

# "Looking Forth for the Great Day of the Lord to Come"

## Lesson 21

**Purpose:** To understand and recognize the signs of the Second Coming and prepare for "the great day of the Lord to come" (D&C 45:39).

**Preparation:** 1. Doctrine and Covenants 29:9-29; 34:5-12; 45:16-75; 88:86-99; 101:22-34; 133.

**Pictures:** The Second Coming (62562; Gospel Art Picture Kit 238).

**Attention Activity:** Prepare to use the following pictures in addition to the picture listed above: The Birth of Jesus (62116; Gospel Art Picture Kit 200); Jesus Praying in Gethsemane (62175; Gospel Art Picture Kit 227); and The Crucifixion (62505; Gospel Art Picture Kit 230).

"Jesus, Once of Humble Birth" (Hymns, no. 196).

Focus on the Lord's revealed words in the Doctrine and Covenants. Do not discuss speculative matters such as the timing of the Second Coming.

Look for the relationship between the words of the hymn and the pictures you have displayed. After the hymn, explain that Jesus Christ's birth and His Second Coming are two of the most glorious events in the history of the world. When the Savior first came to the earth, He came in humble circumstances and was not generally recognized as the Messiah. However, when He comes the second time, He will come in power and great glory. This lesson is about the Savior's Second Coming and millennial reign on the earth.

### 1. The Savior will return to the earth in power and great glory.

We are privileged to live in the dispensation of the fulness of times, when latter-day revelation teaches us great truths about the Second Coming, the events that will precede it, and the thousand years of peace that will begin when the Savior comes again. The Doctrine and Covenants provides a wealth of information on these important subjects.

Just as every prophecy relating to the Savior's birth was fulfilled, so too will every prophecy relating to His Second Coming be fulfilled. Discuss what each passage teaches about the Savior's Second Coming.

a. D&C 29:9-11; 45:44. (Christ will come to earth in power and glory. The proud and the wicked will be burned, and there will not be wickedness on earth.)

b. D&C 34:7,12; 43:17; 110:16. (The Second Coming is near.)

c. D&C 34:8, 11; 63:34. (All nations will tremble when the Savior comes. If we are faithful, His power and influence will be with us until He comes.)

d. D&C 45:45-54; 88:96-99. (The Saints who have died will be resurrected and come forth to meet the Savior. The Saints who are alive on the earth will be gathered to meet Him. He will come to the Mount of Olives, and it will divide. The Jews will recognize their Savior and weep because they persecuted Him. Then those who received the gospel in spirit prison will be resurrected.)

e. D&C 49:6. (The Savior will put all enemies under His feet.)

f. D&C 49:7. (No one, not even the angels, knows the hour or the day when the Savior will come.)

g. D&C 133:46-53. (The Savior will come in red apparel. His coming will be a time of vengeance upon the wicked and redemption for the righteous.)

### 2. The Millennium will be a time of joy and peace.

The Savior's Second Coming will usher in the thousand-year period called the Millennium. The tenth article of faith declares that during this time, "Christ will reign personally upon the earth," and "the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory." Doctrine and Covenants 101 provides a description of the beauty and joy we can look forward to during the Millennium.

•What will life on earth be like during the Millennium?

To answer this question, select some of the following scripture passages to read. Discuss what each passage teaches about the Millennium.

- a. D&C 101:23. (Everyone will be able to see the Savior.)
- b. D&C 101:24. (All the wicked will be destroyed.)
- c. D&C 101:25. (The earth will become new.)
- d. D&C 101:26. (People and animals will live in peace.)
- e. D&C 101:27. (People will be granted what they righteously desire.)
- f. D&C 101:28; see also D&C 45:55; 88:110. (Satan will be bound and will not have power to tempt anyone.)
- g. D&C 101:29. (There will be no sorrow or death.)
- h. D&C 101:30-31. (A person will grow old, then be changed suddenly from mortal to immortal life.)
- i. D&C 101:32-34. (The Lord will reveal all things about the earth and heaven, including how the earth was created and what will become of it.)
- j. D&C 45:58. (Children will grow up without sin.)
- k. D&C 45:59; 133:25. (The Lord will be the king and lawgiver for the whole earth.)

•How can this knowledge about the Millennium be a blessing in our lives now? How does it help you to know that righteousness will eventually triumph over wickedness?

### 3. We must prepare for the Second Coming.

The Lord has repeatedly emphasized that we must prepare for His coming (D&C 133:4, 10-11). Some people may feel that they can never do enough or be good enough to prepare adequately. They may become discouraged and feel that such preparation is impossible. However, the Lord has given counsel in the Doctrine and Covenants to teach us that we can prepare for this important event as part of our daily lives.

•What can we do in our lives now to prepare for the Second Coming?

Watch for the signs of the Savior's coming. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord reveals many of the signs that will precede His Second Coming and encourages us to "be watchful" (D&C 61:38).

•Why is it important for us to know about the signs that will precede the Savior's Second Coming? Read D&C 45:36-39. What can we learn from this parable about why these signs have been given to us?

•What are some of the signs that have been prophesied to precede the Savior's Second Coming?

Select some of the following scripture passages to read. Identify the signs that are mentioned in each passage. Summarize them under the headings Positive Signs and Negative Signs.

#### Positive signs

- a. D&C 45:9; 133:57-58. (The fulness of the gospel will be restored.)
- b. D&C 45:66-71. (The New Jerusalem will be built. It will be a place of peace and safety for the righteous in the last days.)
- c. D&C 65:2-6. (God's kingdom will be established on the earth.)
- d. D&C 110:11-16. (Priesthood keys will be restored.)
- e. D&C 133:8-9, 36-39. (The gospel will be preached throughout the world.)

#### Negative signs

- a. D&C 29:15; 88:91. (There will be great weeping, despair, and fear. Men's hearts will fail them.)
- b. D&C 29:16; 45:31; 112:24. (There will be famines, scourges, sickness, and desolation.)
- c. D&C 34:9; 45:40-42; 88:87. (There will be signs and wonders in the heavens and in the earth.)
- d. D&C 45:26; 63:33. (There will be wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth will be in commotion.)

e. D&C 45:27. (The love of men will become cold, and iniquity will abound.)

f. D&C 45:33; 88:89-90. (There will be earthquakes, tempests, and great waves of the sea. Men will harden their hearts against God and fight each other.)

*Point out that some of these prophecies have already been fulfilled, some are in the process of being fulfilled, and some await fulfillment.*

•The Lord counseled us to "be not troubled" during the turmoil of the last days (D&C 45:35). How can we maintain hope and avoid feeling distressed when we are surrounded by the wickedness and turmoil of the last days? (See D&C 38:30.)

### Stand in holy places

In addition to counseling us to watch for the signs of the Second Coming, the Lord also counsels us to prepare by being righteous. Select some of the following scripture passages to read with class members. Discuss what each passage teaches about preparing for the Savior's Second Coming.

a. D&C 27:15; 33:17. (Be steadfast in righteousness.)

b. D&C 34:6; 39:19-20; 43:20-23. (Cry repentance and be repentant.) Why is repentance important in preparing for the Second Coming?

c. D&C 45:32; 87:8; 101:22-23. (Stand in holy places.) What does it mean to "stand in holy places"? What are some of these holy places? (They could include our temples, our chapels, our homes, and the stakes of Zion.) What can we do to keep ourselves worthy and holy even when we are in worldly environments?

d. D&C 45:56-57. (Have the Holy Spirit as our guide.)

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** taught: *"How do you prepare for the Second Coming? Well, you just do not worry about it. You just live the kind of life that if the Second Coming were to be tomorrow you would be ready. Nobody knows when it is going to happen.... Our responsibility is to prepare ourselves, to live worthy of the association of the Savior, to deport ourselves in such a way that we would not be embarrassed if He were to come among us. That is a challenge in this day and age"* (Church News, 2 Jan. 1999, 2).

