

Sunday, April 7

Third Day

President Kimball

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this the sixth session of the

144th Annual Conference of the Church.

We shall now hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Of the Council of the Twelve

Thank you, President. This is a general conference in which I find my emotions very close to the surface. I have just been sustained by a vote of the membership of the Church to a position which is overwhelming. I hope under the circumstances it is permissible to be a little personal as I speak this morning.

Respect for General Authorities

I was reared in a home in which the children were taught great love and respect for the General Authorities of the Church. I remember as I was learning the names of the members of the Council of the Twelve as a Primary graduation requirement, my father spent time and patience to teach me about the lives of each, as well as the required memory work.

To this day, I think you can ask me at any time to recite the names of those great men from Rudger Clawson to Charles A. Callis; and I can repeat them rapidly and remember events in their lives.

As I was thinking about this assignment, I thought, what if there is some father in the Church who would like to spend some time in family home evening telling about the current members of the Council of the Twelve. This thought startled me. What could he ever tell about me?

Love of parents for gospel

As I thought and searched, I realized there is a theme to my life which is worthy of being repeated and I think would be of value to those young children in your homes. It is this: He was reared in a home in which his parents loved and appreciated the gospel of Jesus Christ. They understood the admonition of Paul to the Ephesian saints when he wrote, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." (Eph. 6:10-11, 14-16.)

A shield of faith

We were dressed in our home each morning, not only with hats and rain-coats and boots to protect us from physical storm, but even more carefully our parents dressed us each day in the armor of God. As we would kneel in family prayer and listen to our father,

a bearer of the priesthood, pour out his soul to the Lord for the protection of his family against the fiery darts of the wicked, one more layer was added to our shield of faith. While our shield was being made strong, theirs was always available, for they were available and we knew it.

What a protection it was to travel through the journey of life knowing that a shield of faith is being carefully constructed for you by loving parents from our first moments on earth.

Incident in Los Angeles

Let me just give you a small example of how that shield would work. One day I was made an attractive offer by a group of marines, buddies of mine, as we were about to go on liberty. It wasn't until after we were on our way that I discovered this was not the best of company to be in. It was then that I found out the reason they had invited me. It was because they knew of my standards. They knew that I would be sober when it was time to return to the base, and I could guide them back.

We found ourselves in Los Angeles on a streetcar headed toward a dance hall. They had already started to drink a little, and I was ready to part their company. It was here that that protective shield took over and I knew of the prayers of my parents for my welfare. The streetcar stopped and allowed new passengers to come aboard. The new passengers separated me from my buddies and pushed me to the back of the car. It was there that I discovered a nice group of young people standing and seated. Immediately upon finding me in their company, one spoke up and said, "Hi, Marine! We're Mormons. What do you know about our Church?"

I answered, "Plenty," and got off the streetcar with them and went to a ward social.

You see, the shield of faith was there. It was protecting me from the

fiery darts of the wicked in order that in a proper time in my life I would be worthy to take an angel into the temple of the Lord and there at its altar be sealed together for time and all eternity.

I know by personal experience the value of having noble parents to build around their children a protective shield of faith of our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ. I give you my witness that it works. Should not every child of God be given that opportunity in their lives—to start each day having their fathers blessing their home and giving them that protective shield of faith as they depart from the home to go about their every activity.

Acceptance of call

President Kimball, I publicly accept the call that you have conveyed to me to serve the Lord. I know of your divine call. I know within you there is the same attribute which distinguished Joseph of old to the Pharaoh of Egypt who declared to his servants that in Joseph was "a man in whom the Spirit of God is." (Gen. 41:38.)

I hope and pray that in some way I may be capable of helping you lift the great burden that you carry by my service in this quorum.

President Benson, I love and appreciate you and your great leadership. I am devoted to service in our Father in heaven's kingdom. Use me in any way that I am capable.

And to my two great colleagues whom I have worked so closely with, Elder Hanks and Elder Faust, there has been a special brotherhood develop between us. How patient they have been in helping to train me in the things that I should do in these great callings. I express to you my gratitude and thanks.

And to all who hear my voice today, I declare my witness that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Spencer W. Kimball is truly a prophet of the Lord. Come and join with us.

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Let us help you build your shield of faith that you may live with the peaceful assurance that you have a strong line of defense between you and the powers of the wicked one, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Elder L.

Elder Eldred G. Smith

Patriarch to the Church

Last spring my wife and I had the wonderful privilege of visiting the Holy Land. On the last day of our stay in Jerusalem, we left the hotel early in the morning and walked to the Garden Tomb. To our great delight, we were alone in the garden. A feeling of awesome reverence filled our hearts. We gazed at the hill Golgotha, the place of the skull. We could imagine the three crosses there and the sign "This is Jesus—the King of the Jews" over the agonized figure of Christ. (See Matt. 27: 37.) The thought comes, "Are we worth all his suffering for us?"

The tomb of Jesus

Then we turned to the tomb—historically the property of Joseph of Arimathea. Here Joseph and Nicodemus placed him, assisted by the women. His disciples had left him. The stone was rolled to cover the door, and everyone departed—all but Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. (See Matt. 27:60-61.) They sat huddled next to the sepulcher. Then a watch was placed at the tomb.

We are told there was great destruction in Jerusalem; the veil of the temple was "rent in twain." (Matt. 27:51.) The destruction was much greater, however, on this continent. There were great convulsions of the earth. In three hours cities were destroyed, some buried, some burnt.

Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, will now address us. Following Elder Smith, Elder J. Thomas Fyans, Assistant to the Twelve, will be heard.

Mountains appeared where cities had been. There was storm, then tempest, and a great dense darkness covered the entire land. At the conclusion of three hours of destruction, yet during the darkness, which lasted three days, a voice, only a voice, came to them. The voice identified itself as that of Jesus Christ, saying:

Appearance to Nephites

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.

"I came unto my own, and my own received me not. And the scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled." (3 Ne. 9:15-16.)

He told them the destruction had been because of their wickedness, and that only the more righteous had been spared. Possibly preparing them for his visit after his resurrection, he told them to repent and he would receive them.

The voice told them that the Law of Moses had been fulfilled by him. "And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings.