

Introduction to Helaman 16

1 Sometimes we get the notion that if it is written in a book, it makes it more true than if it is spoken in the last General Conference. Just because it is written in a book does not make it more of an authority to guide us. President Taylor goes on with this same idea and explains why the scriptures of the past are not sufficient for us today:

The Bible is good; and Paul told Timothy to study it, that he might be a workman that need not be ashamed, and that he might be able to conduct himself aright before the living church [there is that word “living” again], the pillar and ground of truth. The church-mark, with Paul, was the foundation, the pillar, the ground of truth, the living church, not the dead letter. The Book of Mormon is good and the Doctrine and Covenants, as land-marks.

But a mariner who launches into the ocean requires a more certain criterion. He must be acquainted with heavenly bodies, and take his observation from them in order to steer his barque aright. Those books are good examples, precedent, and investigation, and for developing certain laws and principles. But they do not, they cannot, launch every case required to be adjudicated and set in order.

We require a living tree—a living fountain—living intelligence, proceeding from the living priesthood in heaven, through the living priesthood on earth... And from the time that Adam first received a communication from God, to the time that John, on the isle of Patmos, received his communication, or Joseph Smith had the heavens opened to him, it always required new revelations, adapted to the peculiar circumstances in which the churches or individuals were placed. Adam’s revelation did not instruct Noah to build his ark; nor did Noah’s revelation tell Lot to forsake Sodom; nor did either of these speak of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. These all had revelations for themselves, and so had Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus, Peter, Paul, John, and Joseph. And so must we, or we shall make a shipwreck. (The Gospel Kingdom, p. 34).

I do not know a stronger statement, and I have gone back enough generations to quote a prophet. I might have said the same thing myself in the same language, and you, because you have more faith and are better grounded in believing in a living oracle today, perhaps, would have believed. But I have gone back enough generations to President Taylor so that probably it has more “epical” authority than if I had said it in my own language today. But you see the point it makes.

Harold B. Lee, “The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer, and Revelator,” address to Seminaries and Institutes of Religion faculty, BYU, 8 July 1984, p. 9.

2 How we respond to the words of a living prophet when he tells us what we need to know, but would rather not hear, is a test of our faithfulness.

Ezra Taft Benson, *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1980, p. 28

3 Many are prone to garnish the sepulchers of yesterday’s prophets and mentally stone the living ones.

Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, 1949, p. 121.

Helaman 16:1

4 “Deny not”

To “deny not” is to be candid in the confession of sin and weakness. It is to be open and pliable to counsel, direction, and the promptings of the Spirit.

Millet & McConkie, *BYU Commentary*, Vol 3 p. 410.

Helaman 16:25 *Rejecting a Prophet*

It is not important that a prophet should say those things with which you and I are in full accord. But it is important that you and I should bring ourselves into full accord with those things which a prophet speaks by virtue of his office and calling.

Richard L. Evans, *Improvement Era*, November 1939, 672.

6

Now the only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said.... We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophets.... There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself,.... “the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory” (D&C 21:6).

Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, 1970 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Latter-day Saints, 1970], 152.

7

Many men will say I will never forsake you, but will stand by you at all times. But the moment you teach them some of the mysteries of the kingdom of God that are retained in the heavens, and are to be revealed to the children of men when they are prepared for them, they will be the first to stone you and put you to death. It was this same principle that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, and will cause the people to kill prophets in this generation.... If the Church knew all the commandments, one-half they would reject through prejudice and ignorance.

Joseph Smith, as quoted in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis Publishers, 1945], 322.

8

The story is told in the early days of the Church—particularly, I think, at Kirkland—where some of the leading brethren in the presiding councils of the Church met secretly and tried to scheme as to how they could get rid of the Prophet Joseph’s leadership. They made the mistake of inviting Brigham Young to one of these secret meetings. He rebuked them, after he heard the purpose of their meeting. This is part of what he said: “You cannot destroy the appointment of a prophet of God, but you can cut the thread that binds you to the prophet of God and sink yourselves to hell.”

Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Apr 1963 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963], 81

“The prophet will not necessarily be popular with the world or the worldly.

9

As a prophet reveals the truth it divides the people. The honest in heart heed his words, but the unrighteous either ignore the prophet or fight him. When the prophet points out the sins of the world, the worldly either want to close the mouth of the prophet or else act as if the prophet didn't exist, rather than repent of their sins. Popularity is never a test of truth. Many a prophet has been killed or cast out. As we come closer to the Lord's second coming, you can expect that as the people of the world become more wicked, the prophet will be less popular with them. Ezra Taft Benson, “Fourteen fundamentals in Following the Prophet,” in *1980 Devotional speeches of the Year* [1981], 29

10 While addressing the Saints from this pulpit in 1948, the late President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., spoke concerning having a prophet and a listening ear... (see in Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 79-80)...

“The trouble with the world is they... want a prophet that will tell them that what they are doing is right, no matter how wrong it may be.” A prophet has spoken—the prophet is speaking.... What we need is a listening ear.

Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Oct. 1979 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1970], 7.

Helaman 16:2

11 *Divine Protection*

If you live worthy of the priesthood, you have the right to receive and enjoy the very power of heavenly beings to guide you, to protect you, to bless you.

Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Oct 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 64.

12 The Lord will take care of you in times of danger, if you will give him the opportunity... I was just a young man when I went on my mission to the southern states... I ... labored in Tennessee... I was traveling with President J. Golden Kimball... One of the local Saints had invited us to accept the hospitality of his home for the night... There were six missionaries in the group...

About midnight we were awakened with a terrible shouting and yelling from the outside. Foul language greeted our ears as we sat up in bed to acquaint ourselves with the circumstances. It was a bright moonlit night and we could see many people on the outside. President Kimball jumped up and started to dress. The men pounded on the door and used filthy language ordering the Mormons to come out, that they were going to shoot them. President Kimball asked me if I wasn't going to get up and dress and I told him no, I was going to stay in bed, that I was sure the Lord would take care of us. In just a few seconds the room was filled with shots. Apparently the mob had divided itself into four groups and were shooting into the corners of the house. Splinters were flying over our heads in every direction. There were a few moments of quiet, then another volley of shots was fired and more splinters flew. I felt absolutely no terror. I was

very calm as I lay there, experiencing one of the most horrible events in my life, but I was sure that as long as I was preaching the word of God and following his teachings that the Lord would protect me, and he did.

Apparently the mob became discouraged and left. The next morning when we opened the door, there was a huge bundle of heavy hickory sticks such as the mob used to beat the missionaries in the South.

The Teachings of George Albert Smith, ed. by Robert and Susan McIntosh [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2000], 193-194.

13 Prophets of all dispensations have willingly put their lives on the line and, with courage, have done the will and proclaimed the word of God....

... Let us follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and His prophets, past and present. It may not be required of us to give our lives as martyrs, as did many of the prophets. What is required is our obedience to the Lord's commandments and our faithfulness to the covenants we have made with Him.

Robert D. Hales, in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 49; *Ensign*, May 1996, 35.

14 We have nothing to fear. God is at the helm. He will overrule for the good of this work. He will shower down blessings upon those who walk in obedience to His commandments. Such has been His promise. Of His ability to keep that promise none of us can doubt.

"This Is the Work of the Master," *Ensign*, May 1995. P. 71.

Helaman 16:6-7

The Lord's Armor

15 In one of those tedious nights we had lain as if in sleep till the hour of midnight had passed, and our ears and hearts had been pained, while we had listened for hours to the obscene jests, the horrid oaths, the dreadful blasphemies and filthy language of our guards. Colonel Price at their head, as they recounted to each other their deeds of rapine, murder, robbery, etc., which they had committed among the "Mormons" while at Far West and vicinity. They even boasted of defiling by force wives, daughters and virgins, and of shooting or dashing out the brains of men, women and children.

