

morally, physically, and mentally prepared when they reach mission age. However, we should, above all else, teach our children "to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28).

Preparations for Second Coming

What can I do for my progenitors to help them qualify for eternal life? I can help my parents and grandparents to understand the gospel, to be baptized, and to receive these saving ordinances in the temple of God. I can make certain that my deceased parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and as far as I can go in my genealogical research, have received in person or vicariously the temple saving ordinances necessary for them to gain eternal life. By doing these things for our posterity and for our progenitors, a forever family can be established, resulting in a dynasty of righteous lives that will bring joy and happiness "in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory" (Moses 6:59).

The final scene of this great drama is near at hand. The kingdom of God is going forth preparatory to the second coming of Christ when the curtain will fall and the Savior will say to each of the valiant, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). And thus the kingdom of God will continue forever through the eternities to come. As the prophet Daniel said, "And it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44), with you and I having received judgment and reward according to the role to which we have been faithful in this life—to which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

"Will a man rob God?" (Malachi 3:8). This must be one of the most pointed questions ever asked in the holy scriptures. The implications are that an affirmative answer would mean that those who rob God will be cursed by God and burned as stubble at the Lord's second coming. (See Malachi 3:9; 4:1.)

Tithing—critical judgment criterion

This query was made of ancient Israel through the prophet Malachi, but it didn't apply only to ancient Israel. It quite obviously applied to the Nephites and Lamanites on this continent, too, for the resurrected Lord repeated it to

them when he visited them in about A. D. 34. (See 3 Nephi 24:8–9.) I presume modern Israel is also included under the same injunction, for surely the Lord used almost the same words when he warned of the burning that would precede his second coming, and tithing seems to be the critical judgment criterion. (See D&C 64:23–24.)

On the other hand, those who do pay tithing (give the Lord *his* tenth) are promised that the windows of heaven will be opened to them and their blessings will exceed their ability to receive. (See Malachi 3:10.) Further, the Lord "will rebuke the devourer for [their] sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of [their] ground" (Malachi 3:11). This is a blessing of great magnitude.

Perfect timing

Obedience to the commandments of the Lord, including the important commandment of tithing, brings many blessings. We do not always know how the Lord will bless us. For example, possibly the following experience common to most of us may serve to illustrate.

Have you ever been following a slowpoke car that is doddering along with the driver looking at everything along the way, and you know that if he doesn't speed up you are never going to get through on that green light? But then he does speed up—just enough to get through on the yellow light—and you have to stop. This has a great tendency to test the patience. Sometimes we even start thinking rather derogatorily about him as he drives away. However, it just may be that the Lord is protecting us from an accident two miles down the road because we stopped at that light, even though we did it reluctantly. If you entertain these kinds of thoughts, it may have a tendency to make you thankful instead of irate or angry, which is much better for your digestion.

I had this principle vividly impressed upon me one day a long time ago. I was living back in Virginia at the time, and one beautiful fall day I drove out into the country to pick up some walnuts. There were sixteen Stop signs between my home and the very, very heavily wooded lane where I turned in to get those walnuts. I stopped fifteen times. The last Stop sign was way out in the country. I could see in both directions. There were no other cars in sight. I thought to myself, "Why should I stop? Stop signs are to protect people, but I am the only one around. So why stop?" *So I didn't!* I wasn't speeding. I just went through at the speed limit. When I reached the heavily wooded lane, I found I couldn't see around the corner. It's that way back there in Virginia. So I slowed down and turned in. Just as I did, there was another car coming out

of the lane, and because we couldn't see each other, we ran together at about five miles per hour. It wasn't a hard impact, and the cars weren't severely damaged. As I recall, it only cost me \$168 to replace my grill and headlights.

Now, that accident had to be perfectly timed. Of course, if I had stopped at the last Stop sign, it would never have happened. I said, "Lord, I get the message. You really didn't have to go this far, but I do understand." In fact, I stopped sixteen times on the way home with the front end of my car beat up.

Blessings from obedience

It does seem that the Lord requires obedience in order for us to receive his blessings, which include rebuking the devourer. "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which *all* blessings are predicated." When we receive a blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. (See D&C 130:20-21; italics added.) This could reach even to a Stop sign, too, I suppose.

"Let no man break the laws of the land," says the Lord. "For he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land" (D&C 58:21).

