

hear my voice this day, that John the Baptist actually and literally did appear to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and conferred upon them the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood. If parents, leaders, and holders of this priesthood will recognize it for what it truly is, and if our young men will make themselves acquainted with him who stands at the head and emulate his life, a mighty and great generation

of leaders will come forth. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President N. Eldon Tanner

We have just listened to Victor L. Brown of the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy will now address us, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing, "O Lord Most Holy."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Of the First Council of the Seventy

● I desire very much to be directed by the Spirit, because I know that when a man speaks by the power of the Holy Ghost, that holy being carries the word of truth into the heart of every receptive soul.

Message of the gospel

We are servants of the Lord, and he has sent us into the world to say to every creature: "God has a message for you," and then to deliver that message in his name.

The message he has given us to proclaim in the ears of all who dwell upon the earth is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the plan of salvation. It is that Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. It is a message of peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.

This message comprises the most sobering and glorious truths of which the human mind can conceive. It is a voice of joy and gladness and thanksgiving; of glory and honor; of immortality and eternal life. And it is destined to make of this earth, a heaven; and of man, a god.

Known to the apostles and prophets of old, this glorious message was first revealed in modern times to the Prophet Joseph Smith and has since been planted in the hearts of all the true servants of the Lord by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Proclaim saving truths

And so now, obedient to the divine command, we proclaim the saving truths of the gospel, not in the spirit of contention or debate, but by way of announcement, of exhortation, and of testimony.

We are bold to say that there is a God in heaven, an infinite and holy being who is our Eternal Father and whose offspring we are in the spirit; that he ordained the plan of salvation whereby we, his spirit children, might advance and progress and become like him; that he chose his First-born in the spirit to be the Savior and Redeemer in his great plan of salvation; and that ever thereafter, to honor its chief advocate and exponent, this plan of salvation has been known as the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Salvation in Christ

We testify that according to the terms and conditions of God's eternal plan, salvation is in Christ. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world whose blood atoneth for the sins of all those who believe in his name.

In the words of a holy angel who ministered to a Book of Mormon prophet: ". . . there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent." (Mosiah 3:17.)

Also: "... salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent." (Mosiah 3:18.)

In pleading with men to believe in Christ and be reconciled to God so as to gain a remission of their sins, Nephi said: "... we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, . . . [for] the right way is to believe in Christ, and deny him not; and Christ is the Holy One of Israel; wherefore ye must bow down before him, and worship him with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul; and if ye do this ye shall in nowise be cast out." (2 Ne. 25:26, 29.)

Extol his holy name

Thus we are bold to extol his holy name, to proclaim that he is the Lord Jehovah, the Great I Am, the Creator of heaven and earth and all things which in them are. And thus we testify that he is the God of Israel, the promised Messiah, the Only Begotten, the Son of God.

Our proclamation is that he came into the world to ransom men from the temporal and spiritual death brought upon them through the fall of Adam; that he was born of Mary, inheriting from her the power of mortality, which is the power to die; that he is literally the Son of God, in the same sense in which all men are the offspring of mortal fathers; and that he inherited from his Father the power of immortality, which is the power to live.

Infinite atonement

We know that because he is the Only Begotten in the flesh, he was able to work out the infinite and eternal atonement, whereby all men are raised in immortality, which is redemption from the temporal fall, while those who believe and obey his laws are raised also unto eternal life, which is redemption from the spiritual fall.

Now we join with Peter and Paul and his servants of old in announcing that he is risen; that he broke the bands of death and gained the victory over the grave—which thing they knew be-

cause they saw him after the resurrection, ate with him, felt the nail marks in his hands and feet, and thrust their hands into the spear wound in his side; and which thing we know because he has returned to earth in our day, manifesting himself anew to modern prophets, and because the Holy Spirit of God bears witness to us that he is the risen Lord.

Testimony of ancient prophets

We accept without reservation the testimony of the ancient prophets that after their day there would be a falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints; as also their prophecies that God, by angelic ministration, would restore the everlasting gospel in the last days and gather scattered Israel to its standard.

And we now add to their testimony our witness that God has in these last days restored those truths by obedience to which salvation may be won.

We are one with the ancients in our belief in Christ. We accept him as the Son of God, as the Savior and Redeemer of the world. We are grateful that he has seen fit to add to the canon of holy scripture, revealing anew, with a plainness and perfection which surpass the record of old, those things which men must do to be justified through faith in him and to work out their salvation with fear and trembling before him.

We believe the witness born by the Lord's servants of old and gain great satisfaction from studying and pondering in our hearts the doctrines they taught and the testimonies they bore as these are recorded in the Bible.