**Elder Boyd K. Packer** of the Quorum of the Twelve gave the following counsel: *"Teenagers also sometimes think, 'What's the use? The world will soon be blown all apart and come to an end.' That feeling comes from fear, not from faith. No*

*one knows the hour or the day (see D&C 49:7), but the end cannot come until all of the purposes of the Lord are fulfilled. Everything that I have learned from the revelations and from life convinces me that there is time and to spare for you to carefully prepare for a long life.*

*"One day you will cope with teenage children of your own. That will serve you right. Later, you will spoil your grandchildren, and they in turn spoil theirs. If an earlier end should happen to come to one, that is more reason to do things right"* (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 72; or Ensign, May 1989, 59).

Conclusion: The Lord has revealed more information about the Second Coming and the Millennium to us than to any other group in the history of the world. With this information, we can be prepared and steadfast in righteousness as His prophecies are being fulfilled all around us. We should look forward with joy to the time when the Savior will return and usher in the millennial reign of peace and righteousness.

### Additional Teaching Ideas

#### 1. The parable of the wheat and the tares

Doctrine and Covenants 86 provides further insight into the Second Coming. This section records a revelation that Joseph Smith received to clarify some of the meanings of the parable of the wheat and the tares. The Savior earlier gave this parable during His mortal ministry (Matthew 13:24-30).

•Review the parable in D&C 86 with class members. What do the elements of this parable represent?

The Lord's servants are the sowers of the good seed, and Satan and his followers are the sowers of the tares. The good seed represents the followers of Jesus, and the tares represent those who succumb to evil. The wheat and the tares are allowed to grow together until the end of the world. At that time, the righteous will be gathered out from among the wicked and the wicked will be burned.

•What does this parable teach us about the events connected with the Second Coming?

#### 2. Video presentations

"Be Not Troubled" (five minutes). This presentation can help class members understand that they do not need to be frightened or troubled by the calamities

that will come in the last days. If you decide to show it, do so during the third section of the lesson.

"They That Are Wise" (six minutes). This presentation portrays the Savior's parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13; see also D&C 45:56-59). If you decide to show it, do so during the third section of the lesson.

Before showing "They That Are Wise," explain that the parable of the ten virgins is based on ancient Jewish wedding customs. In Jesus' time, the bridegroom and his friends would escort the bride from her home to the home of the bridegroom. Along the way, the friends of the bride waited to join them. When they arrived at the bridegroom's home, they all went inside for the wedding. These weddings usually took place in the evening, so those waiting for the bride carried small lamps fueled by oil. In the parable, the bridegroom represents the Savior. The virgins represent members of the Church. The wedding represents the Savior's Second Coming. The oil in the lamps represents preparation for the Second Coming.

After showing the presentation, have class members read D&C 45:56-59. Then ask the following question:

•What do these verses teach about preparing for the Savior's Second Coming? You may want to share the following insights **from President Spencer W. Kimball:** *"In the parable, oil can be purchased at the market. In our lives the oil of preparedness is accumulated drop by drop in righteous living. Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity—these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps"* (Faith Precedes the Miracle [1972], 256).

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## **Prepare against the Day of Tribulation**

### **Doctrine and Covenants 29**

## **Historical Background**

In the months previous to September 1830, Joseph Smith had been greatly persecuted in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Newel Knight helped move the Prophet's family to Fayette, New York, where the Smiths had been invited to live with David Whitmer's family.

The Church was less than six months old. The first conference had been held in June, which helped strengthen the young Church. The Saints were looking forward to the second conference to be held on 26 September 1830. Shortly before the conference convened, Joseph inquired of the Lord concerning a stone through which Hiram Page had been claiming to receive revelations (see D&C 28). The Prophet Joseph Smith made the following record of the event: "As a conference meeting had been appointed for the 26th day of September, I thought it wisdom not to do much more than to converse with the brethren on the subject [of the stone], until the conference should meet.

Finding, however, that many, especially the Whitmer family and Oliver Cowdery, were believing much in the things set forth by this stone, we thought best to inquire of the Lord concerning so important a matter; and before conference convened, we received the following: [D&C 28-29]." (History of the Church, 1:110.)

## **Notes and Commentary**

### **D&C 29:1-2. "Even As a Hen Gathereth Her Chickens"**

This expression is used three times in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 10:65; 29:2 and 43:24) and echoes similar phrasing in Matthew 23:37 and 3 Nephi 10:4-6. It evokes the vivid picture of a mother hen who, when danger appears to threaten her chicks, raises her wings and clucks excitedly. The chicks, although they may be scattered over the barnyard, instantly obey that call and scurry under the protection of her wings.

In this passage the Lord describes those who will come to him for protection as having three characteristics. (1) they hearken to his voice, (2) they humble themselves, and (3) they call upon him in mighty prayer. The Jewish nation and the Nephite people in America refused to heed that call and meet those conditions, and as a result they suffered great tragedy and destruction. For a further treatment of the doctrine of gathering, see D&C 29:7-8; 101:17-23; Enrichment A in the Appendix.

### **D&C 29:7. Who Are the "Elect"?**

"The elect of God comprise a very select group, an inner circle of faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They are the portion of church members who are striving with all their hearts to keep the fulness of the gospel law in this life so that they can become inheritors of the fulness of gospel rewards in the life to come." (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 217.)

Elder George Q. Cannon explained: "Where people are pure and chaste in their thoughts and actions, the Spirit of God has such power with them that they readily perceive and comprehend the truth. It is by this means that the best among the children of God are being gathered out from the various nations. Truth cleaves to truth, light to light and purity to purity. The gospel gathers with its influence those who love its principles; and if any should be gathered in who cannot abide its requirements, they pass off and mingle with the elements that are congenial to the spirit they possess." ("The Sin of Adultery and Its Consequences," Millennial Star, 14 Mar. 1863, p. 169.)

### **D&C 29:8. "They Shall Be Gathered into One Place"**

In the time of Joseph Smith, the Saints were commanded to gather in the land of Missouri to build the city of Zion (see D&C 57:1-2). The Saints still look forward to the building of Zion in the originally designated spot (see D&C 101:17-18), but today the gathering is taking place in wards and stakes all over the globe. Elder Harold B. Lee explained: "The spirit of gathering has been with the Church from the days of that restoration. Those who are of the blood of Israel, have a righteous desire after they are baptized, to gather together with the body of the Saints at the designated place...."

". . . The Lord has placed the responsibility for directing the work of gathering in the hands of the leaders of the Church to whom he will reveal his will where and when such gatherings would take place in the future. It would be well-before the frightening events concerning the fulfilment of all God's promises and predictions are upon us, that the Saints in every land prepare themselves and look forward to the instruction that shall come to them from the First Presidency of this Church as to where they shall be gathered and not be disturbed in their feelings until such instruction is given to them as it is revealed by the Lord to the proper authority." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1948, p. 55.)

The Saints must look to the First Presidency and gather at whatever time and in whatever manner they prescribe.

### **D&C 29:8. What Is the Purpose of the Gathering?**

The Prophet Joseph Smith answered this question when he wrote: "The main object [of gathering] was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose.

"It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world...."

"It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc." (History of the Church, 5:423-24.)

### **D&C 29:9. The Wicked Shall Be Burned As Stubble**

Is this passage figurative, or will the wicked really burn? President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "It is not a figure of speech that is meaningless, or one not to be taken literally when the Lord speaks of the burning. All through the scriptures we have the word of the Lord that at his coming the wicked and the rebellious will be as stubble and will be consumed. Isaiah has so prophesied.... Surely the words of the Lord are not to be received lightly or considered meaningless." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:238.)