Malachi continues, "Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field." (We will avoid waste.) "And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful some land, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:11-12).

It is a fact that we even look better when we pay tithing. There is a happiness that comes into the heart of the tithe payer that even reflects in his countenance.

Then the Lord seems to lament somewhat: "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?" (When did we ever say anything against the Lord?)

The Lord answers, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?"

"And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Malachi 3:13-15).

A record is kept

Did you ever look at the boat in the driveway of the nonmember next door and think: "He doesn't pay tithing, or perhaps attend church on Sunday. He gets to watch the Super Bowl and the World Series and so forth on Sunday. He doesn't seem to do any of the things I have to do, and yet he seems to be getting along as well as I am, maybe even better than I am." Did you ever have any such thoughts? Well, if so, I would imagine that is what the Lord is referring to in these passages. Then the Lord drops the bombshell:

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." (Like we are doing now. Did you ever notice that those who love the Lord are always talking to each other? One meeting after another.) "And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi 3:16 and 3 Nephi 24:16).

Ah! the light breaks. There is a record kept—and surely there is one. One group is receiving its reward now; the other is laying it up in heaven; and out of the books which are written and shall be written shall the dead be judged. (See Revelation 20:12.) Then the Lord gives his word, which he cannot break, for surely "I, the Lord, am bound *when ye do what I say*" (D&C 82:10; italics added). And here is the Lord's promise: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi

3:17). Surely, it is very difficult not to be partial to your own son who is working for you, if he does a good job. I presume there is nothing wrong in feeling that way about your own son. The Lord seems to think not.

The Lord continues: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18). This will be quite easy to tell by looking at the record.

Roots and branches

Now comes the crux of the whole matter of tithing: "For, behold, the day cometh [saith the Lord], that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1).

In other words, those who pay tithing will have roots and branches at the last day and those who do not will have neither roots nor branches. Now what are our roots? Alex Haley wrote a book about roots. Obviously our roots are our ancestors. And what are our branches? They are our children. Then those who walk in holiness before the Lord, which includes the payment of tithing, will have an eternal family at the last day. And those who do not pay tithing will have none.

Tithing is necessary in order to receive the blessings of the temple. If a man were to keep all of the Lord's commandments with the exception of tithing, he still could never be married for time and all eternity in the temple; thus, he would have neither roots nor branches at the last day.

Then this becomes really serious, since there is no exaltation without your family. Without tithing there is no exaltation. As we think about it, we know this is true.

Tithing—a principle of exaltation

Tithing, then, is one of the bedrock foundation principles of exaltation. And, as it turns out, when a man pays tithing, the Lord opens the windows of heaven and rebukes the devourer so that it doesn't cost him anything, but really puts him far more ahead than he ever could have been if he had not paid it. It is a principle of great promise and brings eternal joy and happiness.

Who, then, can afford not to give the Lord his tenth? Surely neither you nor I; which witness I bear. For surely the Lord God has spoken it. And in the words of King Benjamin, "He never doth vary from that which he hath said" (Mosiah 2:22). In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice." We shall all stand for this. Then following the singing, Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

President Hinckley

When you see a group like this, you never worry about the future of the Church.

We shall now hear from Elder James M. Paramore of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder Loren C. Dunn of that same quorum.

Elder James M. Paramore

Signs and silent voices

My beloved and wonderful brothers and sisters, I seek an interest in your faith and prayers these few minutes that I stand before you. A few years ago, just before our departure for a mission to Belgium, our family went on a vacation. Upon arriving at a motel, our children were out of their clothes and into swimming suits before we could unload the car. As I passed the swimming pool, the sign struck me forcefully: "Do Not Leave Children Unattended." Though I had read similar signs and ignored them many times before, I felt compelled to stay and watch my young children. (My wife wasn't very happy; she was unloading the car.) In minutes, one of my daughters was in deep water, and deep trouble, and struggling for help. I dove

into the pool, clothes and all, and with all the energy I had, I reached her just in time. I recognized that frantic yet unspoken call for help that day, and I will never forget it.

There are basic needs of people that are not always so obvious as this experience; but they are there, and their nearly inaudible voices are there if we can and will hear—signs and silent voices everywhere that say, "I feel that there is something, somewhere, that I need, that will give me peace, that will comfort me and let me know that my life has purpose and importance, that I belong."

Gospel, great influence

A few years ago a psychiatrist, Dr. Henry Link, after going through