

## SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 164th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1994. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began.

### President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this afternoon to the fifth and concluding session of the 164th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Ezra Taft Benson is watching this session in his apartment, and Clinton Cutler is excused, being ill.

We note that Elders M. Russell Ballard, Ted E. Brewerton, and David E. Sorensen are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall; and Elders J. Richard Clarke and Dennis B. Neuenschwander are in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. We also send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere, who are par-

ticipating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, accompanied by John Longhurst, will provide the music for this session. The choir will begin this service by singing "Come, All Whose Souls Are Lighted." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Monte J. Brough, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Come, All Whose Souls Are Lighted."

Elder Monte J. Brough offered the invocation.

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### President Monson

Thank you, Brother Brough.

The choir will now sing "With All the Power of Heart and Tongue." Elder David B. Haight of the Council of Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

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The choir sang "With All the Power of Heart and Tongue."

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## Elder David B. Haight

### Longings that lead us to Jesus

I pray for a portion of your faith and prayers as I bear witness of Christ. In the hearts of all mankind, of whatever race or station in life, there are inexpressible longings for something they do not now possess. This longing is implanted by a concerned Creator.

A loving Heavenly Father's design is that this longing of the human heart should lead to the One who alone can

satisfy it—even Jesus of Nazareth, who was foreordained in the Grand Council before the earth was created.

To the brother of Jared, the pre-mortal Jesus said:

"Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. . . . In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name" (Ether 3:14).

### Expand our understanding of Christ

Today is Easter—a day designated to solemnize the bodily resurrection of the Savior of the world. As members of His restored church, it is imperative that we do our utmost to expand our understanding of His premortal commission, His earthly ministry, His unjust crucifixion, the agony of His suffering, His final sacrifice, and His resurrection. Each of us is profoundly indebted to Him, for we were purchased by the shedding of His own precious blood. We are surely obligated to follow His admonition, to believe on His name, and to testify of Him and His word.

I am indebted for some of my remarks to eyewitness accounts of Christ's life as recorded in the New Testament; to prophets—ancient and modern—especially to the Prophet Joseph Smith for his personal witness that God the Father and His Son live and for his faithfully following divine instructions in bringing forth the fulness of the everlasting gospel as contained in the Book of Mormon and other latter-day scriptures; also to the apostolic writings of Elders James E. Talmage and Bruce R. McConkie; and to others, including theologian and believer Frederic Farrar. Our scriptures teach us gospel truths, and inspired writers add to our understanding.

### Washing the disciples' feet

We have learned that during the last days of His mortal life, Jesus had withdrawn from all public teaching and had spent the Wednesday before Passover in Bethany in seclusion. The next day, Thursday, Jesus instructed Peter and John to go to Jerusalem, where they would find a room prepared so they could meet together. In that room Jesus met with the Twelve, and they sat down to eat.

It was custom that as a person entered a room, he laid aside his sandals at the door and his feet were washed to

remove the dust from his travels. A servant usually performed this lowly task, but on this sacred night, "Jesus Himself, in His eternal humility and self-denial, rose from His place at the meal to do [this] menial service" (Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ* [Portland, Oreg.: Fountain Publications, 1964], p. 557).

Jesus said to them:

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:13-14).

"He their Lord and Master had washed their feet. It was a kind and gracious task, and such ought to be the nature of all their dealings with each other. He had done it to teach them humility, . . . self-denial, [and] love" (*Life of Christ*, p. 559).

During the course of the meal, He revealed the terrible news that one among them would betray Him, and a deep sadness fell over all of them.

Jesus spoke to Judas, "That [which] thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27). And Judas left the room to do his awful deed.

### Teaching the chosen eleven

Conscious of the impending events, Jesus opened His heart to His chosen eleven, saying:

"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. . . .

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: [but] whither I go, ye cannot come. . . .

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:31, 33-35).

While in that upper room, Jesus—initiating the sacrament—took bread, brake it, prayed over it, and passed it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body

which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

And then, passing the cup, He said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (v. 20).

The Savior prayed to the Father for the Apostles and all believers, saying:

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:1-3).

The time which remained for Him to be with them was short. He told them of the Holy Ghost, whom He would send to comfort and guide them in truth. He taught them many things that night in the upper room as He tried to prepare them for that which He knew was coming.

### Anguish in Gethsemane

They rose from the table, united their voices in a hymn, and left the room together to walk to the Garden of Gethsemane and all that awaited them there.

"The awful hour of His deepest [suffering] had arrived. . . . Nothing remained . . . but the torture of physical pain and . . . mental anguish. . . . He . . . calm[ed] His spirit by prayer and solitude to meet that hour in which all that is evil in the Power of [Satan] should wreak its worst upon the Innocent and Holy [One]. And He must face that hour alone" (*Life of Christ*, p. 575).

