

You will understand, as Elisha's young servant came to understand when he discovered the city surrounded by the Syrian army. Running to Elisha in panic he asked, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?"

Elisha answered: "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

"And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:15-17).

When you are in tune with that Holy Spirit, you will be well armed to be the Lord's representative, prepared to teach and to testify, bringing souls to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In last April's Regional Representatives' seminar, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "In missionary work, as in all else, preparation precedes power. Encouragement to prepare while still very young can make a tremendous difference" (3 April 1987).

To my grandchildren, and to the youth of the Church wherever you are, I invite you to make the commitment to serve a mission. I invite you to become a part of the royal army of the Lord, to prepare yourselves physically, mentally, socially, spiritually—beginning right now.

President Benson has reminded you that you can do "nothing more important. School can wait. Scholarships can be deferred. Occupational goals can be postponed. Yes, even temple marriage should wait" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, p. 57; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 44).

With President Benson, I invite you to show your love and commitment

to the Lord by responding to His call to serve and joining your voice with thirty-four thousand other missionaries in singing:

*Called to serve Him, heav'nly
King of glory,
Chosen e'er to witness for his
name,
Far and wide we tell the Father's
story,
Far and wide his love proclaim.
Called to know the richness of his
blessing—
Sons and daughters, children of a
King—
Glad of heart, his holy name
confessing,
Praises unto him we bring.
Onward, ever onward, as we glory
in his name;
Onward, ever onward, as we glory
in his name;
Forward, pressing forward, as a
triumph song we sing.
God our strength will be; Press
forward ever,
Called to serve our King.
("Called to Serve," Hymns [1985],
no. 249)*

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

O youth of the Church, go and do likewise—be prepared to serve!

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

My dear brothers and sisters, I rejoice with you in the privilege of coming together on this beautiful Sabbath

day to worship our Father in Heaven and his Son Jesus Christ and to be instructed by their servants.

The Book of Mormon tells of the resurrected Lord visiting some of the people of the Americas. Clothed in a white robe, he descended out of heaven. Standing in the midst of a multitude, he stretched forth his hand and said:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world" (3 Nephi 11:10-11).

He has repeated this declaration in many modern revelations (see D&C 12:9, 39:2, 45:7). In harmony with his words, we solemnly affirm that Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God the Eternal Father, is the light and life of the world.

Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world because all things were made by him. Under the direction and according to the plan of God the Father, Jesus Christ is the Creator, the source of the light and life of all things. Through modern revelation we have the testimony of John, who bore record that Jesus Christ is "the light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men.

"The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him" (D&C 93:9-10).

The light of the world

Jesus Christ is the *light* of the world because he is the source of the light which "proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space" (D&C 88:12). His light is "the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (D&C 93:2; see also D&C 84:46). The scriptures call this universal light "the light of truth" (D&C 88:6), "the light of Christ" (D&C 88:7, Moroni 7:18), and the "Spirit of Christ" (Moroni 7:16). This is the light that quickens our understanding (see D&C 88:11). It is "the

light by which [we] may judge" (Moroni 7:18). It "is given to every man, that he may know good from evil" (Moroni 7:16).

Jesus Christ is also the light of the world because his example and his teachings illuminate the path we should walk to return to the presence of our Father in Heaven. Before Jesus was born, Zacharias prophesied that the Lord God of Israel would visit his people "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide [their] feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79).

During his ministry Jesus taught, "Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you" (3 Nephi 18:16). Later, he told his Apostles, "Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world," adding, "Behold, I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do" (3 Nephi 18:24). He taught the Nephite multitude, "Ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do" (3 Nephi 27:21).

The Savior emphasized the close relationship between his light and his commandments when he taught the Nephites, "Behold I am the law, and the light" (3 Nephi 15:9).

The Psalmist expressed that relationship: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

As the Lord led Lehi and his people out of Jerusalem, he said, "I will also be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments" (1 Nephi 17:13).

As we keep the Lord's commandments, we see his light ever brighter on our path and we realize the fulfillment of Isaiah's promise, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually" (Isaiah 58:11).

Jesus Christ is also the light of the world because his power persuades us to do good. The prophet Mormon taught: "All things which are good cometh of God; . . .

"Wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God" (Moroni 7:12-13). Mormon's words anticipate what the Lord later told Moroni while he was compiling the Book of Mormon: "He that believeth these things which I have spoken . . . shall know that these things are true; for it persuadeth men to do good.

"And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. . . . I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world" (Ether 4:11-12; see also D&C 11:12).

And so we see that Jesus Christ is the *light* of the world because he is the source of the light that quickens our understanding, because his teachings and his example illuminate our path, and because his power persuades us to do good.

The life of the world

Jesus Christ is the *life* of the world because of his unique position in what the scriptures call "the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death" (2 Nephi 11:5).

Jesus taught: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. . . .

". . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:9-10).

Later, Jesus explained to his Apostles, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

We come to the Father through the life-giving mission of the Son in two ways. In each of these ways, Jesus Christ is the life of the world, our Savior and our Redeemer.

Through the power and example of the infinite atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind will be resurrected (see 2 Nephi 9:7, 12). Our mortal life came into being because of his creative act. Our immortal life has now been assured because the Resurrected Lord

has redeemed us from death. According to the plan of the Father, the Son was "the firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18). "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Jesus Christ is also the life of the world because he has atoned for the sins of the world. By yielding to temptation, Adam and Eve were "cut off from the presence of the Lord" (Helaman 14:16). In the scriptures this separation is called spiritual death (see Helaman 14:16, D&C 29:41).

