

the dictionary, he learns that there are many other meanings of the word *see*, such as coming to know Him, discerning Him, recognizing Him and His work, perceiving His importance, or coming to understand Him.

Such heavenly enlightenment and blessings are available to each of us.

God our Father lives, as does His Son, Jesus the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I am a grateful recipient of His healing power and love. This is His work. I so testify in His holy name, amen.

The choir sang "Blessed Are the Men Who Fear Him" without announcement.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the choir singing "Blessed Are the Men Who Fear Him."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation," following which we shall hear from Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder James M. Paramore

My beloved brothers and sisters, I love you so much and I seek an interest in your faith and prayers today as I speak a few words to you. Several weeks ago I met a wonderful man while traveling to Texas. May I share with you a letter that I have written to him.

Witnesses of the Lord

Dear Ken, I feel impressed to write you following our long discussion a few weeks ago on the airplane. I hope you have received my letters and the materials about the Church. I have thought of you so often and how anxious you were to learn all you could about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I felt I would like to share some thoughts today about the many witnesses of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and His mission to bless all mankind. Because He is the central figure of the life on this earth, every possible opportunity should be taken to understand Him, His purposes, and the witnesses that can bring us to Him. It seems that nothing could be more important to this

world and to each of us than to know that.

You know, Ken, each Christmas we sing a song with great feeling and gusto, "Joy to the world, the Lord [will] come; Let earth receive her King! Let ev'ry heart prepare him room, And Saints and angels sing" (*Hymns*, no. 201). These immortal, almost sacred words state that He will come. But, Ken, He *has* come. And it is about His coming—many times—and the witnesses thereof that I would like to write today.

God, our Father, has indeed established a plan for this earth and for all of us. Jesus Christ was central to that plan. Christ would come to earth, give of Himself to people every day, overcome the world, establish His ways for others to follow, and then take upon Himself the sins of the world in Gethsemane, and then be raised from the tomb to live again and tell us that we would live. He would give to the world hope and eternal perspectives. He would offer the way, the truth, and the light by which it could be done. His message would illuminate every human aspiration, every hope and desire.

No more could we cry out, Ken, "If only I could know who I am, what is my destiny, who is God, and why am I here." Many times He gave the answers in His life, in His teachings, and in the words left about Him. Thank our Heavenly Father above that there are many witnesses of Him in each era of time to which we can go and with perfect surety know of Him and His ways. All these witnesses certify of Him, and of the things He taught, and of the guidelines or standards—yes, the commandments—He gave that man could securely pass through this earth with joy and happiness and eternal blessings.

Old Testament witnesses

As we open scriptural pages to read of the plan for life on earth, we see that our Father in Heaven made known to the prophets of the Old Testament that the Savior, His Only Begotten Son, would come to earth. Isaiah the prophet said that "a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Isaiah 7:14), and "the government shall be upon his shoulder" (Isaiah 9:6), and later said that "the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 40:28) was "the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 43:3), even the "redeemer . . . that maketh all things" (Isaiah 44:24; see Isaiah 40–45). Jeremiah, Zechariah, Job, Moses, and others of the prophets had revealed to them the Christ and that He would come to provide the way for all of us to return to our Father in Heaven. These prophets left their witnesses for us to study and to pray about and to receive our own testimony of the "looked for" Savior of the Old Testament.

New Testament witnesses

My friend, the world waited for the Savior, not knowing fully what He would do. And then came that long-awaited day when He came to the earth as the babe in Bethlehem. Miraculous events surrounded His birth, and acknowledgment was given from heaven

that this indeed was the Only Begotten Son of God sent to earth to redeem all mankind from death.

While here on the earth those short years, He fulfilled His ministry, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6); and by acknowledging that He was sent to do the work of His Father in Heaven, and fulfilling all righteousness—He would Himself be baptized by one whom He acknowledged to be a prophet, even John the Baptist. He gave a special power, the gift of the Holy Ghost, to all who would follow Him and be baptized, which would, He said, be a Comforter, would guide to all truth, would teach all things, would bring all things to our remembrance, would show us all things to come, and would be a witness, and testify of Him (see John 14–16).

He also called Apostles and prophets and others and gave them authority to act in His name. He established His church to serve as a refuge from the world, where the Saints could learn about Him and His truths and His ways and could learn to love and serve each other.

