

to carry our sorrows and relieve our burdens that we might be healed from within, be made whole persons, and receive everlasting joy in his kingdom. May our faith in the Father and the Son help each of us to become whole. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have heard from Elder J Ballard Washburn of the Seventy, followed by Bishop Merrill J. Bateman, the Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder Robert D. Hales

Expression of love for prophets

President Hinckley, President Monson, President Faust, as we raised our hands in the law of common consent during the solemn assembly, we gave our consecration, our love, and our devotion to our prophet, and we sustain the First Presidency. "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, no. 19).

Twice in the space of a year we have lost prophets who are very dear to us, President Ezra Taft Benson and President Howard W. Hunter. These two great prophets of God brought truth and light and joy into our lives. They conveyed to us the word of God. They taught us about the importance of family, studying the Book of Mormon, and living our lives in such a way that we would draw closer to God. They taught us the importance of being kind to one another, obeying the commandments, and how to receive a fulness of joy and merit eternal life. They have pleaded with us to live more Christlike lives, to emulate the Savior in all we do, and to qualify ourselves to be worthy of the saving and exalting blessings available only in the holy temples of the Lord. They gave us words of encouragement and wise counsel to bring more happiness and peace into our lives and into the world. We love them for their obedience and for their concern for us.

Today I join you in sustaining President Gordon B. Hinckley as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We live in a world of turmoil where we find sadness and destruction in every corner, much of which is brought about by man's failure to listen to the words of the true prophets of God. How different would the lives have been of those who lived in all dispensations if they had listened to the prophet Moses and followed the Ten Commandments?

There has always been a desperate need for the steady and reassuring voice of a living prophet of God—one who will speak the mind and will of God in showing the way to spiritual safety and personal peace and happiness.

The Lord protects Jehoshaphat's people

Our loving Heavenly Father has given the world prophets from the days of Adam. The prophets of old taught well the importance of listening to the voice of prophets. The story of Jehoshaphat found in 2 Chronicles 20 is an example. King Jehoshaphat had several great armies coming to battle with him in an attempt to possess his land. Understandably he was seized with dreadful fear, so he proclaimed a fast throughout all his kingdom and gathered the people of Judah together to plead for guidance from the Lord. Jehoshaphat

humbly and earnestly prayed, "O our God, . . . we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee" (v. 12).

Then came the answer of the Lord through the prophet Jahaziel: "Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, *Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.* . . .

"Fear not, nor be dismayed; . . . for the Lord will be with you" (vv. 15, 17; italics added).

Jehoshaphat and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell in thankful prayer before the Lord.

Jehoshaphat then gave very important counsel that we today would do well to obey. Indeed, just as the people of Judah, our lives may depend upon it—even our eternal lives: "*Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper*" (v. 20; italics added).

As promised, the Lord protected the good people of Judah. As Jehoshaphat's forces looked on, those armies which came to battle against them fought so fiercely among themselves that they completely destroyed one another before they ever reached the people of Judah. Listen to a prophet's voice and obey. There is safety in following the living prophet.

Prophets speak plainly and boldly

A characteristic of prophets throughout the ages is that, regardless of the consequences, they have had the strength to speak the words of God with plainness and boldness. As Nephi made an end to his record, he taught:

"And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do

good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal.

"And it speaketh harshly against sin, according to the *plainness of the truth*; wherefore, no man will be angry at the words which I [the prophet] have written save he shall be of the spirit of the devil.

"*I glory in plainness; I glory in truth; I glory in my Jesus*, for he hath redeemed my soul from hell" (2 Nephi 33:4-6; italics added).

Micaiah speaks plainly to Ahab

Another account of Jehoshaphat illustrates how prophets speak directly and plainly the word of God and let the consequence follow. Ahab, the king of Israel, invited Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, to join with him in battle against Syria. Jehoshaphat asked Ahab to inquire of the Lord to see if it would be wise to go against the Syrians.

After four hundred of Ahab's so-called prophets told Ahab only what he wanted to hear—that he would be victorious over Syria—Jehoshaphat asked if he didn't have any other prophets. Ahab replied, "There is yet one man, Micaiah . . . : *but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil*" (1 Kings 22:8; italics added).

Jehoshaphat convinced Ahab to seek the word of the prophet Micaiah. The messenger who was sent to bring Micaiah before the kings cautioned Micaiah to tell Ahab only what he wanted to hear. "*And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak*" (1 Kings 22:14; italics added). Micaiah told Ahab that Israel would not return victorious and that Ahab would be killed.

Against the counsel of the prophet, Ahab went to battle and lost his life, and Israel was defeated.

Micaiah, as all prophets before him and all who have followed, spoke the word of God with plainness and truth and let the consequence follow.

Restoration of prophetic authority

"We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth" (Articles of Faith 1:6).

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that it was necessary for the Church of Jesus Christ to be restored in this dispensation and that "all the keys and powers of priesthood held by the prophets of former dispensations must be conferred upon God's chosen representatives on the earth" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 1:168).

The prophet Wilford Woodruff said: "This is the last dispensation. He [the Lord] has raised up men and women to carry on his work, and . . . many of us have been held in the spirit world from the organization of this world, until the generation in which we live" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:284).

