



A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF

God has great things in store for us. It is spiritually healthy to let this thought dominate your mind. Reading slowly and thinking carefully about each phrase, contemplate the picture Isaiah described for those who believe in Christ and for those who will yet be convinced to believe: *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more* (Isaiah 2:2-4). Hopefully, pondering upon this familiar passage brings you pure joy and has become a reference that anchors your vision of the future.

As latter-day events unfold in our times, **we look forward to the reality of the mountain of the Lord's house. Meanwhile, we talk a lot about preparation** of the heart and mind, sanctification of our souls, and living and working in unity and righteousness, concepts which are very much in the front of our minds if we have been paying attention to God's revelations and inspired messages. **Take pause and be alerted if you have found these revelations to be more disconcerting than reassuring. Indeed, the imperative term "prepare" can impose an uncomfortable sense of obligation upon the carnal mind: the requirement of effort to make ready,** and, yes, if it were natural for us to be prepared, God would not have to message mankind repeatedly as He has throughout history. Certainly, spiritual preparation during these pre-Zion days does have implications for our daily living and the choices we make.

First, of course, we understand that **anyone who is spiritually aligned with the Lord seeks His will and does not become intertwined with worldly people or with activities that indulge the carnal nature.** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ... what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ... for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I*

will receive you, (2 Cor. 6:14-17). Moreover, as a person achieves the “state of being spiritually prepared,” the building of God’s kingdom will take a high position in the prioritization of personal activities and use of resources – in other words – God will direct the everyday lives of the faithful. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself (Matt. 6:33).

Prophecy is given for everyone’s benefit. Instructions are given to provide all men and women with knowledge of the paths of righteousness. But, as to receiving these prophecies and instructions, each of us is a unique individual “receptor” who receives according to his own individual “mix” of carnal and spiritual understandings, or rather, carnal and godly spirits. Of course, we know that these do not actually blend but rather conflict; the carnal mind is at enmity with God (see Rom. 8:7). The degree to which each of us anticipates the future with joy or with fear is dependent upon his or her individual “receptivity” or preparedness. Ideally, we follow the proverbial advice: *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths (Prov. 3:5-6).*

So, as we consider the wonderful promise of Zion, let us take care not to allow our fleshly minds to become side-tracked while we think about what may happen before we get there. **Do not slide into a mindset that views preparation as a burden rather than an opportunity.** For example, one might wonder: How will I be impacted by God’s dealings with those who would oppose His plan? Are world systems about to collapse? Should I be setting aside my life plans because God is getting ready to make big changes? Is the future set such that there is no use in pursuing an education, or planning for retirement, or finding a spouse and planning a life together? For some individuals, questions such as these can dampen the joy of envisioning God’s latter-day Kingdom of believers under His protection, gathered in trust and in worship, and blessed with His power and gifts. For others, the prospect of impingements on their current lives disrupts their ability to receive the guidance God is giving or even prompts them to dismiss it as currently irrelevant.

Yes, we know that those who put their trust in the arm of flesh do have cause for concern. But brothers and sisters of The Church of Jesus Christ ought to be above such concerns – free of fear because of our righteousness and faith AND our studied knowledge of God’s promises. Still, it is apparent from scriptures that God’s people have frequently needed reassurance that He will take care of them as long as they seek to live for Christ. Let’s be reminded of some of those reassurances:

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: (2 Peter 2:9)

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4:18-19).

Wherefore, he will preserve the righteous by his power, even if it so be that the fulness of his wrath must come, and the righteous be preserved, even unto the destruction of their enemies by fire. Wherefore, the righteous need not fear; for thus saith the prophet, they shall be saved, even if it so be as by fire (1 Nephi 22:17).

Therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy and holiness shall be upon their heads; and they shall obtain gladness and joy; sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I am he; yea, I am he that comforteth you. Behold, who art thou, that you shouldst be afraid of man, who shall die, and of the son of man, who shall be made like unto grass? (2 Nephi 8:11-12)

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9)

These scriptures speak of Christ's deliverance, reassuring us both while in the flesh and for eternity. It is intriguing to contemplate the mindsets of faithful individuals who lived during the times these assurances were originally spoken and written. It appears that those saints were not so different from us today. It is likely that they too had their conflicted moments, experiencing dread and repugnance over the trends of their day while they struggled to live in the hope God offered them with His promises. Centuries of conflict have passed since the first lie was told in the garden. **The Apostle Paul recognized that, while we tend to focus on this life of flesh and blood, our struggles and our opportunities are simultaneously temporal and eternal.** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:35-39).* We live in hope of an eternal kingdom that has its beginning with the saints on this earth and continues as all flesh passes and there is a new heaven and a new earth. Therefore, we are able to understand that our preparation for Zion is not meant to be different than our preparation for Eternity.

Today as in all times, **God is willing to guide us to live "prepared" in faithfulness and righteousness as we go about our business as saints who variously...**

... may obtain learning for better living.

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: (Prov. 1:5)

... are likely working to earn their own living as best they can.

Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work (Exodus 35:35).

... may find partners and marry.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him (Gen. 2:18). Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (Eph 5:25).

... hope to enjoy the fruits of their labors.

Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest (Ecc. 9:9-10).

... always respect the Lord in everything they do.

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. (Col. 3:23-24).

God does not want us to live in fear or dread. Neither does He want us to sit idly waiting to be acted upon. Rather **He gave us the opportunity to act for ourselves taking positive action to obtain the promises He has presented to mankind through His Son, Jesus Christ.** ... *and men are, that they might have joy. And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given (2Nephi 2:25-26).* He created man to have joy in the Lord; therefore, we owe it to ourselves and to the Lord to live joyously in the hope of ultimate salvation basking in the blessings of our preparation as His promises unfold.

Be sure to take good care of yourself!

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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