One stands in awe in reading and feeling the profound effect of His teachings and life. He raised the dead and made the blind see. He fed thousands on several occasions from just a few loaves of bread and some fishes. He forgave the repentant sinner, gave hope and encouragement, and administered to others all the days of His life. And then He offered Himself, though in the greatest agony and pain ever known to mankind, upon the cross as a final witness of His love for you and me by taking our sins upon Himself, a pure and sinless Son of God, that we might have eternal life. He did something for us that we could not do for ourselves. But think of the great blessing that came a few days later when the tomb was open and He emerged as the living, resurrected, immortal Christ, showing us that He lives and that we, too, would live.

So, again, the witnesses. The record in the New Testament reveals His life and the many witnesses of Him. It did again provide the commandments, or guides or standards, and ordinances by which mankind could be blessed eternally.

Book of Mormon witnesses

Ken, when Jesus was in Palestine, He said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). And following His resurrection, He visited some of the other sheep on the American continent and again established and provided the witnesses as He had done in Palestine.

When He came among them, He said, "And behold, I am the light and the life of the world" (3 Nephi 11:11). "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets [including those who lived on the American continent] testified shall come into the world" (11:10).

He established the Church among them. He gave the priesthood and the ordinances of baptism and again the gift of the Holy Ghost to all who would follow Him. He gave prophets and disciples to direct His church and people. He blessed the people, and many miracles followed His work.

My friend, His few days among this people are recorded in the Book of Mormon to help us gain the witness for ourselves. The people in ancient America were so touched and changed by the teachings and power of the Savior that they lived His teachings for over two hundred years. This stands as an everlasting witness of the power of the Savior to cause people to live in peace and unity and receive His blessings. Listen to a recorded account of a very special witness, the Book of Mormon:

"And it came to pass . . . , the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, . . . and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man

did deal justly one with another. . . .

" . . . They did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord. . . .

" . . . And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God" (4 Nephi 1:2, 12, 16).

"[And all of this] because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people" (1:15).

Latter-day witnesses

My friend, what powerful witnesses Jesus gave those few short years upon the earth. But, unfortunately, man would ultimately change His truths, His church, and lose sight of His promises. And so, in the year 1820, Jesus would again cross the veil that separates earth life and life hereafter in response to a fervent desire and prayer of a young man, Joseph Smith, Jr., and provide the *witnesses again*.

Joseph read in the New Testament, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, . . . and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). Joseph then, in sincere faith in this promise of the Lord, went and poured his soul out to God. And the heavens opened, and two heavenly beings descended and stood in the air above him.

And Joseph said, "I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). And so the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the young man and ushered in the witnesses that would bring us back to the knowledge once again.

Ken, the heavens were opened, not just for Joseph Smith, Jr., but for the whole world. This would usher in again all that He had established while He was upon the earth.

So, once again witnesses were given, as during the *Old Testament days*

and during the *life of the Savior* upon the earth and *as He appeared to the inhabitants of the American continent* after His resurrection. He always provides witnesses of the truths and blessings He brings.

Finally, Ken, we have in our day, as before, the witnesses of the members of the Church, who follow, know, and testify of these eternal truths through the power of the Holy Ghost.

The most important news

My friend, many years ago, about the turn of the century, a writer for a newspaper was asked an important question, "What would be the most important news the world could receive?" He thought and thought about the question, he talked to many people, and read all he could in an effort to find an answer for himself. And finally, he printed his answer, "To know that Jesus Christ lives today would be the most important news the world could receive. In fact, if He lives today, then we too will live eternally as He said."

Ken, no, God has not forgotten His children, even though they leave His

presence for a season and come to earth. We are all on a journey to come to earth and prove ourselves, to find the Savior and the witnesses we have talked about today, and to embrace them with all of our heart. This will bring us peace and safety in a world of ever more frightening challenges and will ultimately make us witnesses ourselves of Him and His work and take us home one day to our Father in Heaven crowned with glory and eternal lives. Ken, won't you take that journey? I bear to you my solemn testimony that it is true. There are witnesses—the New and Old Testaments. There are Apostles and prophets upon this earth today. His church is upon this earth today, and I do so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

The straight and narrow way

While traveling along a mountainous road one evening through a driving rainstorm punctuated with frequent claps of thunder and flashes of lightning, Sister Wirthlin and I could barely see the road, either in front of us or to the right and the left. I watched the white lines on that road more intently than ever before. Staying within the lines kept us from going onto the shoulder and into the deep canyon on one side and helped us avoid a head-on collision on the other. To wander over either line could have been very dangerous. Then I thought, "Would a right-thinking person deviate to the left or the right of a traffic lane if he knew

the result would be fatal? If he valued his mortal life, certainly he would stay between these lines."

That experience traveling on this mountain road is so like life. If we stay within the lines that God has marked, he will protect us, and we can arrive safely at our destination.

The Savior taught this principle when he said,

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13–14).