Joseph Smith, the Lord's chosen prophet to usher in the Restoration, recorded the following visions received in the Kirtland Temple in 1836:

"After this vision closed," the scriptures tell us, "the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.

"After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.

"After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us;

for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

"Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

"To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—

"Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors" (D&C 110:11-16).

With the restoration of the priesthood in 1829, there was a restoration of prophets in this dispensation. Living prophets are leading this church today. The greatest security of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints comes from learning to listen to and obey the words and commandments that the Lord has given through living prophets. I would hope that the world would understand the importance of having a living prophet on earth today.

Come, listen to a prophet's voice

The scriptures tell us that prophets receive commandments "walking in all holiness before me; For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith" (D&C 21:4-5).

We sing a hymn that reminds us:

Come, listen to a prophet's voice,
And hear the word of God. . . .
We've found the way the prophets
went
Who lived in days of yore.
Another prophet now is sent
This knowledge to restore.
["Come, Listen to a Prophet's Voice,"
Hymns, no. 21]

Another hymn teaches:

We listen to a prophet's voice and
hear the Savior too.

With love he bids us do the work the
Lord would have us do.

The Savior calls his chosen seer to
preach the word of God,
That men might learn to find the
path marked by the iron rod. . . .

Rejoice! The prophet has confirmed
that by Him we are known.

Attend, ye earth! The prophet speaks;
come listen and obey.

He is the man who holds the keys of
priesthood pow'r today.

["We Listen to a Prophet's Voice,"
Hymns, no. 22]

Prophets are prepared by the Lord

In my own lifetime, through association with prophets, I have observed how they are prepared by the Lord. By the time they become the prophet, their greatest concern is for the goodness and obedience of the members of the Church. They express the love and gratitude they have for faithful Saints and for all who give of their goodness and service in the world in lifting and strengthening others. Their purpose is to bring us the will of the Lord for our times. I give my testimony that the prophets of this day have the qualities of the prophets of old and the other prophets of this dispensation.

Each of these prophets has humbly and prayerfully sought to know and follow God's will in his personal ministry. Each has been determined to declare to Heavenly Father, as did an obedient Jesus Christ before him, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Blessings of heeding prophets

The desire of the prophets is to assist our Father in Heaven and his Son, Jesus Christ, in bringing about the great objectives of the plan of salvation, or, as

one ancient prophet called it, "the great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8).

If we listen to the prophets of this day, poverty will be replaced with loving care for the poor and needy. Many serious and deadly health problems will be avoided through compliance with the Word of Wisdom and the laws of sexual purity. Payment of tithing will bless us, and we will have sufficient for our needs. If we follow the counsel given by the prophets, we can have a life in mortality where we do not bring upon ourselves unnecessary pain and self-destruction. This does not mean we will not have challenges. We will. This does not mean we will not be tested. We will, for this is part of our purpose on earth. But if we will listen to the counsel of our prophet, we will become stronger and be able to withstand the tests of mortality. We will have hope and joy. All the words of counsel from the prophets of all generations have been given so that we may be strengthened and then be able to lift and strengthen others.

President Hinckley is our prophet today

We declare with soberness, and yet with the authority of God in us vested, that we have a prophet today. The President of the Church, as a prophet, is God's representative on earth and is appointed to lead His church. This has been true in the past as recorded in the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, with the restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

He who holds all the priesthood keys authorizing the saving blessings is the living prophet. The Lord has declared, "There is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred" (D&C 132:7). I testify that President Gordon B. Hinckley is the *one* in whom those keys are currently vested.

He is our prophet today. He was prepared and foreordained before the foundation of the world. For over a half century he has been taught and tutored by apostles and prophets with whom he has served. He is wise. He is caring. He speaks for the Lord. His is the voice to which we should now respond. Our spiritual safety lies in turning to the clear voice of our living prophet. If we listen to his voice and obey his counsel, we will be able to live as Christ would have us live and endure to the end so that one day we, along with our families, will return back into the presence of our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I humbly add my testimony to the testimonies of all who have sustained

the prophet this day in this solemn assembly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Hark, All Ye Nations!"

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Hark, All Ye Nations!"

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

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Living water to quench spiritual thirst

Early in his mortal ministry, the Savior and his disciples passed through Samaria while traveling from Judea to Galilee. Weary, hungry, and thirsty from their journey, they stopped at Jacob's well in the city of Sychar. While the disciples went in search of food, the Savior remained at the well. He requested a drink from a Samaritan woman who had come to draw water. Because the Jews and Samaritans were divided by rancor and did not often speak to one another, the woman responded to the Savior's request with a question: "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?"¹

In the New Testament the Savior used this simple encounter at the well to teach powerful, eternal truths. Though weary and thirsty, the Master Teacher took this opportunity to testify of his divine role as the Redeemer of the world and to proclaim authoritatively his true

identity as the long-promised Messiah. He patiently yet thoughtfully answered the woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."²

Intrigued but skeptical, and seeing that Jesus had no container with which to draw water, the woman queried further, "From whence then hast thou that living water?"³ In a powerful promise, Jesus then declared himself to be the source of living water, the wellspring of life everlasting. He said:

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."⁴

Missing entirely the spiritual meaning in the Lord's message, the woman, thinking only of satisfying her physical