Christ is a glorified, celestial being, and the glory of such beings is comparable to that of the sun (see D&C 76:70). The presence of Christ when He comes in His glory will be as a consuming fire. The mountains will flow down at His presence, the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the waters will boil. Even the sun will hide its face in shame. (See Hebrews 12:29; D&C 133:40-44, 49.) The scriptures also talk about the time when "devouring fire" will be poured out upon the wicked (D&C 29:21; see also D&C 35:14; 1 Nephi 22:17, 23; Ezekiel 38:22; 39:6).

### **D&C 29:9-11. "The Hour Is Nigh"**

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: "The world is rapidly coming to its end, that is, the end of the days of wickedness. When it is fully ripe in iniquity the Lord will come in the clouds of heaven to take vengeance on the ungodly, for his wrath is kindled against them. Do not think that he delayeth his coming. Many of the signs of his coming have been given, so we may, if we will, know that the day is even now at our doors.

".. The day of the coming of the Lord is near. I do not know when.... I sincerely believe it will come in the very day when some of us who are here today [5 April 1936] will be living upon the face of the earth. That day is close at hand. It behooves us as Latter-day Saints to set our houses in order, to keep the commandments of God, to turn from evil to righteousness, if it is necessary, and serve the Lord in humility and faith and prayer." (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:2-3.) Enrichment H further discusses what the Doctrine and Covenants teaches about the Second Coming.

#### **D&C 29:12. The Twelve Apostles Will Judge the Whole House of Israel**

President John Taylor wrote: "We may here state that Christ is called the judge of the quick and the dead, the judge of all the earth. We further read that the Twelve Apostles who ministered in Jerusalem 'shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' (Matthew 19:28.) Also the following: [D&C 29:12 and 1 Nephi 12:8-10].

"This exhibits a principle of adjudication or judgment in the hands, firstly, of the Great High Priest and King, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God; secondly, in the hands of the Twelve Apostles on the continent of Asia, bestowed by Jesus Himself; thirdly, in the Twelve Disciples on this continent, to their peoples, who it appears are under the presidency of the Twelve Apostles who ministered at Jerusalem; which presidency is also exhibited by Peter, James and John, the acknowledged presidency of the Twelve Apostles; they, holding this Priesthood first on the earth, and then in the heavens, being the legitimate custodians of the keys of the Priesthood, came and bestowed it upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. It is also further stated that the Saints shall judge the world. Thus Christ is at the head, his apostles and disciples seem to take the next prominent part; then comes the action of the Saints, or other branches of the Priesthood, who it is stated shall judge the world. This combined Priesthood, it would appear, will hold the destiny of the human family in their hands and adjudicate in all matters pertaining to their affairs." (Mediation and Atonement, pp. 155-57.)

#### **D&C 29:17-21. "I Will Take Vengeance upon the Wicked, for They Will Not Repent"**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "Those with refined senses find it difficult to conceive of the desolation, destruction, and death that will prevail during the final great battles ushering in Christ's reign of peace. So great shall be the slaughter and mass murder, the carnage and gore, the butchery and violent death of warring men, that their decaying bodies 'shall stop the noses of the passengers,' and it shall be a task of mammoth proportions merely to dispose of them. Then shall Ezekiel's

prophecy be fulfilled that every feathered fowl and every beast of the field shall assemble to 'eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth.' (Ezek. 39.) And then shall the cry go forth of which John wrote: 'Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.' (Rev. 19:17-18.) That all this is an actual, literal supper, an horrible but real event yet to be, has been specifically confirmed in latter-day revelation. (D. & C. 29:18-21.)" (Mormon Doctrine, p. 772.)

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "I know these are unpleasant things. It is not a pleasant thing even for me to stand here and tell you that this is written in the Scriptures. If the Lord has a controversy with the nations, He will put them to the sword. Their bodies shall lie unburied like dung upon the earth. That is not nice, is it, but should we not know it? Is it not our duty to read these things and understand them? Don't you think the Lord has given us these things that we might know and we might prepare ourselves through humility, through repentance, through faith, that we might escape from these dreadful conditions that are portrayed by these ancient prophets? That is why I am reading them. I feel just as keenly as you do about the condition, and I pray for it to come to an end, but I want it to come to an end right." (Signs of the Times, pp. 154-55.)

The figure of a cup full of indignation (see D&C 29:17) suggests that the Lord will no longer forbear taking vengeance on the wicked who will not repent. Just as there is a limit to the amount a cup can hold, so there is a limit to the amount of patience the Lord will show towards those who perform wicked acts. To restrain Himself longer would be a disservice to mankind for whom He has offered Himself as Savior. Since the blood of His Atonement will not cleanse those who do not repent, pestilence, famine, plague, and destruction are the tools He uses to reclaim those who are past feeling and will not hearken to the still, small voice (see 1 Nephi 17:45; D&C 43:20-27). These terrible judgments are the natural result of man's wickedness. God's plea is for people to turn from such wickedness and be spared these awful consequences of sin.

#### **D&C 29:22-25. Will This Earth Be Destroyed and a New One Created?**

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that this passage "does not mean that this earth shall pass away and another take its place, and the heaven thereof shall pass away, and another heaven take its place, but that the earth and its heaven shall, after passing away through death, be renewed again in immortality. This earth is living and must die, but since it keeps the law it shall be restored through

the resurrection by which it shall become celestialized and the abode of celestial beings. The next verse of this revelation explains this as follows: [D&C 29:24-25].

"So we see that the Lord intends to save, not only the earth and the heavens, not only man who dwells upon the earth, but all things which he has created. The animals, the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, as well as man, are to be re-created, or renewed, through the resurrection, for they too are living souls." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1928, pp. 99-100; see also D&C 88:17-19, 25-26.)

#### **D&C 29:26. "Michael, Mine Archangel, Shall Sound His Trump"**

"Michael, who is Adam, holds the keys of salvation for the human family, under the direction and counsel of Jesus Christ, who is the Holy One of Zion [see D&C 78:15-16]. Adam will, when the earth is cleansed and purified and becomes a celestial globe, preside over the children of men, who are of his posterity. He is Adam, 'the prince, the arch-angel.' In the eternities before this earth was formed he was the arch-angel. He became Adam when he came to this earth to be the father of the human family. (D. & C. 107:54-57.)

"The Prophet Joseph Smith said of Adam: 'Commencing with Adam, who was the first man, who is spoken of in Daniel as the "Ancient of Days," or in other words, the first and oldest of all, the great progenitor of whom it is said in another place is Michael.... Adam holds the keys of all the dispensations of the fulness of times, i.e. the dispensations of all times have been and will be revealed through him from the beginning.' (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 167-168.)" (Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:309.)

#### **D&C 29:27-29. "Depart from Me ... into Everlasting Fire"**

The wicked referred to here are cast into "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (D&C 29:28). There is a close parallel between Doctrine and Covenants 29:28 and Doctrine and Covenants 76:36. The Lord indicated that He has never said that they should return (see D&C 29:29); rather, He has said that they cannot come where He is, and they have no power, meaning that the power of the Spirit is completely withdrawn from them (see D&C 29:30 concerning "the word of my power"). All of this additional information indicates that those spoken of here suffer the second death and are sons of perdition. (See McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pp. 280-81; see also D&C 76:31-38.)

#### **D&C 29:30. "All My Judgments Are Not Given unto Men"**

Man in his mortal condition, with very limited understanding and imperfect character, is in no position to fully understand the judgments of God, who is perfect and omniscient (see D&C 38:2). God does not reveal all of His judgments and the reasons for His actions. It is certain, however, that all God's judgments are just and right.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "He [God] holds the reins of judgment in His hands; He is a wise Lawgiver, and will judge all men, not according to the narrow, contracted notions of men, but, 'according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil.' . . . He will judge them, 'not according to what they have not, but according to what they have,' those who have lived without law, will be judged without law, and those who have a law, will be judged by that law. We need not doubt the wisdom and intelligence of the Great Jehovah; He will award judgment or mercy to all nations according to their several deserts, their means of obtaining intelligence, the laws by which they are governed, the facilities afforded them of obtaining correct information, and His inscrutable designs in relation to the human family; and when the designs of God shall be made manifest, and the curtain of futurity be withdrawn, we shall all of us eventually have to confess that the Judge of all the earth has done right." (History of the Church, 4:595-96.)

