

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson has addressed us, followed by the choir's singing "O Divine Redeemer," a favorite

number of our prophet and of many of us.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Thank you, Brother Bowden, for that beautiful number. That's a difficult one to follow.

Freedom is a spiritual need

The prophets have taught us that before the world was, there was a council in heaven. President Brigham Young instructed the Saints:

"The Council . . . said, 'Let there be an earth, and let there be a firmament above and beneath it,' and it was so. They said, 'Let there be heat and cold,' and it was so. They said, 'Let there be spring and summer, autumn and winter,' and it was so.

"Who will redeem the earth, who will go forth and make the sacrifice for the earth and all things it contains?' The Eldest Son said: 'Here am I'; and then he added, 'Send me.' But the second one, which was 'Lucifer, [a] Son of the Morning,' said, 'Lord, here am I, send me, I will redeem every son and daughter of Adam and Eve that lives on the earth, or that ever goes on the earth.' 'But,' says the Father, 'that will not answer at all. I give [unto] each and every individual his agency; all must use that in order to gain exaltation in my kingdom; inasmuch as they have the power of choice they must exercise that power. They are my children; the attributes which you see in me are in my children and they must use their agency. If you undertake to save all, you must save them in unrighteousness and corruption'" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], pp. 53-54).

As these spirits have come forth from the council in heaven to take their "turn on earth," they are still desiring

their free agency, and, in fact, they are willing to sacrifice for that freedom. We are witnessing today remarkable events occurring throughout the world: evidence of the strength of man's desire for freedom. The history of man's mortal experience would indicate that the desire to be free has spiritual roots.

There is an innate, overwhelming, compelling desire to be free. This desire seems to be more precious than life itself.

The Lord tells us how to be free

Another desire we carry from the preexistence is to know who we are and where we came from and what our opportunities are in this great eternal plan. Answers to these questions can really only be found in the gospel of our Lord and Savior.

As we hear the cries for help from those who are just now trying to deal with their newly found freedom, trying to use it and understand it, we can turn to the scriptures and read how the Lord prepared another nation for their freedom.

The scriptures record that Israel had lived in the land of Egypt for 430 years. For a time they had prospered under the leadership of Joseph. The account reads:

"And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

"And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

"And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

"Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land" (Exodus 1:6-10).

Then the narrative continues to tell how the Israelites were placed in bondage and became slaves to the Egyptians. Moses was raised up, trained, and charged with the responsibility of freeing them from bondage and leading them to their own promised land. His task was difficult, for Israel had lived about two centuries in slavery; they had been taught many of the idolatrous practices prominent in the land in that day. It would have been impossible for Moses to lead his people without the direction of the Lord.

The Israelites built a tabernacle

As a way of rebuilding their faith and reminding them who was their true God, Moses was instructed to establish certain principles and practices with them to help them return to the true doctrine. First, the Lord directed them to construct a tabernacle, which would be moved about with them from place to place as they journeyed towards their promised land. This was to be a house of worship, where their sacred observances could be held. It was to be used by those who were willing to abide by the Lord's law.

When the children of Israel were disobedient, the privilege of enjoying the blessings of having the tabernacle in their midst was removed from them. We read:

"And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp" (Exodus 33:7).

When the children of Israel again found favor in the sight of the Lord, the tabernacle was moved with them from

place to place as they went about their quest for the promised land. It led them by day and was their security by night.

Later, when they reached their homeland, King Solomon built a magnificent temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem where they could continue to enjoy an official house of worship. Israel worshipped in Solomon's Temple for 350 years. But they failed to be faithful, and dissension caused conflict in the tribes. This so weakened Israel that when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, made war on them, he was able to defeat them and looted the temple and destroyed it. Israel lost not only their place of worship but many also lost their homes when Nebuchadnezzar carried the people to Babylonia as his captives.

Ways Israel kept close to God

In addition to the tabernacle as a place of worship, the Lord gave Israel His written law contained on tablets of stone. These commandments were written by the finger of the Lord. They were kept for guidance and direction. The Ten Commandments were the basis of Hebrew law. Four of them have to do with our attitude toward God; the remaining six with our attitude toward our fellowman. Reverence for God was a basis for the Ten Commandments. Here was a foundation on which to build a society of law and order.

