

provided by the Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Brother Donald H. Ripplinger, newly appointed Associate Director of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Come, Thou Glorious Day of Promise." The invocation will be offered by Elder Joseph Anderson, Assistant to the Twelve.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, "Come, Thou Glorious Day of Promise." Elder Joseph Anderson, an Assistant to the Twelve, offered the invocation.

President Marion G. Romney

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

My beloved brothers and sisters, I invite you to join in a prayer that while I speak you and I may both enjoy the Spirit. I will give you a lesson today that the Lord has taken great pains to bring to us.

Freedom, Peace & Prosperity

Among the questions frequently raised in connection with our upcoming national bicentennial is "Can we maintain our basic freedoms, peace, and prosperity for another 200 years?"

The answer to this question is *yes*, if we shall individually repent and conform to the laws of the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ.

He has stated the basics of his laws in the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and in the two great commandments:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . .

"And . . . thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 22:37, 39.)

President Spencer W. Kimball

The Choir will now favor us by singing "Sing Praise to God." Following the singing, we shall be pleased to hear from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

The song, "Sing Praise to God" was rendered by the Choir.

President Kimball

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Millennia ago he declared: "There shall none come into this land [he was speaking of America] save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord.

" . . . 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." (2 Ne. 1:6-7.)

Another ancient prophet said,

"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." (Eth. 2:12.)

It is my purpose in making these remarks to point out from the record of ancient inhabitants of America that the foregoing decrees have been carried out.

Hill Cumorah

In the western part of the state of

New York near Palmyra is a prominent hill known as the "hill Cumorah." (Morm. 6:6.) On July twenty-fifth of this year, as I stood on the crest of that hill admiring with awe the breathtaking panorama which stretched out before me on every hand, my mind reverted to the events which occurred in that vicinity some twenty-five centuries ago—events which brought to an end the great Jaredite nation.

You who are acquainted with the Book of Mormon will recall that during the final campaign of the fratricidal war between the armies led by Shiz and those led by Coriantumr "nearly two millions" of Coriantumr's people had been slain by the sword; "two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children." (Eth. 15:2.)

As the conflict intensified, all the people who had not been slain—men "with their wives and their children" (Eth. 15:15)—gathered about that hill Cumorah (see Eth. 15:11).

"The people who were for Coriantumr were gathered together to the army of Coriantumr; and the people who were for Shiz were gathered together to the army of Shiz. . . .

"Both men women and children being armed with weapons of war . . . did march forth one against another to battle; and they fought all that day, and conquered not.

"And it came to pass that when it was night they were weary, and retired to their camps; and . . . took up a howling and a lamentation for the loss of the slain of their people." (Eth. 15:13, 15-16.)

This routine was repeated day after day until "they had all fallen by the sword, save it were Coriantumr and Shiz." Shiz himself "had fainted with the loss of blood.

"And it came to pass that when Coriantumr had leaned upon his sword, [and] rested a little, he smote off the head of Shiz.

"And it came to pass that after he had smitten off the head of Shiz, that Shiz raised upon his hands and fell; and

after that he had struggled for breath, he died.

"And it came to pass that Coriantumr fell to the earth, and became as if he had no life." (Eth. 15:29-32.)

Thus perished at the foot of Cumorah the remnant of the once mighty Jaredite nation, of whom the Lord had said, "There shall be none greater . . . upon all the face of the earth." (Eth. 1:43.)

As I contemplated this tragic scene from the crest of Cumorah and viewed the beautiful land of the Restoration as it appears today, I cried in my soul, "How could it have happened?"

Land of promise

The answer came immediately as I remembered that some fifteen to twenty centuries before their destruction, as the small group of their ancestors was being divinely led from the tower of Babel, the Lord "would that they should come forth even unto [this] land of promise, which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people.

"And he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared [their prophet-leader], that whoso should possess this land . . . from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them.

"And now, we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land," wrote the ancient prophet-historian, "that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it 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.

"For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God." (Eth. 2:7-10.)

Pursuant to this decree concerning

the land of America, the Jaredites were swept off in the manner we have reviewed, because, rebelling against the laws of Jesus Christ—the God of the land—they “ripened in iniquity.”

Divinely led

Nor were they the only people who anciently were divinely led to this choice land to grow in righteousness to be a mighty nation and then to deteriorate in wickedness until they ripened in iniquity and were, pursuant to God’s decree, swept off.

I emphasize “divinely led” because, as above indicated, the Lord told them that they were being so led, and “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 Ne.1:6-7)

Nephites

This second civilization to which I refer, the Nephites, flourished in America between 600 B.C. and A.D. 400. Their civilization came to an end for the same reason, at the same place, and in the same manner as did the Jaredites’. From the account of their death struggle, I quote:

“And now,” says Mormon, their historian, “I finish my record concerning the destruction of my people, the Nephites. And it came to pass that we did march forth before the Lamanites . . . to the land of Cumorah. . . . And when . . . we had gathered in all the remainder of our people unto the land of Cumorah, . . . my people, with their

wives and their children, did . . . behold the armies of the Lamanites marching towards them; and with that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked, did they await to receive them.