#### **D&C 29:31-35. "All Things unto Me Are Spiritual"**

When the Lord created the earth, He first created all things spiritually (see Moses 3:5-9). After the Fall all things became temporal (see D&C 77:6). At the end of the earth, the temporal will again become spiritual (Articles of Faith 1:10). Thus, in the beginning things were spiritual first and temporal second. In the end things will be temporal first and spiritual second (see McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:669). These expressions are given by the Lord only for the sake of man's understanding in mortality, however. From God's point of view there is neither beginning nor end, and all things are spiritual.

"Man makes a distinction between temporal and spiritual laws, and some are very much concerned about keeping the two separate. To the Lord everything is both spiritual and temporal, and the laws He gives are consequently spiritual, because they concern spiritual beings. When He commanded Adam to eat bread in the sweat of his brow, or Moses to strike the rock that the people might drink, or the Prophet Joseph to erect the Nauvoo House, or the Saints in Utah to build fences and roads, such laws were for their spiritual welfare, as well as physical. To obey such laws, when given, is a spiritual duty. One who performs his daily labor 'as to the Lord, and not to men' (Eph. 6:7) derives spiritual benefit from whatever his duties are." (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 156.)

### **D&C 29:34. "Adam ... Whom I Created"**

Since this revelation came from Christ (see D&C 29:1), some may feel that this verse teaches that Adam was the offspring of Christ. In reality Adam and all the earth's inhabitants are the offspring of God the Father. In this case Christ is speaking for the Father by a principle called "divine investiture of authority," as Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "Since he [Christ] is one with the Father in all of the attributes of perfection, and since he exercises the power and authority of the Father, it follows that everything he says or does is and would be exactly and precisely what the Father would say and do under the same circumstances.

"Accordingly, the Father puts his own name on the Son and authorizes him to speak in the first person as though he were the Father.... Thus it is that our Lord can begin a revelation by saying, 'Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ,' and shortly thereafter speak of 'mine Only Begotten' (D. & C. 29:1, 41-46), such latter expression being made by Christ, but under that divine investiture of authority which permits him to speak as though he were the Father. (D. & C. 93:3-5; Mosiah 15:1-5.)" (Mormon Doctrine, p. 130; see also "The Father and the Son: A Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency," in Talmage, Articles of Faith, pp. 465-73.)

### **D&C 29:46-48. "Little Children Are Redeemed from the Foundation of the World"**

President Joseph Fielding Smith clarified this verse, explaining that "through the atonement of Jesus Christ all little children are redeemed, for they cannot sin, and the power is not given to Satan to tempt them. The question naturally may arise as to the meaning of the words of the Lord (verse 46) that 'little children are redeemed through the Only Begotten.' This does not mean that redemption was made for them before, or at, the foundation of the world, but at that time when the plan of salvation was received provision was made for the redemption of little children and also for those who are without the law, and this was consummated in the atonement made by Jesus Christ." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:144; see also Moroni 8:8-24; D&C 74:7; 137:10; Moses 6:54.)

The Lord gives fathers a great responsibility for the salvation of little children (see v. 48). The Lord's charge to parents is given in Doctrine and Covenants 68:25-28 and Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

### **D&C 29:50. "He That Hath No Understanding"**

Little children or individuals who do not understand the laws of God because of mental deficiencies will not be judged on the same basis as those who are able to understand them (see 2 Nephi 9:25-27; Moroni 8:22). President Joseph Fielding

Smith taught: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints considers all deficient children with retarded capacity to understand, just the same as little children under the age of accountability. They are redeemed without baptism and will go to the celestial kingdom of God, there, we believe, to have their faculties or other deficiencies restored according to the Father's mercy and justice." (Answers to Gospel Questions, 3:21.)

## **A Revelation to Orson Pratt**

### **Doctrine & Covenants 34**

#### **Historical Background**

The Prophet wrote in his journal that "in the fore part of November, Orson Pratt, a young man nineteen years of age, who had been baptized at the first preaching of his brother, Parley P. Pratt, September 19th (his birthday), about six weeks previous, in Canaan, New York, came to inquire of the Lord what his duty was, and received the following answer: [D&C 34]." (History of the Church, 1:127-28.)

Elder Orson Pratt made a journal entry about this revelation: "In October, 1830, I traveled westward over two hundred miles to see Joseph Smith the Prophet. I found him in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, residing at the home of Mr. Whitmer. I soon became intimately acquainted with this good man, and also with the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. By my request, on the 4th of November, the Prophet Joseph inquired of the Lord for me and received the revelation published in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 34." (Journal History, Nov. 1830, p. 1.)

#### **Notes and Commentary**

#### **D&C 34:1-4. "My Son ... You Have Believed"**

The Lord's calling Orson Pratt "my son" is one example of the many times he has taught that all mankind may come unto him and become his sons and daughters (see D&C 25:1; Mosiah 5:7-8; 15:10-16; Moses 1:4-6; 6:68; Romans 8:14-18; 1 John 3:1-3).

President Lorenzo Snow wrote a poem about the doctrine of becoming sons and daughters of God.

*Hast thou not been unwisely bold,  
Man's destiny to thus unfold?  
To raise, promote such high desire,  
Such vast ambition thus inspire?*



*Still 'tis no phantom that we trace  
 Man's ultimatum in life's race;  
 This royal path has long been trod  
 By righteous men, each now a God:  
 As Abra'm, Isaac, Jacob, too,  
 First babes, then men-to gods they grew.  
 As man now is, our God once was;  
 As now God is, so man may be,  
 Which doth unfold man's destiny.  
 The boy, like to his father grown,  
 Has but attained unto his own;  
 To grow to sire from state of son,  
 Is not 'gainst Nature's course to run.  
 A son of God, like God to be,  
 Would not be robbing Deity;  
 And he who has this hope within,  
 Will purify himself from sin.*

(Lorenzo Snow, "Man's Destiny," Improvement Era, June 1919, pp. 660-61.)

#### **D&C 34:5-10. "Preach My Gospel ... [and] Prophecy"**

Elder Orson Pratt said of his calling to prophesy: "'Lift up your voice and prophesy, and it shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost.' This was a particular point in the revelation that seemed to me too great for me ever to attain to, and yet there was a positive command that I should do it. I have often reflected upon this revelation, and have oftentimes inquired in my heart 'Have I fulfilled that commandment as I ought to have done? Have I sought as earnestly as I ought to obtain the gift of prophecy, so as to fulfill the requirement of heaven?' And I have felt sometimes to condemn myself because of my slothfulness, and because of the little progress that I have made in relation to this great, heavenly, and divine gift. I certainly have had no inclination to prophesy to the people unless it should be given to me by the inspiration and power of the Holy Ghost; to prophesy out of my own heart is something perfectly disagreeable to my feelings, even to think of, and hence I have oftentimes, in my public discourses, avoided, when a thing would come before my mind pretty plain, uttering or declaring it for fear that I might get something out before the people in relation to the future that was wrong." (In Journal of Discourses, 17:290-91.)

Though Orson Pratt felt inadequate in this calling, a study of his writings clearly shows that he did indeed fulfill the Lord's admonition to prophesy. His writings are full of prophetic insights and promises.

#### **D&C 34:7-12. "I Come Quickly"**

The phrase "I come quickly" refers to the nearness of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and is found in at least thirteen sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. Although over 170 years have passed since some of these revelations were given, that is a relatively short period of time when compared to the nearly 6,000 years that the earth has existed in a telestial condition. The fulfillment of many of the prophecies pertaining to the Second Coming indicates that that event is indeed near.

