

Friday, September 30

First Day

party at midnight, or that they may not have the car, or that such tight clothes must not be worn, or that dresses are too short, or that the allowance this month cannot be increased, or that the lawn must be cut on Saturday, the reply of the children should be "we'll obey." The Lord didn't give Adam a reason, Children should not expect reasons from parents, although most parents are glad to tell their children the reasons.

I marvel at the meticulous care with which the Lord conducts his affairs in obedience to the laws he himself establishes:

Remember the night of September 21, 1823, when Joseph Smith was visited three times by Moroni, and how the next day Joseph, feeling ill, was sent home to rest. He crossed the fence and fainted. As he regained consciousness, there once more stood Moroni, who told him to go to his father and tell him all that had transpired. Why? For many reasons, one of which was that he had told Joseph to go to the Hill Cumorah. Joseph could not in righteousness leave that farm without his father's permission. That was the law. Generally it was enforced. So to leave the farm and go to the hill, Joseph had to obtain the approbation of his father. Upon completion of his account of what had happened, the father told him that this was of God and to obey.

I do not recall a single time that Joseph asked permission of his father

to perform any act after he was 21. Until that time he was completely obedient.

It is so with you and me and with our children. Let us, who are fathers, be engaged in the business of rearing children, teaching them the law of obedience to parents.

Obey the law of God

Let children learn this law of God as a commandment to be obeyed. Let us also teach them that this is the great restoration of the gospel promised by ancient prophets. Let us teach them that obedience to their parents, and to those who preside over them, from the quorum leader to the president of the Church, is the foundation of their future success in this world and their exaltation in the world to come.

These are the last days. This is the last time. Through President McKay as prophet, seer, and revelator we may hear the inspired word of the Lord God if we will but listen and obey. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder William J. Critchlow, Assistant to the Twelve.

Brother Critchlow.

Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr.

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

I have several storiottes to tell. A storiotte is a brief story or tale. Mine are not tales. They are true stories greatly condensed and I employ them to make a point that I hope you will discover before I disclose it later on.

Finding of Dead Sea Scrolls

Storiotte #1: Less than a score of years ago, a 15-year-old Bedouin lad, tending a flock of goats in the desert on the western coast of the Dead Sea, threw a stone at a straying goat. The

stone missed its target and fell into a cleft in a rocky cliff. He heard something break. Climbing up to investigate, he found a cave filled with clay jars, one of which lay shattered by his stone. In the shattered jar were seven relatively intact Hebrew scrolls. These old documents provide scientific and historical information covering a period of approximately 250 years, dating from about 150 B.C. to about 100 A.D., a period about which very little is known. These scrolls, along with fragments of other scrolls

since discovered, may, when fully translated, be worth their weight many, many times in gold. Scholars have predicted that their message will shake the faith of Christians all over the world.

Reveal faith and ancient rites

Storiette #2: These scrolls tell about a community of Hebrew people who lived near the shores of the Dead Sea, and who, prior to the birth of the Savior, believed, practiced, and taught doctrines and ordinances that also were a fundamental part of the teachings Christ taught a hundred or so years later. They had set up a religious organization similar to the one created years later by Jesus and his disciples. Presiding over it were 12 laymen and three priests. Functioning in it were bishops, priests, teachers, and deacons. "They practiced baptism by immersion.

"They conducted their communal meal in a form similar to the Christian Sacrament.

"They taught brotherly love.

"They believed in the coming of a prophet or Messiah.

"They accepted the possibility of direct revelation.

"They had joined in a new covenant.

"They believed they belonged to a chosen people and practiced a form of communal living much as did the first Christians during the lifetime and soon after the crucifixion and resurrection of the Savior." (O. Preston Robinson, *How Old Is Christ's Gospel* [Deseret Book Company, 1963], p. 8.)

Essenes

The historian Josephus called these people the Essenes. Another name for them is the Dead Sea covenantors. They were Hebrew people of the Qumran period who, as you have just heard, practiced Christian principles and Christian ordinances years before Jesus came to earth. Shocking? Well, to Christian people who generally believe that Jesus initiated and introduced these principles and ordinances at his coming, years later, I suppose it is.

It is possible, thinks Dr. Yigael Yadin, a Hebrew scholar, that these people became converts when Christ appeared. "Who," he asks, "among all Hebrew people, were better prospects for conversion than they, whose teachings and ordinances were so similar to the Christ's?" Later, in the days of the Apostle Paul, when the people were slipping back to some of their original pre-Christ practices, Dr. Yadin suggests that it was to them that the Apostle Paul addressed his epistle to the Hebrews.

A scroll tells of Abraham

Storiette #3: One of the Dead Sea scrolls, still only partially translated, contains a bit of history purportedly written by Abraham. Unlike the Book of Genesis story, Abraham tells in the first person how he was called by the Lord to go into Egypt and how in a dream he was instructed to tell the Egyptians that Sarah, his wife, was his sister. Abraham also tells how, by the laying on of hands—a gospel ordinance—Pharaoh was healed of an affliction that had come upon him when he had taken Sarah away from Abraham. Pharaoh asked for this blessing, obviously knowing that his own priests were without priesthood power. He undoubtedly knew, too, that an earlier pharaoh had sought the priesthood, and he certainly knew why it was denied him. But more about Abraham later in another storiette.

Lebolo-Chandler scrolls about Abraham

My next storiette involves a Frenchman by the name of Antonio Sebolo. About 135 years ago, while excavating in ancient catacombs in Egypt, he uncovered 11 well-preserved mummies which, because of their meticulous and expensive embalming, were thought to be persons of royalty. On his way to France with these mummies, he died. His will left them to a nephew, Michael H. Chandler, who received them at the port of New York. Bound to the chest of one of the mummies was something enclosed in tidy linen wrappings. If Mr. Chandler

expected to find therein gold, silver, diamonds, or other precious stones, he must have been sadly disappointed when he removed the wrappings and found instead two well-preserved papyrus scrolls. He never suspected them to be very valuable; otherwise he would not have sold them, along with four of the mummies, to friends of Joseph Smith, the American prophet, for a rather modest but undisclosed sum of money. Before selling them to Joseph Smith's friends, he exhibited them throughout the North-eastern States, where thousands of people viewed them.

Ancient writings translated as Pearl of Great Price

The Prophet Joseph Smith subsequently translated the Egyptian characters on one of these scrolls and found them to be a fascinating first person, historical account of Father Abraham's activities, including his visit to Egypt.

Unlike the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, which was heralded in newspaper headlines and in radio broadcasts throughout the world, this discovery by Joseph Smith received practically no publicity. It deserved news headlines. Its message, like the message of the Dead Sea scrolls, could also shake the faith of Christians throughout the world. A basic, hard-core Christian concept may crumble under the impact of its message if it ever receives the same consideration and acceptance now being accorded the Dead Sea scrolls. But more about that concept when I finish my story about the Egyptian scroll.

An account in the Egyptian scroll discovered by Sebolo parallels incidents in Abraham's life, as related in the recently discovered Dead Sea scrolls. It thus confirms the Dead Sea scroll story. Conversely, the Dead Sea scroll story confirms the Egyptian scroll story.

The Egyptian scroll reveals to the world the eternalness of the gospel.

It reveals to the world a knowledge of our eternal existence.

It tells about the grand council of the gods in heaven before the earth was peopled.

It tells about the presentation of the gospel plan to his spirit children before they came to earth.

It tells about the selection of Jesus to be the administrator of the gospel plan on earth, the purveyor of the gospel throughout the world, from Adam on down.

It discloses Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

It tells how one (Lucifer) rejected the gospel plan in that council of the gods.

It discloses the gospel to have had its origin before the foundations of the earth were laid, and it thus confirms again the Dead Sea scroll story or exposé, i.e., principles of Christ's gospel, his teachings, and some of the ordinances were on the earth before Christ came in the flesh.

We have been told that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." (2 Cor. 13:1.)

Two witnesses to the fact that the gospel is eternal are: (1) the Egyptian scroll (Pearl of Great Price) and (2) the Dead Sea scrolls.

Related scripture and other writings

We have additional witnesses which scholars, delving the scrolls, ought to examine:

The story on the golden plates (Book of Mormon) is a third and most impressive witness.

The writings of Moses contained in the Pearl of Great Price is a fourth and very special witness.

The Doctrine and Covenants adds a wealth of persuasive evidence that the gospel is eternal, that Jesus is the Son of God.

Furthermore, every Bible student knows that prophets foretold the Savior's coming and testified that he was the Son of God and that his gospel was for everyone. The "Jewish Talmud makes it plain that baptism," a gospel ordinance, "was required for admission to the Church." (Dr. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. 2, p. 745.) Other ancient writings, such as the books of the Apocrypha, excluded from the Bible, provide evidence that a messiah would come to bring his gos-

pel, even the same gospel that had been taught to Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others.

Why, then—in the face of all this historical evidence to the fact that much of what we now know as Christianity was taught and practiced by prophets, religious teachers, and religious groups prior to the advent of Jesus on the earth—is it that this knowledge was not, and presently is not, widespread among the lay members of Christian churches?

Dr. R. H. Charles, an eminent scholar and writer on ancient Hebrew history, believes that some of the books rejected as scripture “fell under the ban of such authorities as Hilary, Jerome and Augustine,” who, he thinks, were concerned about their contents. “These three men . . . exerted a tremendous influence on what was accepted or rejected as scripture, [and] were probably disturbed about the Christian doctrine that some of these books taught long before the time of the Savior. Having no knowledge of the eternal nature of the gospel and of Christ’s authorship of it before this world was organized, . . . [they] could have feared that the Christian nature of these books would disturb the faith of lay church members” and they therefore suppressed them. (Robinson, *How Old Is Christ’s Gospel*, p. 36.) The Christian concept today is exactly what it was in their day, namely, the gospel was initiated and first introduced to the world by Jesus at his coming nearly 2,000 years ago.