“And it came to pass that they did fall upon my people with the sword, and with the bow, and with the arrow, and with the ax, and with all manner of weapons of war.

“And it came to pass that my men were hewn down, yea, even my ten thousand who were with me, and I fell wounded in the midst; and they passed by me that they did not put an end to my life.

“And when they had gone through and hewn down all my people save it were twenty and four of us, (among whom was my son Moroni) and we having survived the dead of our people, did behold on the morrow . . . from the top of the hill Cumorah, [230,000] of my people who were hewn down, . . .

“Even all my people, save it were those twenty and four who were with me, and also a few who had escaped into the south countries, and a few who had dissented over unto the Lamanites, had fallen. . . .

“And my soul was rent with anguish, . . . and I cried:

“O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! . . . How could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you!

“Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. . . .

“O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, . . . how is it that ye could have fallen! . . .

“O that ye had repented before this great destruction had come upon you.” (Morm. 6:1, 4, 5, 7, 9-11, 15-19, 22.)

Moroni a little later wrote:

“Behold I, Moroni, do finish the record of my father, Mormon. . . .

“. . . after the great and tremendous battle at Cumorah, . . . the Nephites who had escaped into the country

southward were hunted by the Lamanites, until they were all destroyed.

"And my father also was killed by them, and I even remain alone to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people." (Morm. 8:1-3.)

The tragic fate of the Jaredite and the Nephite civilizations is proof positive that the Lord meant it when he said that this "is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it 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." (Eth. 2:9.)

Gentiles

This information, wrote Moroni, addressing himself to us who today occupy this land, "cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles" (now, *Gentiles* is the term used by the Book of Mormon prophets to refer to the present inhabitants of America and to the peoples of the old world from which they came), "[this] cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done.

"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." (Eth. 2:11-12)

Columbus

In 1492, in harmony with the Lord's statement heretofore quoted, "that there shall none come into this land save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord" (2 Ne. 1:6), Columbus was divinely led to America.

Away back between 590 and 600 years B.C., Nephi, looking in vision

down the stream of time, "beheld a man among the Gentiles [that is, among the nations of Europe], who was separated from [this promised land] by the many waters; and I beheld," said he, "the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto . . . the promised land.

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

"And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise." (1 Ne. 13:12-14.)

Columbus himself corroborated the fact that he was divinely led to this land.

"In the royal presence of Isabella, Irving [his biographer] says: 'He unfolded his plans with eloquence and zeal for he felt himself, as he afterwards declared, *kindled as with a fire from on high, and considered himself the agent chosen of heaven to accomplish the grand design.* . . .

"His son Fernando, in the biography of his father quotes him as saying on one occasion: '*God gave me the faith and afterwards the courage so that I was quite willing to undertake the journey.*'

"And the will of Columbus reads:

"*In the name of the . . . holy trinity, who inspired me with the idea and afterwards made it perfectly clear to me that I could navigate and go to the Indies from Spain, by traversing the ocean westward.*" (Nephi Lowell Morris, *Prophecies of Joseph Smith and Their Fulfillment*, Deseret Book, 1945, pp. 289, 294-95; italics added.)

Because Columbus was led, we are here in this choice land.

Wise men raised up

God gave us victory in the Revolutionary War. We are indebted to him for our nation's independence. He has prospered us in every righteous endeavor. He established the Constitution of the United States "by the hands

of wise men whom [he] raised up unto this very purpose.” (D&C 101:80.)

He himself with his Beloved Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith to open a new dispensation of the gospel of Jesus Christ here in this land. He has established his Church here and has sent and is sending representatives thereof into every nook and corner of the land—and as far as possible to all the earth—to declare and teach the laws of Jesus Christ, the God of this land.

Decree of God

He has revealed anew and repeated over and over again the ancient decree:

He has revealed anew and repeated over and over again the ancient decree: “This is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God” concerning this land. (Eth. 2:10.)

This knowledge has been revealed to us that we “may know the decrees of God—that [we] may repent, and not continue in [our] iniquities until the fulness come, that [we] may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon [us] the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done.” (Eth. 2:11.)

Second coming of Christ

We are living in the dispensation of the fulness of times, which will be climaxed by the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning the approach of that event and what is in store for the inhabitants of the earth between now and then, the Lord said 144 years ago:

“The wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure.

...

“Wherefore the voice of the Lord is

unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear.”

And this is his message: “Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh;

“And the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth. . . .

“The hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion.

“And also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst, and shall come down in judgment upon . . . the world.” (D&C 1:9, 11-13, 35-36.)

Now my beloved brethren and sisters everywhere, both members of the Church and nonmembers, I bear you my personal witness that I know that the things I have presented to you today are true—both those pertaining to past events and those pertaining to events yet to come. The issue we face is clear and well defined. The choice is ours. The question is: Shall we of this dispensation repent and obey the laws of the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, or shall we continue to defy them until we ripen in iniquity?

That we will repent and obey and thereby qualify to receive the blessings promised to the righteous in this land, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve will now address us. He will be followed by Elder O. Leslie Stone, Assistant to the Twelve.