"My soul," He said, "'is full of anguish, even unto death'" (*Life of Christ*, p. 576). It was not the anguish and fear of pain and death but "the burden . . . of the world's sin which lay heavy on His heart" (p. 579).

"He withdrew to find His only consolation in communing with [His Fa-

ther]. And there He found all that He needed. Before that hour was over He was prepared for the worst that Satan or man could do" (p. 580).

"From the terrible conflict in Gethsemane, Christ emerged a victor. Though in the dark tribulation of that . . . hour He had pleaded that the bitter cup be removed from His lips, . . . the Father's will was never lost sight of" (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916], p. 614).

### Betrayal, trials, and scourging

And then came Judas with his betraying kiss; Christ's surrender to His enemies; the arrest of the Son of God and three sham trials before the priests in the Sanhedrin; the insults and the derision of the multitudes; Christ's appearance before Pontius Pilate, then Herod, then again before Pilate. Then came the final pronouncement of Pilate. After three appeals to the multitude of Jews to spare one of their own fell upon deaf ears, he delivered Jesus to be scourged.

"Scourging was the ordinary preliminary to crucifixion. . . . The . . . sufferer was publicly stripped, . . . tied . . . to a pillar, and then . . . blows were inflicted with leathern thongs, weighted with jagged . . . bone [or rock]. The victim generally fainted, [or] often died" (*Life of Christ*, p. 624).

### The Crucifixion

When the cross had been prepared, they placed it upon His shoulders and led Him to Golgotha. "But Jesus was enfeebled . . . by [hours] of violent . . . agitation, . . . by an evening of deep . . . emotion, . . . by the mental [anguish] of the garden, [and] by [the] three trials and three sentences of death before the Jews. . . . All [of] these, [added] to the [wounds] of the scourging [and loss of blood], had utterly broken . . . His physi-

cal strength" (*Life of Christ*, pp. 634-35). So a bystander was enlisted to carry the heavy cross.

At Calvary, Christ was laid down upon the cross. "His arms were stretched along the cross-beams; and at the centre of the open palms, the point of a huge iron nail was placed [and driven through the quivering flesh] into the wood" (*Life of Christ*, p. 639). His feet were also nailed to the cross, which was slowly raised and fixed firmly in the ground. "All the voices about Him rang with blasphemy and spite, and in that long slow agony His dying ear caught no [words] of gratitude, of pity, or of love" (p. 644). Every movement would be agony to the fresh wounds in the hands and the feet. "Dizziness, . . . thirst, . . . sleeplessness, . . . fever, . . . long [hours] of torment. . . Such was the death to which Christ was doomed" (p. 641).

Jesus was nailed to the cross on that fateful Friday morning, probably between nine and ten o'clock. "At noontide the light of the sun was obscured, and black darkness spread over the whole land. The terrifying gloom continued for a period of three hours. . . It was a fitting sign of the earth's deep mourning over the impending death of her Creator" (*Jesus the Christ*, p. 660).

At the ninth hour Christ uttered that anguished cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). "In that bitterest hour the dying Christ was alone. [So] that the supreme sacrifice of the Son might be consummated in all its fulness, the Father seems to have withdrawn . . . His immediate Presence, leaving to the Savior of men the glory of complete victory over the forces of sin and death" (*Jesus the Christ*, p. 661).

### **"It is finished"**

Later, "realizing that He was no longer forsaken, but that His atoning sacrifice had been accepted by the Father, and that His mission in the flesh had

been carried to glorious consummation, He exclaimed in a loud voice of holy triumph: 'It is finished.' In reverence, resignation, and relief, He addressed the Father saying: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' He bowed His head, and voluntarily gave up His life" (*Jesus the Christ*, pp. 661-62).

"At that moment the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. An earthquake shook the earth. . . . The multitude, [now] utterly sobered . . . , returned to Jerusalem" (*Life of Christ*, pp. 651-52).

Christ's body was lovingly taken from the cross, placed on fine linen purchased by Joseph of Arimathea, covered with rich spices, and carried to a nearby garden where a new tomb belonging to Joseph was located.

It was now late in the afternoon, and "the preparations had to be hurried, because when the sun had set the Sabbath would have begun. All that they could do, therefore, was to wash [and lay the precious body] amid the spices, to wrap the head in a white napkin, to roll the fine linen round . . . the wounded limbs, and to lay the body reverently in the rocky niche" (*Life of Christ*, p. 659). Then a great stone was rolled across the opening of the tomb.

### **The empty tomb**

On the dawn of that first-ever Easter morn, the two Marys, along with other women, carried their precious spices and ointments to the tomb to finish preparing the body. They wondered who would help them remove the stone from the opening of the sepulchre. To their amazement, they found the heavy stone already rolled away, the body of Jesus gone, and two angels in white bearing witness that Christ had risen from the dead. The two women hurried to the disciples with their news. John and Peter rushed to the tomb to find that it was so. The grave was empty.

