

beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:24–27).

### Find identity as children of light

My brothers and sisters, I hope that we might always accept the Savior’s challenge to us to build upon rock rather than sand and to “walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:35–36).

I bear you my testimony that we can only find individual identity and happiness as children of light, possessing the light of life as found through following the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, for it was he who said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness” (John 8:12). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The Choir sang “Almighty God of Our Fathers” without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing “Almighty God of Our Fathers.”

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker.

## Elder Mark E. Petersen

### True meaning of Easter

Springtime always brings Easter, and Easter turns our minds to Jesus Christ, our Savior.

It was He who was born in Bethlehem, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), who holds out the promise of goodwill to all mankind.

It was He who gave us the true meaning of Easter through His glorious resurrection, with the assurance of everlasting life. Think of it! Everlasting life!

When He was born, He was called Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. But He also was Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), meaning “God with us.”

How appropriate that name, for He was God, and indeed He came into

the world to be with us. “God with us”! This He was in fact. He was deity before he was born into mortality, and He was His divine self while on the earth. He did not change His identity. He forever remains the Son of God, our Redeemer and our Savior.

### The Atonement

He died on the cross to atone for the sins of all who will obey Him, and He broke the bands of death to provide a resurrection for us all.

His atonement was the most important event that ever happened. The creation of this earth, the establishment of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the labors of the great patriarchs and prophets—all were prelude to His achievement on Calvary.

Offerings were burned on the altars of Israel throughout Old Testament times in symbolic anticipation of the great sacrifice of Him who was called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

### Necessity for a physical earth

As Jehovah of the premortal life, Jesus was the central figure in making the primeval arrangements for the mortal existence of the human race.

It was He who volunteered to die for us. It was He who gave all honor to our Heavenly Father. It was He who became the author of eternal salvation "unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

As the Apostle Peter said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Much advance preparation was required for His atonement, even before He was born in the flesh. For one thing, an earth was required on which we, the children of God, could live during our mortal existence.

Of necessity that earth must be physical in nature, for we who were to live on it would be physical beings, such as we now are. It had to be a physical earth also on which the Savior could live out His mortal life.

His existence in Palestine was to be physical, in a body of flesh and bones like our own. On this earth He would endure the physical suffering of crucifixion. He would die physically, and then—how glorious it was—He would bring about a physical resurrection.

Therefore, a physical earth was essential to His mission. There was nothing ethereal about His work here on earth. It was not to be accomplished in some intangible or mystical way.

His life on earth was real and physical. His death was real and physical, as was His resurrection, all taking place on this very real and physical planet. It fully demonstrated His genuine reality as a physical being.

When plans for His atonement were made in the primeval councils in heaven, a portion of that planning centered on the creation of this particular earth, for it would require an act of divine architecture, followed by a process of physical construction.

Without this earth, could Christ have been born to Mary in Bethlehem? Could He have died on the cross in Jerusalem? Could He have been resurrected from the tomb?

Without this earth, would there have been Roman soldiers to nail Him to the cross and afterward to guard His tomb?

Could He have manifested Himself physically to His disciples as proof of His resurrection?

Would "the other" Mary have been in the garden on that first Easter morning (Matthew 28:1) to hear the angel say: "*He is not here: for he is risen*"? (Matthew 28:6).

### The destiny of this earth

The special creation of this earth was a vital part of the plan of salvation. It had a particular purpose. It was not an afterthought. Neither was it an accident of any proportion, nor a spontaneous development of any kind.

It was the result of deliberate, advance planning and purposeful creation. The Divine Architect devised it. The Almighty Creator made it and assigned to it a particular mission.

This earth was not designed merely as a home for mortals, however. Not at all. It has a greater destiny than that. This earth will not remain in its present condition. It is to become immortal. It will pass through a refining process by which it will become a celestial globe and be like a Urim and Thummim in the skies. (See D&C 130:9.) That will require further acts of divine creation, and, of course, ordinary common sense tells us that no spontaneous accident could produce a change like that.

The Savior will reside here when the earth is celestialized, and His Fa-

ther will visit it from time to time. It then will be the eternal home of those who achieve celestial glory in the kingdom of God.

Such is the final destiny of the earth. Such was the purpose God had in mind in creating it, for He planned it so in the beginning.

### The Creator of the earth

Do we appreciate what this earth really means to us? Do we see why it was made? Do we understand its purpose? Do we see that there was nothing accidental or spontaneous about its origin? Do we see that its creation was literally and truly, completely and exclusively, an act of God?

And who was the Creator?

Our Heavenly Father declares that it was His own Beloved Son who accomplished the mighty task.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," said the Apostle John (John 1:3).