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained the phrase and its significance: "'I come quickly.' This is a scriptural expression that occurs frequently, especially in the book of Revelation. This is 'speaking after the manner of the Lord.' (D. & C. 63:53.) This does not mean that immediately the Lord will make his appearance, but when he does come he will come suddenly, when he is least expected. He told his disciples that the day would come when men were unawares, as the thief in the night. For this reason we should watch and pray, 'For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.' (Luke 21:34-35.) There is no excuse for any of us, then, not to be prepared, for we have been fully and frequently warned." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:157.)

## **"Looking Forth for the Great Day of the Lord"**

### **Doctrine and Covenants 45**

#### **Historical Background**

The arrival of the Prophet Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, marked the beginning of a period of rapid growth in the membership of the Church. By early June 1831, the Church had grown to about two thousand members. Among those who joined the Church at this time were Sidney Rigdon's mother and oldest brother; Luke S. Johnson, one of the first missionaries in the Church; and Ezra Booth, who joined the Church after witnessing a miracle.

Civic leaders, ministers, newspaper editors, and parishioners joined together in an effort to stop the conversion of their neighbors to the new religion. The Prophet

recorded, "Many false reports, lies, and foolish stories, were published in the newspapers, and circulated in every direction, to prevent people from investigating the work, or embracing the faith" (History of the Church, 1:158).

During these trying times of slander and abuse, the Lord blessed the Saints with revelations of comfort, peace, and assurance. One of these revelations was section 45, of which the Prophet wrote, "To the joy of the Saints who had to struggle against every thing that prejudice and wickedness could invent, I received the following: [D&C 45]" (History of the Church, 1:158).

## Notes and Commentary

### D&C 45:2. "In an Hour When Ye Think Not"

President Joseph Fielding Smith noted that "one of the great failings of mankind is to ignore warnings of punishment for sin. In all ages of the world it has been the peculiar belief of men that the saying of the prophets were to be fulfilled in times still future. That is true of the people today. We have had ample warning of the nearness of the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. The signs are upon us in all their power.... In this revelation we are given the warning that the summer is passing and if we are heedless of the warning we will find the summer past, the harvest ended and our souls not saved. While no man knows the day or the hour, yet if we are taken unawares, we will be without excuse, for the signs are ample and we now see them being fulfilled." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:195.)

### D&C 45:3-5. What Is the Significance of the Title "Advocate"?

The imagery of a judicial system is often invoked when the Last Judgment is mentioned in scriptures. Man goes before the "judgment bar" (2 Nephi 33:15), there to be "arraigned" (Alma 11:44) and face God, "the Judge of all" (Hebrews 12:23). As part of that imagery, Jesus is called the Advocate (*paraclaytos*). In the King James Version of the New Testament, Jesus is called the "advocate" only once (1 John 2:1). The same word (*paraclaytos*) is used for the Holy Ghost, although it is translated "Comforter" (John 14:16). Thus, Jesus is one Paraclete, or Comforter, and the Holy Ghost is called "another Comforter" (John 14:16). The Greek word comes from *para*, to the side of, and *kalayo*, to summon. "Hence, originally, one who is called to another's side to aid him, as an advocate in a court of justice" (Vincent, Word Studies, 1:486).

In the terminology of today's legal system, an advocate is a lawyer who pleads another's cause in a court of law, or in other words, an attorney for the defense.

Usually, the attorney for the defense pleads the cause on the basis that the client is innocent; or if guilty, that extenuating circumstances should be considered and mercy extended. At the time of eternal judgment, we will stand before the bar of God accused of being imperfect and unworthy to enter God's presence, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). At that time we have an Advocate with the Father. He will stand beside us to plead our cause before the Great Judge; however, He does not plead our case by pointing to our lack of guilt; rather, it is His own sinlessness to which He calls God's attention (see D&C 45:4). His perfection and His suffering pay the price to satisfy justice for those of His "brethren that believe on my name" (v. 5). Imagine the indescribable sorrow of standing before the judgment bar with no one to step forward, no one to speak for you. How tragic that some will not come to Him in true faith and repentance so that He can take their guilt upon Him and become their advocate with the Father.

### D&C 45:6. "While It Is Called Today"

Three scriptures contribute to an understanding of this phrase. Modern revelation states that the earth's temporal history spans seven thousand years, divided into periods of one thousand years each (see D&C 77:6-7). Peter and Abraham taught that time on earth, compared to the time where God dwells, is at a ratio of a thousand of earth's years to one day of God's time (see 2 Peter 3:8; Abraham 3:4). Since the earth will have a temporal existence before it is celestialized, and since it is known that the earth is now in the sixth period of a thousand years, or the sixth "day," in the Lord's terminology the present period is "today" and Christ will come "tomorrow." In a later revelation, the Lord used this same terminology, indicating that "now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man," that "after today cometh the burning," that "tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble" (D&C 64:23-24; italics added).

### D&C 45:14. How Would Enoch's People and All Holy Men See a Future Day of Righteousness "in Their Flesh"?

"When the Millennial reign comes, the holy men of old shall see it in their 'flesh,' for they will be resurrected and take their place among the Saints" (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 255; see also Moses 7:61-64).

### D&C 45:16. When Did Jesus Speak These Things unto His Disciples As He "Stood before Them in the Flesh"?

Most of this revelation is the Savior's retelling of one of His sermons while He was in Jerusalem. After leaving the temple, the Savior and His disciples climbed the

Mount of Olives, where they had a dramatic view of the temple and Jerusalem. Here His disciples asked, "When shall these things be ... and what is the sign of thy coming?" (JS-M 1:4). His lengthy answer provides one of the most detailed revelations on the signs of the times and of the Second Coming. Known as the Olivet Discourse because it was given on the Mount of Olives, the full sermon is given in Matthew 24-25. Joseph Smith's inspired corrections of the Olivet Discourse are so significant that they have been included in the Pearl of Great Price (see Joseph Smith-Matthew). Mark and Luke also recorded portions of the discourse, though not as fully as did Matthew (see Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36).

The Lord's citation of the same discourse in Doctrine and Covenants 45 begins in verse 16 with the words "As ye have asked of me." The Savior interrupts the quotation after verse 33 to make an explanatory comment but continues it in verse 35 with "Be not troubled." He seems to end the account at the end of verse 59 and begins speaking directly to Joseph Smith in verse 60.

#### **D&C 45:16-17. Why Were the Early Apostles Anxious to Know the Signs of the Second Coming?**

"One reason for their anxiety to know the signs is here stated. The separation of the spirits from the bodies is, even to those who are Christ's own, a 'bondage,' which is ended only by a glorious resurrection, and they were interested in knowing by what signs they might recognize that their day of redemption was drawing near, when spirit and body should be united. The departed saints are, we may be sure, looking for the signs of the coming of the Lord, with an intense interest as the saints still in mortality. Jesus graciously showed them 'how the day of redemption shall come, and also the restoration of scattered Israel.' The two events are inseparably connected." (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 259.)

#### **D&C 45:19-21. Jews to Be Scattered among All Nations**

"In the year 66 A.D., Cestus Gallus marched into Judea and threatened Jerusalem. He might have taken the City, but he retreated and met with defeat near Beth-Horon. The Christians in the City, remembering the words of our Lord, fled to the little city of Pella, but the Jews were fired, by their temporary success, to renewed resistance. Vespasian was then sent from Rome to crush the rebellion. He took some of the strongholds of the Country and approached Jerusalem. Internal strife prevailed there, and such horrors were perpetrated that Vespasian decided to give his army a rest, while the Jews destroyed each other. Vespasian was elevated to the throne, and his son, Titus, was left to continue the conquest. The siege began in the year 70 A.D. Soon famine prevailed. Citizens who ventured outside the walls to search for roots to eat, if seized, were crucified by the Roman soldiers.

Sometimes hundreds in that awful position could be seen from the walls. A trench was dug around the City, in order to make its isolation complete. Prisoners of war were cut open, while alive, to enable soldiers to search their bodies for gold which they might have swallowed. Six hundred thousand persons died within the walls, and the dead bodies, too numerous to be buried, were left in the houses. The Zealots, a fanatical sect whose members maintained that God would save them at the last moment, went about murdering and urging the people to resistance. Even Titus was sick at heart at the daily horrors he witnessed or heard of. At length the temple became a fort. Titus attacked it as such. A Roman soldier, contrary to order, set fire to it. After a while the scene was one of carnage and plunder. Six thousand Jews perished in the flames. In this awful war more than a million and a half of the Jews perished, and many were sold into slavery, and thus 'scattered among all nations.'" (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, pp. 260-61.)

The Savior spoke the words of the Olivet Discourse during the last week of His life, in A.D. 33. Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70. His promise "that this generation of Jews shall not pass away until every desolation ... shall come to pass" (D&C 45:21) was fulfilled. Some of the disciples who heard Jesus speak those words were still alive when the legions of Titus put the temple to the torch.

#### **D&C 45:22. Is the World Going to Come to an End at Christ's Second Coming?**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained the special way this phrase is used in the scriptures: "The end of the world is the end of unrighteousness or of worldliness as we know it, and this will be brought about by 'the destruction of the wicked.' ([JS-M] 1:4.) When our world ends and the millennial era begins, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. (Isa. 65:17-25; D. & C. 101:23-24.) Lust, carnality, and sensuousness of every sort will cease, for it will be the end of the world." (Mormon Doctrine, p. 848.)

#### **D&C 45:24-30. What Are the "Times of the Gentiles" and When Are They Fulfilled?**

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that "the times of the Gentiles commenced shortly after the death of our Redeemer. The Jews soon rejected the Gospel and it was then taken to the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles have continued from that time until now. The Lord said: 'But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.' In that day the Gospel was given first to the Jews and then taken to the Gentiles. In this dispensation it was taken first to the Gentiles and afterwards it will go to the Jews." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:196.)

The times of the Gentiles began with Peter's vision and the baptism of Cornelius (see Acts 10). Paul and the other Apostles then began the great missionary work to the Gentiles, since the Jewish nation, for the most part, had rejected Jesus. As President Smith indicated, the times that the major gospel effort would be with gentile nations continued with the Restoration. The times of the Gentiles will be over, or fulfilled, when the major efforts of gospel teaching begin to focus on the house of Israel: the Lamanites, the Jews, and the ten tribes.

In the Olivet Discourse, the Savior gave four signs to indicate when the times of the Gentiles were over. Three are given in section 45, and one is given in Luke's account of the great discourse.

1. The Jews will be gathered back to the land of Jerusalem (see D&C 45:25). In the April 1960 general conference, Elder George Q. Morris of the Quorum of the Twelve discussed this sign:

"I think perhaps we may well now not continue saying the Jews are going to gather in Jerusalem. I think now we may well say they have gathered. The ultimate returns will come later as they develop this land and are joined by others....

"This statement by a writer is very interesting:

"Strangely enough when the State of Israel was reborn in 1948, it was a nation of 600,000, the same number which the Bible reports that Moses led out of bondage in Egypt. It now numbers some two million, the same number which it is said populated the ancient Kingdom of Solomon, when Israel was in all its glory.'

"That is why we may now say that the Jews have returned to Palestine." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1960, pp. 100-101.)

2. It will be in a time of great social turmoil (see D&C 45:26-27). One need only follow current events as reported in the news media for a day or two to see turmoil like the Savior described.

3. The Gentiles will for the most part reject the gospel (see D&C 45:28-30). President Joseph Fielding Smith, writing about these verses, said: "'And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my Gospel,' the Lord said in this revelation [D&C 45:28]. The meaning is that when the time had come for the restoration of the Gospel-in the times of the Gentiles-that it would not be perceived because the hearts of the people are turned away by the precepts of men. However, in that

generation this should happen, the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:196.)

4. Jerusalem will no longer be "trodden down of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). Again President Smith explained: "When we consider the words of the Savior to his disciples, that the Jews should be scattered and 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,' we have a fair understanding of the meaning of this ... verse [D&C 45:30] in this revelation. Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles from the day of its destruction until the close of the year 1917, when it was freed from Turkish rule by General Edmund H. Allen by of the British forces. After the war Palestine became a British mandate, and Great Britain by proclamation declared that country to be a refuge for the Jews, who were invited to return.... It is very significant, however, that Jerusalem is no longer trodden down by the Gentiles and the Jews are again gathering there. This is the sign given by our Lord, for the end of the times of the Gentiles. We are now in the transition period and shortly the day of the Jew will dawn and the Gospel will be taken to them and to the remnants on this land." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:196-97.)

When Joseph Fielding Smith wrote those words in 1947, Israel had not yet been made a state; they were still under the British mandate. But on 15 May 1948, Israel became an independent nation and declared Jerusalem to be her capital. In the war that followed this declaration, the Jews could maintain control of western Jerusalem only. East Jerusalem became part of the state of Jordan. In general conference in 1966, Elder Smith, now President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said: "Jesus said the Jews would be scattered among all nations and Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. (Luke 21:24.) The prophecy in Section 45, verses 24-29, of the Doctrine and Covenants regarding the Jews was literally fulfilled. Jerusalem, which was trodden down by the Gentiles, is no longer trodden down but is made the home for the Jews. They are returning to Palestine, and by this we may know that the times of the Gentiles are near their close." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1966, p. 13.)

During the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel conquered the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and for the first time since the city fell to the legions of Titus in A.D. 70, Jerusalem came completely under the control of a Jewish government.

D&C 45:26. Men's Hearts Shall Fail Them

President Ezra Taft Benson noted: "We live in an age when, as the Lord foretold, men's hearts are failing them, not only physically but in spirit. (See D&C 45:26.) Many are giving up heart for the battle of life. Suicide ranks as a major cause of

the deaths to college students. As the showdown between good and evil approaches with its accompanying trials and tribulations, Satan is increasingly striving to overcome the Saints with despair, discouragement, despondency, and depression.

"Yet, of all people, we as Latter-day Saints should be the most optimistic and the least pessimistic. For while we know that 'peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion,' we are also assured that 'the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst.' (D&C 1:35-36.)" (In Conference Report, Oct. 1974, p. 90; or Ensign, Nov. 1974, p. 65.)

#### **D&C 45:27. What Will Cause the Love of Men to Wax Cold?**

"The expression is the same as that found in Matt. 24:12, where we read (translated literally), 'And because lawlessness has abounded, the love of the many [this indicates more than a few] shall wax cold.' 'Love' here means Christian unity, harmony. Where ... does that love, that oneness, prevail? There is an abundance of cooperation based on self interest, or family connections: but where is there genuine Christian love, true, unselfish, constant? Its absence in the majority of men is one of the signs of the end." (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 262.)

#### **D&C 45:30-31. Why Is the Fulfilling of the Times of the Gentiles So Significant?**

The fulfilling or closing out of the times of the Gentiles is one of the great signs given by the Savior in answer to the question of the disciples, "What is the sign of thy coming?" (JS-M 1:4). Doctrine and Covenants 45:31 shows its great significance: "There shall be men standing in that generation [in which the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled] that shall not pass." That language is almost identical with the Savior's warning to the Jews, as he recounts in verse 21, and the fulfillment will be just as sure (see Notes and Commentary for D&C 45:21).

#### **D&C 45:19,31. "An Overflowing Scourge" and "Desolating Sickness"**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie warned: "Be it remembered that tribulations lie ahead. There will be wars in one nation and kingdom after another until war is poured out upon all nations and two hundred million men of war mass their armaments at Armageddon.

"Peace has been taken from the earth, the angels of destruction have begun their work, and their swords shall not be sheathed until the Prince of Peace comes to destroy the wicked and usher in the great Millennium.