But the fire of testimony which burns in our hearts was not lighted at ancient altars, nor is the knowledge we have of the doctrines of salvation based solely upon the partial and fragmentary accounts of what God revealed to men in ancient days.

The ancient saints had the gospel, which is the power that saves men, and they recorded many of its truths in their scriptures. The world today has the record of part of what the saints of old possessed.

The gospel restored again

But thanks be to God, we have the gospel, with all its saving power, restored again. God has given us the same doctrines, the same keys, and also the same powers possessed by those of old. All these things have been dispensed anew in this final, glorious gospel dispensation.

I shall call your attention to three heavenly visions which are part of this restoration of the gospel:

First: In the spring of 1820, Joseph Smith sought wisdom from God. In the providences of the Lord, he then received one of the most marvelous visions of all time, which he recorded in these words:

"... I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"... I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith 2:16-17.)

Second: Nearly twelve years later, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon "beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father," together with a great concourse of "holy angels," and recorded their testimony in these words:

"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." (D&C 76:20-23.)

Third: In April 1836, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw the Lord of heaven, of which this is the scriptural account:

"The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

"We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father." (D&C 110:1-4.)

Visions real and true

Now, as servants of the Lord, we announce and testify that these three visions were as real and true as any ever received by any prophet in any age.

There is no room for contention or debate. We are not quoting the Bible to prove what happened any more than Peter turned to the writings of Isaiah to prove he had felt the nail marks in the hands and feet of the risen Lord. We are saying with words of soberness that men in our day have heard the voice of God and seen the visions of eternity, and that the power of God whereby salvation comes is once more held by living apostles and prophets.

And all men everywhere have exactly the same obligation to heed and believe our testimony as men had in former days to accept the witness of the prophets of old.

Knowledge by personal revelation

The issue in Peter's day was: Did Christ rise from the dead? If so, he was the Son of God, and the religion of the ancient saints had saving power. To prove their message, the Lord's ancient servants reasoned out of the scriptures and bore testimony of what they knew by personal revelation.

The issue today is: Was Joseph Smith called of God? If so, the religion of the Latter-day Saints has saving power. And to prove our message, like our brethren of old, we reason out of the scriptures and bear testimony of what we know by personal revelation.

And so we testify that the Holy Ghost certifies to us that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God; that

Joseph Smith is the great latter-day prophet through whom the knowledge of Christ and of salvation was restored; and that this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in very deed the kingdom of God on earth, the one place where men may come to find peace in this life and become inheritors of eternal glory in the life to come.

We are servants of the Lord, and he has commanded us to proclaim his gospel message to all men. And of that message we now testify that as our Lord and our God liveth, it is true. In

the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

Following Elder McConkie's sermon, the Tabernacle Choir sang the anthem, "O Lord Most Holy."

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Of the Council of the Twelve

● We live in an interesting period of the history of mankind. The slow pace of man's progress from the beginning gradually commenced to accelerate and gain speed. Today we find advancement moving at such increased momentum that we are often frightened by the thoughts of the future. Man takes pride in the rapid strides of science that have created conveniences for his everyday living. His health has been improved by the progress of medicine, and his life-span has been extended. Sweeping reforms in many areas of society have enhanced his well-being. Business and industry are moving forward at a pace never before known, and this generation has the highest standard of living ever enjoyed by man. We are proud to be living in a modern world of achievement.

Progress brings concern

Will all of this spiraling progress be good for man in the years that lie ahead? Will it be beneficial in every respect to our children and grandchildren? We would agree, no doubt, that many things give us concern. What of the future of the family and home life, which in past generations have been great stabilizing forces in society? What of the solidarity of community and national life? What of the future of our economy, as the con-

sequence of inflation and increased debt? What of the modern course of deterioration of morality and its effect upon individuals, families, nations, and the world? We are forced to admit that what we term as progress brings with it many consequences of serious concern.

We are entering into, or going through, a period of history in which so-called modern thought is taking precedence in the minds of many persons who classify themselves as advocates of a modern generation. The more extreme of these lean toward free thinking and free action without assuming the responsibility men owe to fellowmen. Where will we be led if we follow those who advocate freedom of use of drugs and freedom of morality? What will be the result of universal free love, abortions at will, homosexuality, or legalized pornography?

Modern criticism

What of spiritual values and the religious ideals of past generations, which have been the great stabilizing influence on society? Modern thinkers claim these have been the great deterrents to man in the freedoms he now seeks. There is a great effort on the part of so-called modernists to change religious beliefs and teachings of the