divine purpose, and that great blessings, which all must admit, as we review the history of this nation, have so far been literally fulfilled; yet the fulfillment of future promise of blessings is conditional upon the continued righteousness of its people. A great challenge is presented to the citizens of this land if God is to be on our side and give us power as a nation to overcome our

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enemies and not be brought down into captivity.

This nation did not come into being by chance. God declared that the gentiles who came here were to be brought out of captivity by his hand. The prophecies previously quoted concerning the establishment of this nation have been fulfilled to the letter. The people coming here in the beginning did so to find religious freedom. Nevertheless, they were subjected to tyrannical rule, unjust demands, and no representation. They had lost the opportunities, the privileges, the religious freedom and liberty which impelled them to settle in this new land. The colonists became an aroused group because of oppression; therefore, the time had arrived in the economy of God for the people to break off the yoke of domination which subjected them to these unjust and intolerable conditions. The Lord, knowing beforehand the events which would set the pattern for independence, raised up strong and valiant men to meet this hour of crisis and challenge. The Declaration of Independence came from a determined people. The successful Revolutionary War which followed united the colonies; and the gentile nation of destiny and of divine purpose, as foretold by the prophets, was born. A Constitution was needed to set forth the purposes, obligations, and the guide lines for the new nation. God was prepared and ready and did not neglect this newborn nation which he had ordained to be established thousands of years previously.

I now turn to latter-day scripture to substantiate this statement, which revelations are not only important for Latter-day Saints to know and understand, but also for the entire citizenry of this favored country. The Lord, through the Prophet Joseph Smith in December of 1833, counseled in the midst of their afflictions that "the Saints should continue to importune for redress, and redemption, by the hands of those who are placed as rulers and are in authority over you—

"According to the laws and constitution of the people, which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of

all flesh, according to just and holy principles;

"That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.

"Therefore, it is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another.

"And for this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and deemed the land by the shedding of blood." (D&C 101:77-80.)

God gave the men chosen to formulate the Constitution the inspiration of heaven to guide them. It becomes, therefore, an enduring document for this nation. It is not the prerogative of man to change its basic and fundamental principles and concepts.

The dynamic statesman, Daniel Webster, in his last public address before the New York Historical Society in 1852, said:

"Unborn ages and visions of glory crowd upon my soul, the realization of all which, however, is in the hands and good pleasure of Almighty God; but, under His divine blessing, it will be dependent on the character and the virtues of ourselves, and of our posterity.

"And let me say, gentlemen, that if we and our posterity shall be true to the Christian religion—if we and they shall live always in the fear of God, and shall respect His commandments—if we and they shall maintain just, moral sentiments, and such conscientious convictions of duty as shall control the heart and life—we may have the highest hopes of the future fortunes of our country, and if we maintain those institutions of government and that political union, exceeding all praise as much as it exceeds all former examples of political associations, we may be sure of one thing—that, while our country furnishes materials for a thousand masters of historic art, it will afford no topic for a Gibbon. It will have no decline and fall. It will go on prospering and to prosper.

"But if we and our posterity reject

religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden the catastrophe may overwhelm us, that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity."

How applicable today are these splendid sentiments and warnings by this valiant statesman and patriot!

When God established the nation of Israel, he gave them the Ten Commandments, written on tablets of stone by his own finger. Man, through the centuries, has not altered or changed the Ten Commandments. The Constitution of this nation was not written on tablets of stone like unto Israel, but wise men were raised up and inspired for the important task of writing a constitution of government which guaranteed the God-given rights of free men.

In the revelation to Joseph Smith previously quoted, he was told that the Constitution should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles, that it is not right for man to be in bondage one to another. It guarantees what God has always bestowed upon his children—the rights, privileges, and honor of a free people. So important is this latter-day gentile nation established by God that he required the land to be redeemed by the shedding of blood. The blood of the Revolutionary patriots was freely spilled upon the field of battle to insure independence and to redeem the land and make it sacred to those who possessed it. When the North and South became divided over state rights which included slavery, it was most important in the plan for this nation that it remain united and strong. Only by so doing could the nation fulfill its destiny and God's purposes and work. The Civil War resulted in the death and misery of many souls, and thus for the second time the land was redeemed by the shedding of blood.