"There will be earthquakes and floods and famines. The waves of the sea shall heave themselves beyond their bounds, the clouds shall withhold their rain, and the crops of the earth shall wither and die.

"There will be plagues and pestilence and disease and death. An overflowing scourge shall cover the earth and a desolating sickness shall sweep the land. Flies shall take hold of the inhabitants of the earth, and maggots shall come in upon them. (See D&C 29:14-20.) 'Their flesh shall fall from off their bones, and their eyes from their sockets' (D&C 29:19).

"Bands of Gadianton robbers will infest every nation, immorality and murder and crime will increase, and it will seem as though every man's hand is against his brother.

"We need not dwell more upon these things. We are commanded to search the scriptures where they are recounted with force and fervor, and they shall surely come to pass." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1979, p. 131; or Ensign, May 1979, p. 93; see also D&C 5:19-20; 63:32-37; 97:22-27.)

#### **D&C 45:32. Stand in Holy Places**

President Harold B. Lee stated: "In these days of our generation, many of you are asking: Where is safety?

"The word of the Lord is not silent. He has admonished us: 'But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die.' (D&C 45:32.)

"The Lord has told us where these 'holy places' are: 'And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety.' (D&C 45:68.)

"Where is Zion?

"During the various periods of time or dispensations, and for specific reasons, the Lord's prophets, his 'mouthpieces,' as it were, have designated gathering places where the Saints were to gather. After designating certain such places in our dispensation, the Lord then declared: 'Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion.' (D&C 101:21.)

"Thus, clearly the Lord has placed the responsibility of directing the work of gathering in the hands of his divinely appointed leaders. May I fervently pray that all Saints and truth-seekers everywhere will attune their listening ears to these prophet-leaders....

"As one studies the Lord's commandments and attending promises upon compliance therewith, one gets some definite ideas as to how we might 'stand in holy places,' as the Lord commands-if we will be preserved with such protection as accords with his holy purposes, in order that we might be numbered among the 'pure in heart' who constitute Zion, as I have read from the Lord's own words." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1968, pp. 61-62.)

#### **D&C 45:34-35. "Be Not Troubled"**

Elder Marion G. Romney commented: "The fact that the Lord recounted these predictions to the Prophet Joseph in 1831 surely emphasizes their importance to us. And since the disciples were troubled when they were but being told of these calamities to come far in the future, it is no wonder that we are troubled as we witness their occurrence....

"It was in the light of Christ's foreknowledge ... that he said to his disciples, 'be not troubled....'

"I hope we are all familiar with these words of the Lord and with his predictions concerning other coming events, such as the building of the New Jerusalem and the redemption of the old, the return of Enoch's Zion, and Christ's millennial reign.

"Not only do I hope that we are familiar with these coming events, I hope also that we keep the vision of them continually before our minds. This I do because upon a knowledge of them, and an assurance of their reality and a witness that each of us may have part therein, rests the efficacy of Christ's admonition, 'be not troubled....'" (In Conference Report, Oct. 1966, pp. 51-52.)

President Jedediah M. Grant asked: "Why is it that the Latter-day Saints are perfectly calm and serene among all the convulsions of the earth-the turmoils, strife, war, pestilence, famine and distress of nations? It is because the spirit of prophecy has made known to us that such things would actually transpire upon the earth. We understand it, and view it in its true light. We have learned it by the visions of the Almighty." ("The Hand of God in Events on Earth," Improvement Era, Feb. 1915, p. 286.)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "We do not know when the calamities and troubles of the last days will fall upon any of us as individuals or upon bodies of the Saints. The Lord deliberately withholds from us the day and hour of his coming and of the tribulations which shall precede it-all as part of the testing and probationary experiences of mortality. He simply tells us to watch and be ready. "We can rest assured that if we have done all in our power to prepare for whatever lies ahead, he will then help us with whatever else we need....

"We do not say that all of the Saints will be spared and saved from the coming day of desolation. But we do say there is no promise of safety and no promise of security except for those who love the Lord and who are seeking to do all that he commands.

"It may be, for instance, that nothing except the power of faith and the authority of the priesthood can save individuals and congregations from the atomic holocausts that surely shall be.

"And so we raise the warning voice and say: Take heed; prepare; watch and be ready. There is no security in any course except the course of obedience and conformity and righteousness." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1979, pp. 132-133; or Ensign, May 1979, p. 93.)

#### **D&C 45:34-38. The Parable of the Fig Tree**

"When Jesus spoke to his disciples in answer to their query: 'Show us when the end of the world shall come, and the time of thy coming' [Matthew 24:3], he spoke of certain signs that would indicate the time of his coming, the very signs that the world, if they only had eyes to see, could be beholding today: Said he: judge the matter even as you would judge the coming of spring. When you see the fig tree putting forth its leaf, ye know that summer is near, and so when you see these signs, you may know that the coming of the Son of man is nigh at hand." (Melvin J. Ballard, in Conference Report, Oct. 1923, p. 32.)

#### **D&C 45:40-42. "They Shall See Signs and Wonders"**

President Joseph Fielding Smith said of the signs mentioned here: "One wonders if we are not now seeing some of the signs in heaven-not all, for undoubtedly some of them will be among the heavenly bodies, such as the moon and the sun, the meteors and comets, but in speaking of the heavens, reference is made to that part which surrounds the earth and which belongs to it. It is in the atmosphere where many of the signs are to be given. Do we not see airships of various kinds traveling through the heavens daily? Have we not had signs in the earth and through the

earth with the radio, railroad trains, automobiles, submarines, and satellites, and in many other ways? There are yet to be great signs: the heavens are to be shaken, the sign of the Son of Man is to be given, and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn....

"If the great and dreadful day of the Lord were near at hand when Elijah came 130 years ago, we are just one century nearer it today. But some will say: 'But no! Elijah, you are wrong! ... Surely you made a mistake!' So many seem to think and say, and judging by their actions they are sure, that the world is bound to go on in its present condition for millions of years before the end will come. Talk to them; hear what they have to say-these learned men of the world. 'We have had worse times,' they say. 'You are wrong in thinking there are more calamities now than in earlier times. There are not more earthquakes, the earth has always been quaking, but now we have facilities for gathering the news which our fathers did not have. These are not signs of the times; things are not different from former times.' And so the people refuse to heed the warnings the Lord so kindly gives to them, and thus they fulfill the scriptures." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1966, pp. 13, 15.)

#### **D&C 45:48-53. "Then Shall the Lord Set His Foot upon This Mount"**

"This mount" refers to the Mount of Olives on which the Savior was sitting when he gave this great discourse. Parley P. Pratt described in a pamphlet the great events depicted here: "Zechariah, chapter 14, has told us much concerning the great battle and overthrow of the nations who fight against Jerusalem, and he has said, in plain words, that the Lord shall come at the very time of the overthrow of that army; yes, in fact, even while they are in the act of taking Jerusalem, and have already succeeded in taking one-half the city, spoiling their houses, and ravishing their women. Then, behold, their long-expected Messiah, suddenly appearing, shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, a little east of Jerusalem, to fight against those nations and deliver the Jews. Zechariah says the Mount of Olives shall cleave in twain, from east to west, and one-half of the mountain shall remove to the north while the other half falls off to the south, suddenly forming a very great valley into which the Jews shall flee for protection from their enemies as they fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah; while the Lord cometh and all the saints with Him.

Then will the Jews behold that long, long-expected Messiah, coming in power to their deliverance, as they always looked for him. He will destroy their enemies and deliver them from trouble at the very time they are in the utmost consternation, and about to be swallowed up by their enemies. But what will be their astonishment when they are about to fall at the feet of their Deliverer and

acknowledge him their Messiah! They discover the wounds which were once made in his hands, feet, and side; and on inquiry, at once recognize Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, the man so long rejected. Well did the prophet say that they shall mourn and weep, every family apart, and their wives apart. But, thank heaven, there will be an end to their mourning; for he will forgive their iniquities and cleanse them from uncleanness. Jerusalem shall be a holy city from that time forth, and all the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon. She shall be lifted up and inhabited in her place, and men shall dwell there. There shall be no more utter destruction of Jerusalem, 'And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.' (Zechariah 14:9.)" (Voice of Warning, pp. 32-33.)