Mary of Magdala returned once more to the tomb and there uttered the words, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him" (John 20:13). And then Jesus Himself stood before her and said to her, "Mary" (v. 16). Now that she recognized Him, He gently instructed her, "Touch me not; for I [have] not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (v. 17). And she hastened to obey.

After rising from the tomb on the third day after His crucifixion, Jesus appeared not only to Mary but to the other women also. A third appearance of Jesus was to Peter. On the same day, two of the disciples were on their way to the village named Emmaus when Christ joined with them. Once more, for the fifth time on that memorable Easter day, Jesus manifested Himself to His disciples. Ten of them were gathered together seeking solace when Christ appeared before them.

"Peace be unto you," He said.

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:36, 39).

### "Feed my sheep"

Later on, at the seashore at Galilee, while the Savior and the disciples were eating fish together, Jesus asked Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"

"Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my lambs."

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" He asked again.

"Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my sheep."

A third time: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

In anguish, Peter said, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

And the Savior replied yet again, "Feed my sheep" (see John 21:15-17).

As the place of His ascension, Jesus chose the Mount of Olives. Here on the Mount the Savior instructed the Apostles and those whom He had commissioned:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

This is our mandate. This is why we go to all nations of the earth proclaiming His gospel.

### How great the wisdom and the love

Eliza R. Snow, who loved this work—as do I—wrote these precious lines:

How great the wisdom and the love  
That filled the courts on high  
And sent the Savior from above  
To suffer, bleed, and die!

His precious blood he freely spilt;  
His life he freely gave,  
A sinless sacrifice for guilt,  
A dying world to save. . . .

How great, how glorious, how complete,  
Redemption's grand design,  
Where justice, love, and mercy meet  
In harmony divine!  
["How Great the Wisdom and the Love," *Hymns*, no. 195]

The prophet Alma taught that the plan of mercy required an atonement to be made by God himself "to appease the demands of justice," that God might be a perfect, just, and merciful God (Alma 42:15). I bear witness that He lives, that He is our Savior. His is the pathway to

true happiness, I declare in His holy name, Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

Thank you, Elder Haight, for that touching account of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Robert D. Hales, who was sustained yesterday as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Elder Gerald E. Melchin of the Seventy, who is currently presiding over the Toronto Ontario Temple.

## **Elder Robert D. Hales**

### **Shaking of the oak tree**

It is time for my response. Nineteen years ago, after I was set apart by the Quorum of the Twelve in the temple as an assistant to the Twelve Apostles, Elder LeGrand Richards gave me two pieces of wisdom that have come to me over and over in the past fifty-some-odd hours that I have known of this call. First was, "Oh, to be a boy and have your whole life ahead of you." I was forty-two years of age. I am now sixty-one and am once again a boy. There are men sitting on this stand who have been Apostles and in the First Presidency for half my age.

The second gem of wisdom that Elder LeGrand Richards gave me was that each time a new assignment in the Church came to him, it was like the shaking of an oak tree: when the tree shook, an acorn would fall and be planted, allowing him a new beginning in that assignment. "You know, my life has been like a great oak tree. From a tiny acorn I would grow a great oak tree." Then he said, "I did it in business, and the oak tree shook. An acorn came down, and they sent me out as a mission president. Then I grew another oak tree; they sent me out a second time as a mission president, and then a third." Then he talked of being a Presiding Bishop. And each time the oak tree would shake, an acorn would be planted.

At this time, I understand the oak tree has shaken. An acorn has been planted; it is a new beginning.

### **Expressions of gratitude**

I express gratitude, my brothers and sisters, for the strength which comes through your faith and prayers. I am in need of your prayers at this time of my calling. To be an Apostle of the Lord, I am finding, is a process—a process of repentance and humility, to look inward as we've been instructed and ask for forgiveness and strength to be what I should be. Unfortunately, I am not a perfect man, and infallibility does not come with the call. Therefore, I must ask for forgiveness from Heavenly Father for those things which I have done which are less than perfect and ask forgiveness of anyone I might have offended knowingly or unknowingly because of my personality or style.

The strength which will come through your prayers will be invaluable to what I need to do to forge the spiritual strength required to have my voice and my testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ penetrate the hearts of those who will hear.

I express my appreciation to my parents, my dear brother who has passed away, and my sister for their loving example. I am grateful for the many teachers, and the priesthood leaders who work week after week, teaching us as youth to love the Lord. I wish, also, to express appreciation and my deep love for my wife, children, and grandchildren. I have been privileged to work among the finest Brethren that this earth can have in the Quorum of the Seventy—working