The atonement of our Savior overcame this spiritual death. The scriptures say, "The Son of God hath atoned for original guilt" (Moses 6:54). As Paul taught the Saints in Rome: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18). As a result of this atonement, "men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (Articles of Faith 1:2).

Our Savior has redeemed us from the sin of Adam, but what about the effects of our own sins? Since "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23), we are all spiritually dead. Again, our only hope for life is our Savior, who, the prophet Lehi taught, "offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7).

In order to lay claim upon our Savior's life-giving triumph over the spiritual death we suffer because of our own sins, we must follow the conditions he has prescribed. As he has told us in modern revelation, "I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16-17).

Our third article of faith describes the Savior's conditions in these words: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

In the words of our Savior, recorded in the Book of Mormon as he taught the people on this continent, "And whosoever will hearken unto my words and repenteth and is baptized, the same shall be saved" (3 Nephi 23:5).

In summary, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, is the *life* of the world because his resurrection and his atonement save us from both physical and spiritual death. Jacob rejoiced in this gift of life: "O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit" (2 Nephi 9:10).

I wish that everyone could understand our belief and hear our testimony that Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, is the light and life of the world.

Our Savior and our Redeemer

Some who profess to be followers of Christ insist that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not Christians. Indeed, there are those who make their living attacking our church and its doctrines. I wish all of them could have the experience I shared recently.

A friend who was making his first visit to Salt Lake City, called on me in my office. He is a well-educated man and a devout and sincere Christian. Although we have not discussed this with each other, we both know that some leaders of his denomination have taught that members of our church are not Christians.

After a short discussion on a matter of common interest, I told my friend I had something I would like him to see. We walked over to Temple Square and into the North Visitors' Center. We viewed the pictures of Bible and Book of Mormon Apostles and prophets. Then we turned our steps up the inclined walkway to the second level. Here Thorvaldsen's great statue of the

risen Christ dominates a setting suggestive of the immensity of space and the grandeur of the creations of God.

As we emerged and beheld this majestic likeness of the Christus, arms outstretched and hands showing the wounds of his crucifixion, my friend drew a sharp breath. We stood quietly for a few minutes, enjoying a reverent communion of worshipful thoughts about our Savior. Then, without further conversation, we made our way down to the street level. On the way we walked past the small diorama showing the Prophet Joseph Smith kneeling in the Sacred Grove.

As we left Temple Square and took our leave of one another, my friend took me by the hand. "Thank you for showing me that," he said. "Now I understand something about your faith that I have never understood before." I hope that every person who has ever had doubts about whether we are Christians can achieve that same understanding.

We love the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Messiah, our Savior and our Redeemer. His is the only name by which we can be saved (see Mosiah 3:17, 5:8; D&C 18:23). We seek to serve him. We belong to his church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our missionaries and members testify of Jesus Christ in many nations of the world. As the prophet Nephi wrote in the Book of Mormon, "We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26).

As we state in our first article of faith, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." God the Father, the great Elohim, the Almighty God, is the Father of our spirits, the framer of heaven and earth, and the author of the plan of our salvation (see Moses 1:31-33, 2:1-2;

D&C 20:17–21). Jesus Christ is his Only Begotten Son, Jehovah, the Holy One and God of Israel, the Messiah, “the God of the whole earth” (3 Nephi 11:14). As the Book of Mormon declares, “Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent” (Mosiah 3:18; see also Moses 6:52, 59). The scriptures proclaim and we reverently affirm that Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world.

What does this knowledge mean to Latter-day Saints? (We call ourselves “Saints” because this is the scriptural term for those who have sought to make their lives holy by entering into covenants to follow Christ.)

Our Savior is the light of the world. We should live so that we can be enlightened by his Spirit, and so that we may hear and heed the ratifying seal of the Holy Ghost, which testifies of the Father and the Son (see D&C 20:26). We should study the principles of his gospel and receive its ordinances. We should keep his commandments, including his two great commandments to love God and to love and serve our neighbors (see Matthew 22:36–40). We should be faithful to the covenants we have made in the name of Jesus Christ.

Our Savior is also the *life* of the world. We should give thanks for his absolute gift of immortality. We should receive the ordinances and keep the covenants necessary to receive his con-

ditional gift of life eternal, the greatest of all the gifts of God (see D&C 14:7).

Come unto Christ

In short, Latter-day Saints invite each other and all men and women everywhere to “come unto Christ.” As a prophet has told us in the Book of Mormon: “I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved” (Omni 1:26).

May God bless all of us to come unto Christ. I testify that he is our Savior and our Redeemer, the light and the life of the world, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “Truth Eternal” without announcement.

President Monson

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing “Truth Eternal.”

President Benson has asked that I serve as concluding speaker at this session of our conference.

President Thomas S. Monson

We live in a wicked world

Recently there moved over the wires of Associated Press a catalog of crime as the daily happenings around the world were relayed to the media and thence to the homes on every continent.

The headlines were brief. They highlighted murder, rape, robbery, molestation, fraud, deceit, and corruption. I made note of several: “Man Slays

Wife and Children, Then Turns Gun on Self”; “Child Identifies Molester”; “Hundreds Lose All As Multimillion-Dollar Scam Is Exposed.” The sordid list continued. Shades of Sodom, glimpses of Gomorrah.

President Ezra Taft Benson has often stated, “We live in a wicked world.” The Apostle Paul warned, “Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud,