

Building a holier Zion

As we build a holier Zion, with "the voice of melody" we will sing those lyrics—"All is well, all is well" ("Come, Come, Ye Saints," *Hymns*, no. 13)—but sometimes as a reassuring sob as well as a song, awaiting the promised day when "sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

With Paul, we can say, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4:8-9)—perhaps adding, "We are confronted, but not surprised; we are falsely accused, but pray for our accusers; we are reviled, but respond with Christian service." Brothers and sisters, we can be walking witnesses and standing sermons to which objective onlookers can say a quiet amen.

The Savior has told us that just as when the fig tree puts forth its leaves, we may know that summer is nigh, so it will be with his second coming (see Luke 21:28-30). The foreseen summer of circumstances is now upon us. Let us not, therefore, complain of the heat!

The Savior will be in our midst saying, "Fear not, little flock" (see D&C 6:34), urging us to "do good" even as we are badly done by until divine intervention mercifully halts human deterioration, for then "all flesh shall see [him] together" (D&C 101:23), and "all nations shall tremble at [his] presence" (D&C 133:42) as his coming makes "a full

end of all nations" (D&C 87:6) and as there are no laws but his laws (see D&C 38:22).

There will be no more questions then about the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. For the faithful "of every kind," gladly gathered into his gospel net, there never was any question—only answers!

Meanwhile, may God help us to receive more effectively all newcomers and returnees to Zion—even as God has so mercifully received us into his Church. There will be one more regal reception at the gate, where Jesus is the sole gatekeeper. He awaits us there, not only to certify us, but because his divine love brings him to welcome us. Hence he "employeth no servant there" (2 Ne. 9:41). May we be ready to be so received, as he leads us with his "kindly light," I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Maxwell's address, the Choir sang "Lead, Kindly Light" without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Lead, Kindly Light."

We welcome those who have just joined us on television or radio for this, the first general session of the 150th Semiannual Conference of the Church.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

On a warm summer day I visited the land of Adam-ondi-Ahman in the state of Missouri. I had looked forward to this visit with keen anticipation, for I had never been there

before.

The place was beautiful: The fields were green, the hills were rolling, the entire landscape was something to remember.

History of Adam and Eve

But more impressive than the landscape was the significance of the place, for here Adam lived—and Eve—and their family. The stupendous importance of it all weighed heavily upon me.

Here is where the human race began. This we are told by revelation. (See Moses 1:34; D&C 107:53; 84:16.)

Adam and Eve knew God personally. They saw him and talked with him. They were taught the gospel of Jesus Christ even in that early time—which was long before the Lord's earthly ministry, for Jesus had been appointed to be the Savior during our premortal existence.

The plan of salvation, therefore, was instituted among these first human beings, Adam and Eve and their children. Angels taught them. The family believed. They were baptized and began to serve God. (See Moses 5.)

The scriptures say that as Adam tilled the ground and cared for the cattle and the sheep, Eve "did labor with him" (Moses 5:1).

They were highly intelligent people, not at all like either the hominids or the cavemen some claim the first humans to have been. They were well educated, having been taught by the Lord himself. What an education! What an instructor!

Think of it, and remember that "the glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36). These gifts were imparted to Adam and Eve and their family. No one else could teach them, because they were the first human beings. That task was left to the Lord and his angels.

Adam and Eve had many sons and daughters. Among them were Seth and Abel, faithful to the Lord in all their ways. And then there was Cain!

They taught their children to read and write, "having a language

which was pure and undefiled," given them by God (see Moses 6:6).

"And a book of remembrance was kept" among them, recorded in the language of Adam, and all who called upon God were allowed to write in this pure and undefiled tongue, by the spirit of inspiration (see Moses 6:5-6).

"And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Moses 5:58).

"And from that time forth, the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land, and to till the land, and to tend flocks, and they also begat sons and daughters" (Moses 5:3).

Evil brings retrogression

It was a glorious period—until Satan came among them. That evil person defied the teachings of God and said to the children of Adam, "Believe it not," and from that time some of the family loved Satan more than God (see Moses 5:13). They apostatized from the truth.

