



A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

IT IS ALWAYS GOOD TO KNOW THE WAY

Life is a journey, in fact, a series of journeys. On any journey, it's always good to know the way.

As children, we stayed close to home and gradually learned the neighborhood, venturing a little farther from home as our confidence built. Each time we went a ways out and found our way back home, we unconsciously grew more willing to go a little farther the next time. The trips we took with our parents – to the store, to church, perhaps to school for the first few times – really expanded our knowledge and our range of travel. Eventually, we were ready to go solo. But it was always helpful when Mom or Dad would remind us of our past successes and give us a little coaching on what to expect as we ventured forth on the next journey. We didn't always tell them, but it was good to have been prepared by their directions and to complete each trip.

In maturity, physical journeys usually take a back seat to emotional and spiritual journeys through life. Amulek said it well: *...this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.* (Alma 34:32) In this life the spiritual journey is the most important one. The choices we make can impact that spiritual journey. Without preparing with good guidance, it can be very easy to get lost. It's always good to know the way.

The Word of God is full of examples of how the Lord has prepared and provided direction for His servants on many spiritual journeys – some combined with significant physical movements, some with tremendous challenges. It is clear that He is very willing to do that because His desire is for every one of us to be successful in our spiritual journey.

- God spoke directly to Noah preparing him for his role in God's plan, and Noah obeyed. (Gen. 6:13-17)
- God spoke to the brother of Jared and promised to lead his people to a promised land. (Ether 1:40-43) Having abandoned their journey and not called upon God for four years, the brother of Jared encountered the Lord who spoke to him from within a cloud and chastised him for three straight hours. Tough, but merciful as it got the people back on track. (Ether 2:13-16)

- The Lord visited Abraham and covenanted with him. (Gen. 17) God later sent messengers to confirm His promise as a legacy to Isaac, Abraham's son-to-be. (Gen. 18)
- The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a burning bush, and God called out to Moses from the bush and recruited him and instructed him for his role in God's plan. (Exodus 3 & 4)
- The Lord led the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land in a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. (Exodus 13:21)
- God sent an angel to recruit Gideon and to prepare him for his role. (Judges 6)
- Reacting to prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem, Lehi prayed to the Lord with all his heart. A pillar of fire appeared to him, and he saw and heard much to the point of being overcome with the Spirit so that he received a tremendous vision of the throne of God and the wonders of the future in preparation for his role in God's plan. (1 Nephi 1)

This list could go on and on. Notice that, in every case, the UNKNOWN was vast. There was no way to know all the obstacles that would be encountered or how shortfalls in human capacity would be overcome until God actually provided.

For our benefit, examples of God's interaction with mankind to prepare and direct them by speaking, or through manifestations, angels, messengers, visions, dreams, etc. saturate the *Old Testament*, the *New Testament* and *The Book of Mormon*. Such examples also bear witness that the great journey of life is made up of many segments, all of which are opportunities to align with God in preparation to receive His blessings and to ultimately meet Him. On any journey, it's always good to know the way. God shows us the way.

One beautiful example, a model of God's ways, is the Ball or Director - Liahona. The account is in 1 Nephi 16. As Lehi had been commanded to begin the journey into the uncharted wilderness, he finds at his tent door a brass ball of curious workmanship with two spindles, one indicating the direction they were to go. There were also messages on the ball that changed from time to time. The pointers on the ball worked according to their faith and diligence, as did the content of the messages. Alma elaborated on the Liahona while instructing his son Helaman (See Alma 37: 38-46): *And it did work for them according to their faith in God; therefore, if they had faith to believe that God could cause that those spindles should point the way they should go, behold, it was done; therefore they had this miracle, and also many other miracles wrought by the power of God, day by day. Nevertheless, because those miracles were worked by small means it did show unto them marvelous works. They were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey; Therefore, they tarried in the wilderness, or did not travel a direct course, and were afflicted with hunger and thirst, because of their transgressions. ...these things are not without a shadow; for as our fathers were slothful to give heed to this compass (now these things were temporal) they did not prosper; even so it is with things which are spiritual. ...For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise.* Notice the importance of faith and diligence. No

skill, no knowledge, no human attribute could have substituted. On any journey, it's always good to know the way.

In our current time, events and circumstances present many parallels to being in a wilderness. We know that God wants us to stay on the course He sets for us and to avoid going off course because of distraction, frustration, anger, or fear. How do we find our way through our wilderness? Faith in God! Heeding the words of Christ! Diligence in our beliefs! All these are essential to enlist the power of God and maintain the way forward to God's promises. As in times of old, God directs His church today. Like previous groups who journeyed to their promised lands, we are repeatedly reminded that we must prepare and remain in a state of preparedness – readiness - throughout our journey in order to benefit from His power to reach our destination.

A recent experience is analogous to our youth when the encouragement given by our parents reinforced earlier efforts while supporting confidence to stay the course into the future. Following is an excerpt. The Lord tells us to ... *look now to the horizon, for rising before you now is the fulfillment of My promise ... My kingdom being established upon this land. ... My hand is moving, and I see the remnant of My Israel whom I have covenanted with these many years. ... it will start with the House of Joseph. ... though My Spirit has moved and it has planted, throughout this House, seeds of love, yet now fruit will begin to be born now through this House of Joseph. Great is the day now that is before you My servants! Continue to seek My favor as you labor amongst My chosen people. And as I have shown you, My Spirit will come upon you. It will be powerful within you! And if your heart and your eyes are focused on Me and My glory, yes, My power will flow through you! And great healings you will see. Great will be the words that will come from your lips and that will fall upon the hearts of those who are seeking now the truth in this day and time! ... you will see it, and you will know it, not just hope... So prepare now yourselves is My word to you today...*

Along our way through uncharted "territory," such experiences, underpinned by related scriptural contexts, give us assurance telling us of the times we are living in. Rather than reacting to circumstances and being taken off course, we are reminded to rest upon the Word of God including prophecies such as Nephi's (1 Nephi 22) and others which describe the great Gentile nation that God raised upon the land of America, God's marvelous work among the Gentiles which is of great worth to the seed of Joseph and to all the house of Israel, the preservation of the righteous, and the confounding of their enemies. While we read of turmoil, we are promised that the righteous need not fear, for they are those who will not be confounded. These scriptural prophecies match the contemporary experience: Continuing in God's work, the mission of our Church, and keeping focused on Jesus Christ will sustain us by the power of God and we will build His kingdom. This is the journey we are on today. On any journey, it's always good to know the way.

Jesus said to his disciples: *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* Later in that same conversation, He added: *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* (See John 14) Jesus means for us to rejoice while on this life's journey because we know

His promises and we rely on His Spirit to keep them in our remembrance to help us follow Him through life and to eternity. It is REALLY good to know the way.

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

James Crudup, Joel Gehly, John Griffith, Paul Liberto, Thomas M. Liberto, Leonard A. Loalvo, Frank Natoli, Paul A. Palmieri, Peter Scolaro, Jerry Valenti

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