#### **D&C 45:55 How Will Satan Be Bound During the Millennium?**

In speaking of the millennial era, Nephi said that "because of the righteousness of his [the Lord's] people, Satan has no power; wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of many years; for he hath no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth" (1 Nephi 22:26).

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught concerning the binding of Satan: "There are many among us who teach that the binding of Satan will be merely the binding which those dwelling on the earth will place upon him by their refusal to hear his enticings. This is not so. He will not have the privilege during that period of time to tempt any man. (D. & C. 101:28.)" (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:192.)

These two statements at first may seem to be at variance, but in reality they are not. It is true that the result of the righteousness of the Saints is that Satan cannot exert power over them. The restrictions that will come upon Satan will be a result of two important actions by the Lord: (1) He will destroy telestial wickedness from the earth at His Second Coming; and (2) He will reward the righteous by pouring out His Spirit on them to such an extent that Satan's power will be overwhelmed. Satan will not have the power to tempt or negatively influence the Lord's people. Both the righteousness of the Saints and the operation of the Lord's power are necessary to bind Satan: if the Saints do not give heed to God's word, He will not give them His Spirit. And without the Spirit, they on their own cannot withstand the force of the adversary.

President George Q. Cannon explained: "We talk about Satan being bound. Satan will be bound by the power of God; but he will be bound also by the determination of the people of God not to listen to him, not to be governed by him. The Lord will not bind him and take his power from the earth while there are

men and women willing to be governed by him. That is contrary to the plan of salvation. To deprive men of their agency is contrary to the purposes of our God....

"Satan only gains power over man through man's exercise of his own agency; and when Satan shall be bound, as the Lord says he will be for a thousand years, one of the great powers that will help bring this to pass will be man's agency. The Lord has never forced men against their will to obey Him. He never will do so. If Satan, therefore, has power with man, it is because man yields to his influence....

"The time is not far distant when great judgments will be poured out upon the wicked inhabitants of the earth. Every Prophet who has looked forward to our day has seen and predicted that the wicked would be destroyed. Their destruction means the destruction of Satan's power. The righteous will be left, and because of their righteousness the Lord will have mercy upon them; they, exercising their agency in the right direction, will bring down His blessings upon them to such an extent that Satan will be bound." (Gospel Truth, 1:86-87; see also 2 Nephi 30:18; Ether 8:26.)

#### **D&C 45:56-57. The Parable of the Ten Virgins**

Though many people think the Olivet Discourse is limited to Matthew 24, the three parables in chapter 25 (the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents, and the parable of the sheep and the goats) were part of the same discourse (note especially Matthew 25:1, 31). The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith the key to the symbolism of the parable of the ten virgins. The oil represents spiritual power derived from the Holy Ghost.

Elder Spencer W. Kimball explained: "I believe that the Ten Virgins represent the people of the Church of Jesus Christ and not the rank and file of the world. All of the virgins, wise and foolish, had accepted the invitation to the wedding supper; they had knowledge of the program and had been warned of the important day to come. They were not the gentiles or the heathens or the pagans, nor were they necessarily corrupt and reprobate, but they were knowing people who were foolishly unprepared for the vital happenings that were to affect their eternal lives.

"They had the saving, exalting gospel, but it had not been made the center of their lives. They knew the way but gave only a small measure of loyalty and devotion. I ask you: What value is a car without an engine, a cup without water, a table without food, a lamp without oil?

"Rushing for their lamps to light their way through the blackness, half of them found them empty. They had cheated themselves. They were fools, these five unprepared virgins. Apparently, the bridegroom had tarried for reasons that were

sufficient and good. Time had passed, and he had not come. They had heard of his coming for so long, so many times, that the statement seemingly became meaningless to them. Would he ever come? So long had it been since they began expecting him that they were rationalizing that he would never appear. Perhaps it was a myth.

"Hundreds of thousands of us today are in this position. Confidence has been dulled and patience worn thin. It is so hard to wait and be prepared always. But we cannot allow ourselves to slumber. The Lord has given us this parable as a special warning.

"At midnight, the vital cry was made, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.' ...

"At midnight! Precisely at the darkest hour, when least expected, the bridegroom came. When the world is full of tribulation and help is needed, but it seems the time must be past and hope is vain, then Christ will come. The midnights of life are the times when heaven comes to offer its joy for man's weariness. But when the cry sounds, there is no time for preparation. The lamps then make patterns of joy on the hillside, and the procession moves on toward the house of banqueting, and those without lamps or oil are left in darkness. When they have belatedly sought to fulfill the requirements and finally reach the hall, the door is shut. In the daytime, wise and unwise seemed alike; midnight is the time of test and judgment and of offered gladness....

"The foolish asked the others to share their oil, but spiritual preparedness cannot be shared in an instant. The wise had to go, else the bridegroom would have gone unwelcomed. They needed all their oil for themselves; they could not save the foolish. The responsibility was each for himself.

"This was not selfishness or unkindness. The kind of oil that is needed to illuminate the way and light up the darkness is not shareable. How can one share obedience to the principle of tithing; a mind at peace from righteous living; an accumulation of knowledge? How can one share faith or testimony? How can one share attitudes or chastity, or the experience of a mission? How can one share temple privileges? Each must obtain that kind of oil for himself.

"The foolish virgins were not averse to buying oil. They knew they should have oil. They merely procrastinated, not knowing when the bridegroom would come. "In the parable, oil can be purchased at the market. In our lives the oil of preparedness is accumulated drop by drop in righteous living.



Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity—these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps.

"Midnight is so late for those who have procrastinated." (Faith Precedes the Miracle, pp. 253-56.)

#### **D&C 45:60-62. "Translate It, That Ye May Be Prepared"**

The Lord instructed Joseph Smith to translate the New Testament and said that one of the purposes for his translating the scriptures was so that he would be prepared for the things to come. This work of translation is known as the Joseph Smith Translation.

#### **D&C 45:64-75. Zion: A Place of Defense and Refuge**

In the scriptures four words seem closely related to the concept of Zion: gathering, preparation, defense, and refuge. The tribulations and judgments that will be poured out upon the world prior to the Second Coming will be so extensive and devastating that if the Lord did not prepare a means of preservation, His people too would perish. But He has prepared a means for His people to escape those terrible times; that means is Zion. Enoch was told that the Lord would preserve His people in the tribulations of the last days by gathering His elect to Zion where they could gird up their loins (prepare themselves) and look forward to His coming (see Moses 7:61-62). In an earlier revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Savior called the elders of the Church to gather the elect so their hearts could be prepared for the day of tribulation (see D&C 29:7-8). In 1838 the Lord explained that the gathering to Zion and her stakes was to be for defense and refuge from the coming storm that will be poured out on the earth (see D&C 115:5-6). These commands and promises are found also in section 45. The Saints are to gather to Zion (see D&C 45:64-65), a place of safety, peace, and refuge (see v. 65). Even though the rest of the world is in a state of horrible warfare (see v. 68), in Zion (D&C 115:5-6 implies that this includes her stakes) there will be peace and joy (see D&C 45:69-71).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "Without Zion, and a place of deliverance, we must fall; because the time is near when the sun will be darkened, and the moon turn to blood, and the stars fall from heaven, and the earth reel to and fro. Then, if

this is the case, and if we are not sanctified and gathered to the places God has appointed, with all our former professions and our great love for the Bible, we must fall; we cannot stand; we cannot be saved; for God will gather out his Saints from the Gentiles, and then comes desolation and destruction, and none can escape except the pure in heart who are gathered." (Teachings, p. 71)