I had listened till I became so disgusted, shocked, horrified, and so filled with the spirit of indignant justice that I could scarcely refrain from rising upon my feet and rebuking the guards; but had said nothing to Joseph, or anyone else, although I lay next to him and knew he was awake. On a sudden he arose to his feet, and spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering, as near as I can recollect, the following words:

"SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!"

He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty. Chained, and without a weapon; calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked upon the quailing guards, whose weapons

were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards.

I have seen the ministers of justice, clothed in magisterial robes, and criminals arraigned before them, while life was suspended on a breath, in the Courts of England; I have witnessed a Congress in solemn session to give laws to nations; I have tried to conceive of kings, or royal courts, of thrones and crowns; and of emperors assembled to decide the fate of kingdoms; but dignity and majesty have I seen but once, as it stood in chains, at midnight, in a dungeon in an obscure village of Missouri.

Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, p. 210-211.

16 I ask tonight that every father in the Church see to it that in all sincerity he impress his children with the reality of the existence of God and with the reality that God will guide and protect his children. You carry that responsibility.....

That the prayer night and morning should be offered up in sincerity; that the children daily would realize that we desire in our home the presence of God. If we can invite the Savior there, we may know that the angels will be not only willing but eager to protect our boys and girls....

Parents, if you do not do anything else, kneel down in the morning with your children. I know your mornings are usually busy.... but have some time when you can kneel and invite God into your home. Prayer is a potent force.

Teachings of Presidents of the Church—David O. McKay [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 74-76.

17 I promise you that all who faithfully attend to temple work will be blessed beyond measure – your families will draw closer to the Lord, angels will watch over your loved ones when satanic forces threated them, the veil will be thin, and great spiritual experiences will descend upon this people.

Vaughn J. Featherstone

18 Consider the following promises from President Ezra Taft Benson to individuals as well as families in the Church:

- Greater power to resist temptation (*Ensign* Nov.1984, p.7)
- Power to avoid deception (*Ensign* Nov. 1984, p.7)
- Life, in greater and greater abundance (*Ensign*, Nov. 1984, p. 7)
- Fortification against the evils of our day (*Ensign* May 1986, p. 43)
- Spirituality (*Ensign*, May 1986, p. 43)
- An increase in the spirit of reverence in the home (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 7)
- Greater mutual respect and consideration for each other in the family (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 7)
- The departure of contention in the home (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 7)
- The ability to counsel your children with greater love and wisdom (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 7)

- Increased responsiveness and submissiveness of children to counsel from their parents (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p.7)
- Success in righteousness (*Ensign*, May 1986, p. 82)
- Healing of the soul (*Ensign*, May 1986, p. 86)
- Continued blessings from God poured out upon each child of Zion and the Church (*Ensign*, May 1986, p. 82)

Elder Russell m. Nelson stated the following promises regarding the Book of Mormon to the saints in general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 1999, p. 71).

- “A testimony of its divinity” to all who read it.
- Help with personal problems, including ridding ourselves of bad habits.
- Improved family relationships
- Increased spiritual capacity
- “A crown of eternal life” (D&C 20:14)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie made this promise regarding the power of the Book of Mormon: “It is the book that will save the world and prepare the sons of men for joy and peace here and now and everlasting life in eternity.”

Conference Report, Oct. 1983, p. 107

Helaman 16:15-22

19 *Explain away prophecies*

Satan is evil: totally and always. He ever seeks to defeat the gospel plan and “destroy the souls of men.” (D&C 10:27)...

Satan is irrevocably committed to countering and overcoming the influence of the Spirit of Christ upon men.

Marion G. Romney, Conference Report, Apr. 1971, p. 24; or *Ensign*, June 1971, p. 36.

How did the wicked explain away the prophecies of the coming of Christ?

- 20
1. Prophets “guessed right” in some of their prophecies, but not about Christ’s coming(v.16)
 2. Christ’s coming is “not reasonable” (v. 18)
 3. Prophecies of Christ’s coming are only the result of “wicked traditions (v. 20)
 4. We do not believe anything unless we can see it “with our own eyes” (v. 20)
 5. The great mysteries the prophets know can only come from “the evil one” (v. 21)
- Brian D. Garner, *Search these things Diligently*, p. 25

21 Each of these principles given below was used by people in Samuel's day to neutralize his message. Consider each principle and how it may apply to your life.

Helaman 16:6	Principle 1: Do you believe that God's living prophet is truly His mouthpiece? Do you accept his words as if from the Lord's own mouth? (See D&C 1:38)
Helaman 16:15	Principle 2: How do you react to those who ridicule and criticize the words of the prophet? When others criticize his counsel on such matters as dating age, birth control or marriage, what do you say?
Helaman 16:16	Principle 3: Can we find other explanations for what the prophets say? Is it possible that what they say is not truly revelation at all?
Helaman 16:17-19	Principle 4: Is the message of the prophets reasonable? Is it consistent with what we know to be true? Does it discriminate against us unjustly?
Helaman 16:20, 21	Principle 5: Is there rational evidence to support what he's saying? Can we prove his words?

BYU Book of Mormon Institute Manual, p. 379.

22 How do we avoid the same reasoning?

I have little or no fear for the boy or girl, the young man or the young woman, who honestly and conscientiously supplicate God twice a day for the guidance of His spirit. I am sure that when temptation comes they will have the strength to overcome it by the inspiration that shall be given to them. Supplicating the Lord for guidance of His spirit places around us a safeguard, and if we earnestly and honestly seek the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, I can sure you that we will receive it.

Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, p. 26.

23 The Book of Mormon describes [an] attitude among a people who depended solely "upon their own strength and upon their own wisdom" and upon what they could "witness with [their] own eyes." (Hel. 16:15, 20) Upon the basis of reason, these persons rejected the prophecies, saying, "It is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come." (Vs. 18.) Applying that same attitude, a prominent professor dismissed the Book of Mormon with the assertion, "You don't get books from angels. It is just that simple."

Those who seek gospel knowledge only by study and reason are particularly susceptible to the self-sufficiency and self-importance that sometimes characterizes academic pursuits. As the apostle Paul observed in his day, "Knowledge puffeth up." He cautioned the learned: "Take heed lest by any means this liberty [knowledge] of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak... And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" (1 Cor. 8:1, 9, 11.)

Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord's Way*, [1991], 46-47.

24 Our best hope of maintaining doctrinal purity rests with a membership that knows and understands doctrinal implications because they have "witness for themselves." Without that conviction, our members... under the pressures of a changing society, which less and less shares

with us the basic teachings of Christ... may become like the members and nonmembers on this continent prior to the Savior's birth: they rationalized the pronouncements and predictions of the prophets by saying, "It is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come"; they complained about His birthplace because it was to occur "in a land which is far distant, a land which we know not," and, therefore, they could not "witness with [their] own eyes" (Helaman 16: 18-20). This kind of agnosticism infected some in the Church then and could in our time if our members rationalize, question, and lack a personal conviction. We can, if we will, combine our efforts to do a better job or showing the power and majesty of the doctrines of the Church and their implications and applications in the lives of individual members.

The Teachings of Harold B. Lee, 439.

