

Elder LeGrand Richards

of the Council of the Twelve

I rejoice, my brothers and sisters, in the opportunity of attending this great general conference of the Church, and I trust through the inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord that I might say something in the brief time allotted to me that will help to increase your testimonies and impress those who are not members of the Church.

I thought today that I would like to say a few words about the importance of prophecy and prophets.

Savior's ministry foretold

After the resurrection of the Savior, as he walked along the way to Emmaus with two of his disciples, we are told that "their eyes were holden" (Luke 24:16) that they did not recognize him. When he heard what they had to say, he realized that they didn't understand what he had tried to teach them, and so he said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25); and, commencing with Moses and the prophets, he showed them how in all things the prophets had testified of him. Now as you study the scriptures, you will know that the prophets foretold his life and ministry down to the minutest details, even to the casting of lots for his clothing at the time of his crucifixion. (See Ps. 22:18.)

Peter said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. [That is an important thing.]

"For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:19-21.) If we

have that same power, then we ought to be able to understand prophecy.

Church with a prophet

Just as the holy prophets foretold the coming of the Savior in the meridian of time, they have foretold many of the important events that were to transpire to prepare the way for his second coming. I would like to refer to some of them.

The prophet Amos said, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7.) Now if we understand that, no one can look for a work here upon this earth that isn't headed by a prophet. The Lord has never done a work that he has recognized without a prophet at its head. Thank God for our prophets, from the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith down to our present prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball.

I have known President Kimball intimately for thirty-seven years, and I don't think there is a more Christlike man in this world than he; and if the Lord can't talk through a man like President Kimball, he couldn't find anyone on this earth more worthy. I thank Him for living prophets.

Now if we understand the words of Peter when he said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy" (2 Pet. 1:19), then in other words, there isn't any other way in this world that we can know the mind and the will of the Lord as intelligently and assuredly as we can know it through the holy prophets. Then coming back to Amos, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7.)

Any seeker after truth who believes in these words and the importance that Jesus attaches to prophecy cannot look for a church in the midst of the some

700 there are in this land of ours today without it being a church with a prophet at its head unto whom God can reveal his mind and his will.

Times of restitution

Now there were many things that needed to be done. Peter, in speaking to those who had put to death the Christ, following the day of Pentecost, said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21.)

Thus, one looking for truth would look for a restitution and not a reformation, and not a continuation, because if Peter was a prophet of God, we have to have a restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets before the Savior would come, because he said the heavens were to receive the Christ "until the times of restitution of all things." There couldn't be a restitution unless there were a living prophet upon the earth unto whom these holy prophets could come to restore the things that had been lost, whereby the churches were teaching the commandments of men, as Isaiah said. And so we have a living prophet.

The Lord raised up the Prophet Joseph Smith, as has been testified in this conference, and we have more revealed truth through him than any prophet that has ever lived upon the face of this earth as far as our records show. He has brought us things from those dead prophets who were to come to restore all things before the Savior could come again. There are many things that he has restored.

Dream of Nebuchadnezzar

You take, for instance, the dream

of Nebuchadnezzar (to which reference has already been made) and Daniel's interpretation of that dream. You remember that Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten the dream, and he called for the wise men and the astrologers, and none of them could tell him his dream. Then he heard of this man Daniel in Israel, and Daniel said, "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these." (Dan. 2:28.)

Then he told him about the rise and fall of the kingdoms of this world until the latter days (and we live in the latter days), when the God of heaven would "set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people." (Dan. 2:44.) How could God set up such a kingdom as that which would endure forever without a prophet through whom he could work to establish his kingdom?

Then he said it would be as a stone, cut without hands—in other words, it would have a small beginning, and this kingdom started with six men and has grown, as Daniel said it would, to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. (See Dan. 2:35.) No other group of religious worshipers is growing by leaps and bounds as is this church today, because the God of heaven has established it according to his promise.

Kingdom of God

When I was president of the Southern States Mission, one of our missionaries preached on that dream of Nebuchadnezzar in one of our meetings where we had some investigators, and I stood at the door to greet them as they went out. A man came up and introduced himself as a minister, and he said, "You don't mean to tell me that you think that the Mormon Church is that kingdom, do you?"

And I said, "Yes, sir, why not?"

He said, "It couldn't be."

I said, "Why couldn't it?"

He said, "You can't have a kingdom without a king, and you don't have a king, so you don't have a kingdom."

"Oh," I said, "my friend, you didn't read far enough. You just read the seventh chapter of Daniel, where Daniel saw one like the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, 'and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.' (Dan. 7:14.)"

"Now," I said, "my friend, tell me how can the kingdom be given to him when he comes in the clouds of heaven if there is no kingdom prepared for him? That is what we Latter-day Saints are doing."

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. 4:5-6.)

Return of Elijah

Think of the consequences! Where in all the world can you go and find the message of the return of Elijah according to this promise? He has come. He appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple on the third day of April 1836 and brought the keys of this great assignment and work to unite the heavens with the earth that has caused the building of our temples. And that brings us also to what Isaiah saw when he said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, . . . and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall . . . say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Isa. 2:2-3.)

This temple on this temple block is that house of the God of Jacob that our

pioneer fathers started to build when they were a thousand miles from transportation, and it took them forty years to build it. Isn't it a glorious thing, one of the most beautiful buildings in the world? Those of us who filled missions in the early days know how literally every convert, as soon as they joined the Church, would want to sell everything they had, saving their money, as I saw in little Holland, by the nickels and the dimes, until they could find enough to come to this land because of the drawing power of that temple, so that they could learn of his ways and walk in his paths.

Isaiah's prophecies

Now there are many other prophecies, but I would just like to refer to the fact that Isaiah also saw and pronounced "that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people. . . .

"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah." (Isa. 11:11-12.)

The angel Moroni repeated that passage to the Prophet Joseph when Joseph was only eighteen years old, when Moroni visited him three times during the night and again the next morning, indicating that that work was to be established. Just think of the assignment to the Prophet Joseph at that time. He has set up an ensign to the nations. No other church in the world is accomplishing what this Church is doing for its members, and developing its members, and that is an ensign unto the world. People come to us to learn how we are accomplishing these things.

Isaiah saw many other things in connection with this gathering. He saw that the Lord would gather Israel quickly and with speed, that they would not even have time to loosen the shoe latches of their shoes, or to slumber or sleep. (See Isa. 5:27.) Imagine a statement like that way back in the days of Isaiah, thousands of years ago, with

their means of transportation at that time!

Foundation of prophets

You Saints of God that are making the sacrifices that you are of your time and your talents and your means and your youth to promote the great missionary program of the Church and to pay your tithes and offerings—there is nothing else like it in all this world today because God is working through his prophets. Like Paul of old said, speaking to the church of his day, “and [ye] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” (Eph. 2:20.)

So one seeking truth should look for a church that is built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, and I bear you my witness that this is the church of Jesus Christ, built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ the Lord still directing his Church through his living prophets.

We have many other prophecies. The apostle Paul said that the Lord had revealed unto him the mystery of his will. (See Eph. 1:9.) Now that is quite a statement, isn't it—the mystery of the Lord's will? “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.” (Eph. 1:10.) No other church in this world has any such program to unite the heavens with that which is upon the earth.

Saviors upon Mt. Zion

And we read in the prophets about how the Lord's people would come up as saviors upon Mount Zion. (See Obad. 21.) We read the word of Jesus when he said, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God” (John 5:25), because all the multitudes who have gone beyond have to hear the gospel. We are told that every knee shall bow

and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ. (See Rom. 14:11.) That gives us to understand in just a little way the meaning of the words of the apostle Paul when he said, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” (1 Cor. 15:29.)

Another great thing that was to happen in this dispensation is that the Lord, speaking through Malachi, said he would send his messenger to prepare the way for his coming, and that he would come swiftly to his temple. “But who may abide the day of his coming? . . . for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.” (Mal. 3:1-2.) Obviously that had no reference to his first coming. He didn't come swiftly to his temple. All men could abide the day of his coming. But we are told that when he comes in the latter days, the wicked will cry out to the rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne.” (Rev. 6:16.)

Well, we have that program which leads into the use of our temples and ties into the further statement of Malachi when he said, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

President McKay's experience

Just to illustrate the fulfillment of that —when President McKay went to Scotland to help organize the first stake in his bonnie Scotland, on his return, in reporting to us Brethren of the Twelve in the temple, he said he left London at 2:00 in the afternoon, and he spent a little time with the brethren in Chicago, and he was in his own bed that night. He didn't have time to loosen the shoe latches of his shoes or to slumber or sleep. Then he compared that with when his people came to Zion in the early days, when they were forty-three days on the water and then weeks getting across the plains. Just think of the gathering! I wish there were time to go

further into the prophecies of how our people were to be brought here and travel along the river banks, and so forth—and this our pioneers did—and that the Lord would turn their sorrows into rejoicing. Then Jeremiah said the day would come “that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

“But, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them.” (Jer. 16:14-15.)

Stakes of Zion

That is what the Lord has been doing with his people ever since the organization of this Church, and now that we are able to carry stakes and temples to them, they are gathered to the stakes of Zion.

Then Jeremiah adds that the Lord would send for many fishers, and they would fish them, and many hunters, and they would hunt them from the hills, from the mountains, and from the holes in the rocks. (See Jer. 16:16.) Any of you who have been out in the mission field in scattered areas will know how our missionaries, over 21,000 of them, are going from door to door and hamlet to hamlet, gathering the people, as the prophet said, out of the holes of the rocks and the hills. You will realize how literally this church is fulfilling the words of the prophets.

Then Jeremiah said, “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you [what a covenant!]; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jer. 3:14-15.)

You people here today have come one of a city and two of a family to learn of the ways of the Lord, and we are the pastors that are teaching you according to his will, I and these Brethren here, my companions and associates on this stand today.

God bless you all, and I hope you realize that the Lord is speaking through his living prophets, that this Church is built upon the foundation of living prophets, and that we speak to the world to bear witness of what He has done because we know of a surety that this is his work. This is my testimony, and I bear it in great humility, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy. He will be followed by Elder James E. Faust, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Paul H. Dunn

of the First Council of Seventy

If only the world could be as enthused and excited as Elder Richards. I feel out of breath already.

Birth of promised land

Some weeks ago in the summer heat of Boston, two men worked

vigorously and perspired mightily to construct displays for the American Bicentennial. One stopped to mop his brow and asked the other, “Do we really have to go through this every 200 years?” The correct answer, of course, is that we have not celebrated often or deeply enough the birth of this prom-