"By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17). So said the Apostle Paul.

The Almighty also affirmed it when he told Moses: "Worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and *by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten*" (Moses 1:33; italics added).

Christ also taught that He Himself was the Creator. Said He to the Prophet Joseph Smith: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ . . . who created the heavens and the earth" (D&C 14:9).

### Man created in God's and Christ's image

One of our most touching and impressive revelations of the Savior is

provided in the Book of Ether, where the appearance of the Lord to the brother of Jared is recorded. I quote briefly from it. Said the Savior to the brother of Jared:

"Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. . . .

"Never have I shown myself unto man whom I created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. . . .

"This body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and *man have I created* after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh" (Ether 3:14-16; italics added).

There we have it in His own words! The glorious, irrefutable truth! Christ is the Creator! Shall we not accept His word in preference to uninspired theories of men?

### The Creator and Savior

Probably the greatest challenge to belief in Christ today is the fast-spreading denial that He is the Creator, coming from men who would supplant the revealed truth with the very tenuous and fragile theory that the universe and all life came about in some mysterious, spontaneous, accidental manner.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny also that He is the Christ.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He can save us from our sins.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He broke the bands of death. It is to reject the fact of the Resurrection.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He wrought out an atonement on the cross at Calvary.

To deny that He is the Creator is to reject His gospel and the true Christian religion.

But He is the Creator! He is the Redeemer! He is the Savior of the world! He did accomplish His atonement on Calvary, and He did bring about the Resurrection. This we know by the revelation of God! His gospel is true and we love it, and we love Him and deem it a privilege to serve Him!

### Testimony of our Heavenly Father

Can anyone ask for a plainer definition of creation and the purpose of life than is given in our scriptures?

We even have the word of our Eternal Heavenly Father. He bore testimony that Jesus Christ is His Beloved Son and in addition declared that He is very well pleased with Him. (See Matthew 3:17.)

He not only affirmed that Christ created the worlds, but, after each step in creation, did He not say that the work was well done?

When the waters and the firmament were put in position, "God saw that it was good." When life was placed on the earth, "God saw that it was good," and when creation was finished, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good.*" (See Genesis 1:10-31; italics added.)

The Father is a God of truth, and He said that the Savior is "full of grace and truth" (Moses 1:6). Then dare we disbelieve Him or reject His words? The Savior did the work of creation, and the Father was well pleased with Him! Then should we not be pleased to accept Him and serve Him?

The Father repeatedly expressed His satisfaction with the ministry of His Son. Did He not so speak at the baptism of Christ? "This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17; italics added).

Did He not repeat it on the Mount of Transfiguration? "This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 17:5; italics added).

Did He not introduce the Savior to the Nephites with the same expression? "Behold my Beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (3 Nephi 11:7; italics added).

And when He appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, did He not give His Beloved Son another positive endorsement?

Isn't the testimony of our Eternal Heavenly Father sufficient to erase all doubt from the human mind? It is He who declared that Jesus is His Son and that He did all things well.

### Easter means Christ

Then what is our faith?

It is that God is our Heavenly Father and that through the gospel we may become like Him and live with Him.

It is that Jesus of Nazareth is His Son and our Savior.

It is that the Savior indeed was the creator of heaven and earth, and that He is the Divine Pattern after whom we should fashion our lives.

Therefore, let us follow Him and worship Him in spirit and in truth. He holds out a warm invitation, and says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

When He was born the angels sang.

When He died the heavens wept.

When He broke the bands of death, angels were there to greet Him, and so was Mary. She knew Him and recognized Him as the Christ.

But some doubted.

Shall we be like Mary and believe and accept Him? Or shall we join the doubters and shroud ourselves in the darkness of unbelief?

Jesus is a God of light and life, not a symbol of death and doubt. He

lives, and will save everyone who is willing to serve Him. He is our divine Redeemer and our eternal Creator. He is the resurrection and the life. This is our testimony to the world.

Yes, today is Easter, and to us Easter means Christ—the resurrected Christ, the Son of God, our Creator and our Redeemer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

That stirring testimony of the risen Lord was given us by Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who has been our concluding speaker this morning.

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of

the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "Dedication." The benediction will then be pronounced by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

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The Choir sang "Dedication."  
Elder Hugh W. Pinnock offered the benediction.

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## SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

### FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P. M. on Sunday, April 3, 1983.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

### President Ezra Taft Benson

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and I have been assigned to conduct it.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 153rd Annual General

Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Yoshihiko Kikuchi preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio and television.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!" The invocation will be offered by Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The Choir sang "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!"

Elder F. Enzo Busche offered the invocation.

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