Truly, God rules in the affairs of men and nations. This nation has always been a beacon light to the world, exemplifying the principles of democracy, freedom, opportunity, achievement,

and happiness. It now wields tremendous influence and power in the affairs of men and will continue to do so according to the promise of God as long as the people of the land serve the God of the land who is Jesus Christ.

The Constitution made provision for an expanded nation, but the founding fathers and God had no thought of changing or altering its basic principles, rules, and concepts.

President Woodrow Wilson defined the Constitution of the United States as "Not being a mere lawyer's document. It is," said he, "a vehicle of life, and its spirit is always the spirit of the age. The explicitly granted powers of the Constitution are what they always were; but the powers drawn from it by implication have grown and multiplied beyond all expectation."

To interpret this valued document understandingly, we need to remember the conditions and circumstances which confronted the founding fathers, who, under the inspiration of the Lord, brought this wonderful instrument of government into being. So important was God's will respecting this nation as revealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet, that in his prayer offered at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, he included this appeal to Almighty God:

"Have mercy, O Lord, upon all the nations of the earth; have mercy upon the rulers of our land; may those principles, which were so honorably and nobly defended, namely, the Constitution of our land, by our fathers, be established forever." (D&C 109:54.)

With the knowledge of God's declaration that the Constitution of this land is inspired of him, it behooves every citizen to analyze the meaning, importance, and significance of this profound document and give loyal support to its spirit and purpose. We cannot afford to become complacent, forsake vigilance, and thus lose the benefits of the Lord's promise of blessings upon the people of this goodly land. Also, we must see to it that the principles, the standards, the ideals, the rights, the privileges, and the protection guaranteed by the Constitution are upheld by those who represent us in the executive,

legislative, and judicial branches of government.

A wise and understanding God had all this in mind when he gave the following revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith in August 1833:

"And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me.

"Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land;

"And as pertaining to law of man, whatsoever is more or less than this, cometh of evil.

"I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free.

"Nevertheless, when the wicked rule the people mourn.

"Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil." (*Ibid.*, 98:5-10.)

If wickedness prevails and wicked men rule, then we will be as other nations. We will stand alone without the guiding influence and power of God to sustain us in time of trouble and in meeting the challenge and threat of internal and external Satanic ideologies, also the evil designs and intrigues of men and nations.

I quote from a talk given by National Commander James E. Powers of the American Legion which appeared in the *American Legion* magazine of September 1963:

"America's deepest roots are spiritual. This is the most important historical fact of American life. To ignore it is to miss the essence of the heritage, the character, and the destiny of the American people. Today, with international and domestic tension tightening, I believe it is well that we see clearly the spiritual core of that creed. . . . The American colonies and nation were established in turn by men and women

who acknowledged openly their reliance upon almighty God."

Continued righteousness and dependence upon God therefor are the only guarantees we have for the constant enjoyment of his blessings upon us, for he has warned: ". . . my law shall be kept on this land." (D&C 58:19.)

The Constitution of the United States is to this gentile nation what the Ten Commandments were and still are to the nation of Israel.

What a strength and comfort it would be to the people of this land for God to fight for this nation if the need arises as he fought for Israel during their struggle to build and maintain a nation. However, Israel's persistence in disobedience and wickedness destroyed them as a nation. This fact stands as a warning to us. What happened to the nation of Israel can happen to this nation also if we as a people in this chosen land fail to obey the laws and the counsels of God. It will be profitable to all of us in the light of the promises and warnings to this nation to read again the biblical history of the nation of Israel. It will help us avoid the pitfalls which befell them.

I earnestly pray that we shall always stand firm and steadfast and immovable in upholding and sustaining the Constitution of this favored land. May we also selectively and wisely choose those who are equally valiant and patriotic to represent us in the top echelons of government—men who are upright, honest, and willing to keep the commandments of God in their personal lives.

These truths and considerations I bear humble witness and testimony to in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder Delbert L. Stapley, who recently was hospitalized. We are glad he is able to be with us and give us that fine discourse.

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. Elder Christiansen will be followed by Elder Antoine R. Ivins.