Parables

I began this address by promising storiottes that I said would develop a point. Jesus employed storiottes to develop a point, usually a moral. His storiottes are called parables. A parable is a fictitious story. My storiottes are true, and the point I promised to make is, I hope, by now obvious. Simply, it is this: Jesus came in the flesh not to initiate and introduce his gospel but to restore it. The gospel of Jesus Christ is eternal.

Provoking this talk were the radio remarks of a Protestant minister who said that there were two basic, hard-core concepts common to and charac-

teristic of all Christian creeds or churches. One, he said, is a “belief in a God to whom no physical characteristics can be ascribed”; the other, a belief that Jesus came to earth to introduce and “establish his gospel” and that the Christian churches are agencies to promote it.

I wish I had time now to discuss his God concept. I’ve already said enough about the other concept—introducing and establishing the gospel—to make my point.

Effects of Dead Sea Scrolls

The impact of the message of the Dead Sea scrolls upon the Christian churches could be, as I said before, faith-shaking. To support that statement, I submit to you comments by eminent scholars.

One said: “Christianity, we must now see, instead of being a faith once for all delivered to the Saints in the Judea of the First Century, is a development of one branch of Judaism into a religion which presently, when mingled with other religions in the gentile world, developed by natural evolution into the religious system . . . that we know today. . . . Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Taoism—all high religions, no matter what their claims—have grown in natural ways.” (A. Powell Davies, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 120, 131.)

Another eminent scholar has written: “Surely with the evidence at hand, any fair-minded Christian should admit that Jesus was not a miraculous incarnation of a Son of God, pre-existent in the heavens and sent to earth as the long awaited Messiah. . . . The [Dead Sea] scrolls . . . [restore] the man Jesus to the world as a great teacher who learned from Hebrew prophets, from the Essene teachers, from the great thinkers of the Greek Alexandrian cultures of his time. He thought it all over and created his own message from the best of all he had studied, and finally dramatized it as the suffering servant, Savior, Son of Man.” (Dr. Charles Francis Potter, *The Lost Years of Jesus Revealed*, p. 11.)

Another scholar declared the scrolls

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to be "medieval forgeries." (*Newsweek*, June 15, 1966, p. 67.) Still another scholar suggests that they don't make sense. "Actually they make very good sense, but it is a sense quite contrary to conventional ideas of Judaism and Christianity." (Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, [Deseret Book Company, 1964], p. 64.)

Repudiating the scrolls is one way of preserving that dominant hard-core Christian concept that my radio friend said was common to, and characteristic of, all Christian churches. But truth crushed to earth shall rise again.

Our own O. Preston Robinson sums up the reaction of these scholars as follows:

"Faced with the overwhelming evidence of the Gospel's antiquity and bereft of a knowledge of Christ's original authorship of it, these scholars flounder in uncertainty and can only conclude that Christ was a great teacher, an imitator, but not in reality the Son of God. If Jesus was nothing more than a clever teacher utilizing the ideas and principles promulgated by others before him, he would necessarily have been one of the world's most deceptive frauds." (*How Old Is Christ's Gospel?* p. 5.)

Evaluate the whole, not part only

My personal reaction is this: If these floundering scroll scholars, if these confused Christian leaders would take time out to examine the other witnesses that I have cited, particularly the Book of Mormon, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants, they could help a frus-

trated church membership restore Jesus Christ to the status of a Son of God, the very Savior of all mankind. He did come in the flesh, nearly 2,000 years ago, to restore his gospel which, after his death and the death of his apostles, was lost to the world. But, thanks to a merciful God, it has been restored again in this latter day through the great American Prophet Joseph Smith. To this I bear my humble witness, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

I might say to President McKay, who is listening in, that the voting is unanimously in the affirmative.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., Assistant to the Twelve, has just addressed us.

The congregation and the Samoan chorus will now join in singing, "Oh Say What is Truth." After the singing Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, will speak to us.

Singing: "O Say What is Truth"
—Congregation and Oahu Samoan Choir.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Burton.

Elder Theodore M. Burton
Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

Temples among ancient Israelites

Among the ancient Israelites, the temple of God was the pivotal point around which the whole nation revolved. This building was considered to be the house of the Lord and was made as beautiful as man could make it, for it was to be a place to which

God could come on the earth to reveal his will to his prophet. Thus, to be near the temple was a blessing, and to go into it was a great privilege. However, not all the people were permitted to go into the temple. This right was limited only to the priests, and only the high priest could go into the inner court. There were un-