The Lord had another way of reminding Israel of the blessings He had given them. He had them establish religious customs, which became a part of their everyday life, to signify the ways through which they could express their faith in God. Israel refused to abandon these practices even after being taken into captivity. They conceived that God's dominion was not limited by national or political boundaries, and they would not give up their faith even though they struggled in a strange land. Deprived of their temple, they still had their law and their religious customs to worship their God.

We must be examples of freedom

Now, most of us will not be called to help nations organize newly found freedoms, but all of us can be involved by making certain the light of freedom burns brightly within our own souls. We can be certain that, by our actions, we are examples of how freedom should be enjoyed.

Following the pattern that He established for ancient Israel, the Lord has commanded us to build houses of worship for the purpose of having a place where the gospel can be taught. After understanding is achieved, we can enter into covenants with Him to be obedient to His will and, in turn, receive His promised blessings as a result of our faithfulness. We have temples—they now dot the maps of nations—where the worthy can enter, worship, be taught, and make covenants to serve God and abide by His law.

Freedom comes from obeying laws

From the very beginning of man's existence on earth, he has been taught that he must be obedient to law:

"There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:20-21).

Prophets through the ages have taught us to be obedient to the laws of the Lord. These laws are the foundation of our existence here and will bring order out of chaos.

President Wilford Woodruff once taught us:

"The God of heaven, who created this earth and placed his children upon it, gave unto them a law whereby they might be exalted and saved in a kingdom of glory. For there is a law given unto all kingdoms, and all things are governed by law throughout the whole universe. Whatever law anyone keeps, he is pre-

served by that law, and he receives whatever reward that law guarantees unto him. It is the will of God that all his children should obey the highest law, that they may receive the highest glory that is ordained for all immortal beings. But God has given all his children an agency, to choose what law they will keep" (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946], p. 10).

We should create our own traditions

The Lord has not been so explicit in providing us religious customs along the order of feasts and festivals to remind us of the blessings we receive from Him today. However, the practice of having traditions to keep us close to the great heritage which is ours to enjoy should be something every family should try to keep alive.

Daily we should kneel in family prayer and study the scriptures together. Weekly we should observe the Sabbath day by attending our meetings, especially sacrament meeting, and behaving appropriately in activities that are proper for the Lord's day. We should also gather our families together in weekly family home evenings. Perhaps it would also be appropriate to have a date with our wives each week to remind us of the great blessing they are in our lives. Monthly we should fast and pay our tithes and offerings to the Lord. Semiannually we should make listening to the messages delivered at general conference a family tradition. We should organize, annually, family reunions to keep alive our great gospel heritage.

Other traditions which should continually be part of our lives are receiving father's blessings and patriarchal blessings, missionary preparation, temple preparation and regular temple attendance where possible, and being together as family units on those occasions when sacred ordinances are performed in behalf of a family member.

If we will build righteous traditions in our families, the light of the gospel

can grow ever brighter in the lives of our children from generation to generation. We can look forward to that glorious day when we will all be united together as eternal family units to reap the everlasting joy promised by our Eternal Father to His righteous children.

Our family activities and traditions can be a beacon to the rest of the world as an example of how we should live to merit His choice blessings and live in peace and harmony until the day that He returns to rule and reign over us.

This is the Lord's work in which we are engaged. God lives! Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, is my solemn witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We are grateful to the owners and the operators of the many television and radio stations and cable and satellite systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience in many areas of the world.

The chorus will now sing "Come, Rejoice," and the benediction will be given by Elder Douglas H. Smith of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "Come, Rejoice."
Elder Douglas H. Smith offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 160th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, March 31, 1990, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Granger Utah Region. Glenda C. Nordfelt conducted, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we greet you in this the second general session of the 160th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio and many who are watching in stake centers in various parts of the world where the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems for their cooperation and generosity in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

Elders Dallin H. Oaks, Hartman Rector, Jr., and F. Burton Howard are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by a Primary children's choir from the Granger Utah Region under the direction of Sister Glenda C. Nordfelt, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will open this meeting by singing "A Child's Prayer." The invocation will be offered by Elder James M. Paramore of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.