These dissenters lost the Spirit of God and as a result became carnal, sensual, and devilish (see Moses 5:13). With these evil attributes always comes retrogression. We should not be surprised, therefore, to hear of cavemen living in the dawn of time.

One of these dissenters was Cain. He made a dreadful covenant with Lucifer and persuaded others to follow him. "Adam and his wife mourned before the Lord, because of Cain and his brethren" (Moses 5:27).

Cain hated righteous Abel and coveted his flocks. He was encouraged by Satan, who told him he could obtain Abel's sheep if he would kill his brother and thus seize possession.

The first murder resulted. Rebuked by the Lord and cursed be-

cause of his tragic sin, Cain left Adam-ondi-Ahman and went to live in a place called Nod.

Church at time of Adam

The Church of Jesus Christ was well established in the time of Adam (see Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 157, 169). Men like Seth and Enos grew to become the early patriarchs of the Church, and through them a long line of priesthood leaders was established.

Adam held the keys of the First Presidency and stood directly after the Savior in authority (see *Teachings*, p. 168). He received those keys in the Creation, according to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who added, "Christ is the Great High Priest; Adam next" (*Teachings*, pp. 157-58).

Michael, the archangel

Who was Adam that he was privileged to begin the human race here on earth? Had he been some very special personage in the pre-mortal world?

Indeed, Adam was very special and very important. Before coming into mortality, he was known as Michael. The Prophet Joseph Smith clearly identifies both Adam and Michael as one and the same person, an angel, the chief angel, or archangel, of heaven, the special servant of God and Christ.

When Michael came into mortality he was known as Adam, the first man, but he was still his own self. Although he was given another name, that of Adam, he did not change his identity.

After his mortal death he resumed his position as an angel in the heavens, once again serving as the chief angel, or archangel, and took again his former name of Michael.

In his capacity as archangel, Adam, or Michael, will yet perform a mighty mission in the coming years, both before and after the Millennium. This is startling, but the scriptures declare it.

One important assignment that awaits him is to be the angel to sound the trumpet heralding the resurrection of the dead. The scripture reads, "Behold, verily I say unto you, before the earth shall pass away, *Michael, mine archangel*, shall sound his trump, and then shall all the dead awake, for their graves shall be opened, and they shall come forth" (D&C 29:26).

What a marvelous calling for Adam, or Michael. But note that even in this assignment, which is yet future, he still will be an angel—the archangel, but an angel nevertheless.

Section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants, dated March 28, 1835, identifies him as an angel as of that date—a little more than a hundred years ago—and calls him "Michael, the prince, the archangel" (D&C 107:54).

During the Millennium the devil will be bound, but afterward will be freed for a short time, during which he will rally his evil forces to make one final assault upon God.

Who will lead the defending armies of the Lord? None other than Michael himself, whose position as archangel qualifies him to be the captain of the Lord's host. Is he not the chief of the angels? Then should he not lead them into battle against Lucifer?

As the archangel he continues to serve the interests of the Lord with respect to this earth. His ultimate exaltation, of course, is fully assured, but it must await the completion of his work here.

Seven angels are to sound trumpets to announce a series of events to precede the second coming of the Savior. Michael will be the seventh of those angels.

Says the scripture:

"And Michael, the seventh angel, even the archangel"—and please note here how the Lord still identifies him strictly as an angel, for that is his status—and now I repeat this scripture:

"And Michael, the seventh angel, *even the archangel*, shall gather together his armies, even the hosts of heaven. . . . And then cometh the battle of the great God; and the devil and his armies shall be cast away into their own place." (D&C 88:112, 114; emphasis added.)

Then can anyone honestly mistake the identity of Adam, or Michael? Even after the thousand years of the Millennium are over he will still retain his status as an angel—the archangel—and a resurrected man.

In the year 1842 the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of Michael, or Adam, who visited him. Joseph identified him as an angel even then—the archangel—and said, "The voice of Michael, the archangel; . . . and of diverse [other] angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time" (D&C 128:21). He thus listed Michael, or Adam, with the *other* angels.

So, in 1842 Michael, or Adam, was still an angel and will continue to be so through the final winding up scene of this earth.

Adam—not God, nor our Savior

Adam was not our God, nor was he our Savior. But he was the humble servant of both in his status as an angel.

Then what is his relationship to the Savior and to God our Father?

Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, the first born to our Heavenly Father in the spirit and the *Only Begotten in the flesh*.

Jesus is the Holy One of Israel, not Adam, not anyone else. Although we are all *spirit* children of the Father, Jesus is the *Only Begotten* of

the Father, in mortality, *even from the beginning*, not Adam, not anyone else (see Moses 5:9). This the Lord himself says.

Jesus Christ is "the Only Begotten"

In the day that the gospel was given to Adam, the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and the divine voice of Jesus Christ—the Jehovah of that time—said to him by the power of the Holy Ghost: "I am the *Only Begotten* of the Father from the Beginning" (Moses 5:9).

Then, can anyone claim that distinction for Adam, or for anyone else? Of course not! Jesus Christ is the *Only Begotten* of the Father, even from the very beginning.

Shall we not in full faith accept this doctrine, which is so clearly set forth in scripture?

Christ is the Lord! He alone is our Savior!

The Apostle Paul has an interesting passage in his epistle to the Hebrews. He spoke of the Savior and declared him to be in the express image of his Father's person. Then he asked this question: "Unto which of the *angels* said he [God] at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" (Heb. 1:5; emphasis added). And of course the answer is immediate and obvious—none of them—none of the *angels*, not even Adam, or Michael, the chief of the angels.

Jesus of Nazareth was the *Only Begotten* of the Father.

In this passage Paul was speaking only of Jesus the Christ. In the very next verse, as he continued to speak of Jesus, Paul called the lowly Nazarene the *first begotten* and declared, "Let all the angels . . . worship him," and this they did—including Adam, who adores the *Only Begotten* of God, the Savior Jesus Christ, and is always subservient to him.

When the Apostle John wrote

one of his most familiar passages he said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his *only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16; emphasis added).

And who was thus given of the Father to be crucified? Who wrought out the atonement on Calvary? Jesus of Nazareth! He was the Only Begotten of God. He alone was the Sacrificial Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. Adam was the Savior's progenitor only in the same sense in which he is the ancestor of us all.

God had only one begotten son in the flesh. But Adam had many, including Cain and Abel and Seth. He lived nearly a thousand years. He could have had hundreds of children in that time.

Then how could it be said by anyone that he had "an only begotten" son? How could all of his other children be accounted for? Were they not all begotten in the flesh?

Were Cain and Abel and Seth and their brothers and sisters all orphans? Was any child ever begotten without a father? Adam was their father, and he had many sons. In no way whatever does he qualify as a father who had only one son in the flesh.

Yet God our Eternal Father had only one son in the flesh, who was Jesus Christ.

Then was Adam our God, or did God become Adam? Ridiculous!

"Ancient of Days"

Adam was neither God nor the Only Begotten Son of God. He was a child of God in the spirit as we all are (see Acts 17:29). Jesus was the firstborn in the spirit, and the only one born to God in the flesh.

The Almighty himself repeatedly called Jesus both his firstborn and his Only Begotten.

Then who is Adam? He is Mi-

chael the archangel, appointed by God and Christ to be the mortal progenitor of the race. At this very moment, in the year 1980, he is still in his position as the archangel whose trumpet in the final days will herald the resurrection and who will be the captain of the Lord's hosts in the final defeat of Lucifer.

He is the "Ancient of Days" spoken of by Daniel the prophet and as such will meet the faithful in that same valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, which is named after him (see Dan. 7:9-22; D&C 116).

At the close of this dispensation he will there deliver up his stewardship to Christ, his Master and his Savior, the Lord Jehovah, who in turn will give his accounting to the Heavenly and Eternal Father of us all (see *Teachings*, pp. 122, 157, 167-68, 237).

If any of you have been confused by false teachers who come among us, if you have been assailed by advocates of erroneous doctrines, counsel with your priesthood leaders. They will not lead you astray, but will direct you into paths of truth and salvation.

I bear you my solemn testimony that this—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is indeed the church and kingdom of God. Jesus is the Christ. Spencer W. Kimball is his prophet. We are the legal and divinely chosen custodians of the restored truth. This I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Petersen's talk, the choir sang "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand" without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just given the con-