

petitioned the Lord but still could not read it. The third time he knelt down and suggested to the Lord that he felt that this woman was waiting for her work to be done and if he couldn't read the microfilm, how could this take place? As he got up and looked at the microfilm again, it was perfectly clear.

I believe that when you diligently seek after your ancestors—in faith—needed information will come to you even when no mortal records of their lives are available.

### A vast and grand work

Our labor for our ancestors is part of the divine plan of our Heavenly Father. It is a momentous assignment given to His Church, which we *will* complete because He has ordained it. This work is a powerful witness of the divine mission of Joseph Smith, through whom it was revealed.

Elder John A. Widtsoe made this remarkable statement: "When the history of human thought shall be written from the point of view of temple worship, it may well be found that temples and the work done in them have been the dominating influence in shaping human thought from the beginning of the race. Even today," he continued, "political con-

troversies are as nothing in determining the temper of a people, as compared with religious sentiments and convictions, especially as practiced in the temples of the people" ("Temple Worship," p. 52).

The salvation of our Heavenly Father's children from Adam and Eve to the present generation is the most important work in time and eternity. Our joy—or our disappointment—in the eternities may hinge on our willing participation in this great latter-day work.

President Spencer W. Kimball said, "The more clearly we see eternity, the more obvious it becomes that the Lord's work . . . is one vast and grand work with striking similarities on each side of the veil" ("The Things of Eternity—Stand We in Jeopardy?" *Ensign*, Jan. 1977, p. 3).

God bless us to love our ancestors and to be worthy of temple participation. I declare this work is true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder John M. Madsen, followed by V. Dallas Merrill, who were called as members of the Seventy since last April conference.

## Elder John M. Madsen

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of joy and gratitude for the transcendent events which took place in the Kirtland Temple 157 years ago today. And I wish to pay humble tribute to my parents, who raised me "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Enos 1:1).

### "I the Lord am with you"

I love the words of the Lord given to all who are called and appointed to go

forth and preach the gospel in these latter days: "O ye my servants . . . be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:5–6).

All who know and understand the glorious work of redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ and all who know of his majesty and power and promises understand why they are to be of good

cheer. They who have come to know him do not fear! They look unto him in "every thought." They "doubt not," and they "fear not" (D&C 6:36). They know that he, the Lord Jesus Christ, is with them and that he will stand by them! (see D&C 6:32; 29:4-7; 32:3; 84:87-88).

"Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you."

#### **A sacred charge: "Bear record of me"**

Following this comforting and sacred promise is a serious and equally sacred charge, even a commandment which cannot be ignored: "And ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:6).

Why this sacred charge, this commandment of the Lord to his servants? The Lord answers:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

"For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me" (D&C 132:22).

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

#### **All nations will know the Lord's identity**

No doctrine is more fundamental to an understanding of the plan of salvation than the doctrine which reveals the true identity and role of Jesus Christ.

But how are all the nations of the earth to come to an understanding of the true identity of the Lord Jesus Christ? Consider these prophecies:

• "The time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread

throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" (Mosiah 3:20).

• "These last records [clearly referring to the Book of Mormon and other latter-day scriptures] . . . shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved" (1 Nephi 13:40).

• "And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth" (Moses 7:62).

#### **God's instrument to gather his elect**

President Benson has plainly declared that "the Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to 'sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather [His] elect'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, p. 3; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 4). We have no more sacred privilege, and no more urgent and sacred responsibility, than to bear testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! And we have no more effective instrument with which to accomplish this sacred task than the record which God has prepared for that very purpose, even the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ! In its pages, as in the other standard works of the Church, the true identity of the Lord Jesus Christ stands forever revealed—past, present, and future!

#### **The Book of Mormon's witness of Jesus**

Concert halls are filled at Christmas-time by people in many lands throughout the world who, with reverence and rejoicing, stand and sing the triumphant and

immortal words of Isaiah, set to the music of Handel's *Messiah*:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (JST, Isaiah 9:6).

But who is this child? Who is this son? And "whose son is he?" (Matthew 22:42). Who is this "mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," spoken of by Isaiah? The Book of Mormon "verifies and clarifies" who he is! (Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], p. 13).

He is Jesus Christ, born into this world as the Only Begotten Son of God the Eternal Father (see 2 Nephi 25:12; Jacob 4:5, 11; Alma 5:48; 9:26; 12:33-34; 13:5), and the Son of Mary "after the manner of the flesh" (1 Nephi 11:18-24; 2 Nephi 2:4, 8; 31:7; 32:6; Mosiah 3:8).

He is Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Messiah, the Savior and Redeemer of the world (see 1 Nephi 1:19; 10:4-17; 15:13-14; 2 Nephi 2:6-10), of whom all the prophets testified (see 3 Nephi 11:10; Mosiah 3:13; Helaman 8:13-23), who came into the world so "that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name" (Mosiah 3:9; see also 2 Nephi 31:2-21; Alma 32:21-43).

He is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was "judged of the world, . . . lifted up upon the cross" (1 Nephi 11:32-33), and crucified (see 1 Nephi 19:9-10, 13-15; 2 Nephi 6:9; 10:3-5; 25:12-13; Mosiah 3:9; 15:7-9) to "atone for the sins of the world" (Alma 34:8; see also Mosiah 3:11-18; Alma 22:14; 33:22-23).

He is Jesus Christ, who, before descending to come down from heaven to dwell among the children of men (see Mosiah 3:5), was none other than the Great Jehovah (see Moroni 10:34; D&C 110:3-4; Abraham 1:16; 2:6-8), the

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see 1 Nephi 19:7-15; Mosiah 7:19-20; Helaman 8:13-23), the Holy One of Israel (see 2 Nephi 6:9), who gave the law unto Moses on the mount! (see 3 Nephi 15:5).

He is Jesus Christ, "the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning" (Mosiah 3:8; see also 2 Nephi 9:6; Alma 11:39; 3 Nephi 9:15; D&C 38:1-3; 76:24), whose infinite atonement (see 2 Nephi 2:6-10; 9:5-10; Alma 34:8-16; 36:17-18) brings the resurrection of the dead (see 2 Nephi 9:10-13, 21-22; Jacob 4:11-12; Alma 11:42-45; 40:23; Helaman 14:15-19).

He is Jesus Christ, "the Eternal Judge of both [the] quick and [the] dead" (Moroni 10:34; see also 2 Nephi 2:9-10; 9:13-17, 41; Mosiah 3:10, 18; 3 Nephi 27:13-15; 28:31; Mormon 3:20-22).

He is Jesus Christ, "the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity" (Mosiah 3:5).

"O ye my servants . . . , be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the Living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:5-6).

I know and bear witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that he was and is the Great Jehovah, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. I know that he atoned for the sins of the world and that he was resurrected with a glorious body of flesh and bone. I bear witness that he lives and that he soon will come again to rule and reign as "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 19:16). May we truly "flood the earth with the Book of Mormon" (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, p. 4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 5), that all who will may come unto him and be saved, I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.