Helaman 16: 22

25 *Iniquity and Contention*

This account of wickedness and contentions among the Nephites prior to the Lord's birth in the meridian of time is duplicated in the wickedness, contentions, and deceptions of our day as we approach the second coming of our Lord... Here is a partial list of areas where, in my judgment, the warning applies.... In the field of politics the party is often first, regardless of candidate qualifications or record or party platform and legislative program. Decisions frequently based upon political expediency and not what is best for the people. Selfish ambitions of men in departments of government who also seek to perpetuate themselves in office. Harassing investigations, many of which are either publicity stunts or smoke screens to deceive the public from the underlying motives and purposes. Pressure groups seeking preferential treatment at the expense of the people reflected in increased tax burdens.... The theatre and cinema which so frequently portray and encourage the indecent, immoral, lustful, and worldly imaginations and desires of mankind. Glamorizing the movie star, the entertainer, or the athlete and placing him or her upon a publicity pedestal when his or her personal life may not measure up... Newspapers and other periodicals... frequently accept advertising which is false and misleading. Radio and television portray crime, sex and the sensational.... Organizations with deceptive aims and purposes which operate under the cloak of humanitarian, social, or political guise to gain personal goals or preferred group benefits.... The narcotic racket which includes the promotion and use of harmful drugs is a constant menace to this and other countries.... The disgraceful abortion racket draws into its net young women pregnant out of wedlock who wish to cover up their sin. Married couples are also guilty of this heinous sin.... Scientists are human, and many channel their knowledge developing commercial products to realize increased personal wealth.... Although good ethics exist in the profession of law, nevertheless the profession is not without the unscrupulous, cunning, and designing fellow members. In the practice of medicine and surgery, quacks and non-professional practitioners are found.... Teachers in educational fields promoting wrong ideas and theories, also personal views which undermine the ethical, moral, and spiritual values which youth should freely receive in the classroom. In the field of philosophy are found the deceptive sophistries of men. Also the modern intellectual and free thinker who attempts to modify, change, or improve upon the glorious truths, principles, and

standards revealed of God to his chosen prophets who speak authoritatively by his divine power and wisdom. Then there are always the insincere and unethical, as well as the deceiver and anti-Christ to deal with.... Will we heed the warning and not yield to Satan's powers and stratagems to deceive and to destroy us? Our peace, our safety, our happiness is in listening to and following the teachings and instructions of the Lord's anointed.

Delbert L. Stapley, Conference Report, Apr. 1967 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1967], 69.

26 To understand why the Lord has commanded us not to "contend one with another," we must know the true source of contention. A Book of Mormon prophet revealed this important knowledge even before the birth of Christ... [See Helaman 16:22.]

Contention existed before the earth was formed. When God's plan for creation and mortal life on the earth was first announced, sons and daughters of God shouted for joy. The plan was dependent on man's agency, his subsequent fall from the presence of God, and the merciful provision of a Savior to redeem mankind. Scriptures reveal that Lucifer sought vigorously to *amend* the plan by destroying the agency of man...

Satan's selfish efforts to alter the plan of God resulted in great contention.

Scriptures repeatedly warn that the father of contention opposes the plan of our Heavenly Father. Satan's method relies on the infectious canker of contention. Satan's motive: to gain personal acclaim even over God Himself.

Russell M. Nelson, Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 85-86; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 68-69.

Helaman 16: Conclusion

27 The Nephites were becoming increasingly wicked; yet, like people nowadays, they seem not to have recognized how far they had degenerated from the truths they had once known. Even at the height of their wickedness, shortly before the birth of Christ when Samuel the Lamanite was preaching of their impending destruction, they still seem to have retained some semblance of religious belief. According to Samuel, they said among themselves, "If our days had been in the days of our fathers of old, we would not have slain the prophets; we would not have stoned them, and cast them out." (Helaman 13:25.)

To hear them talk, one would surmise that they thought of themselves as enlightened, civilized, and properly religious. As in our day, pride, worldliness, and sin seem to have captured them unawares. Thus, to them, the prophets who called attention to their sins seemed to be madmen or schemers deserving of persecution (see Helaman 13:26); to them, those who taught of the birth of one to be called Christ, the Son of God, seemed to be teaching unreasonable doctrines or attempting to impose a fable upon the people in order to keep them in subjection through superstition. Their criticism of Samuel's teachings about the coming of Christ and the marvelous signs that would attend his birth illustrates well how their faulty religious attitudes and beliefs kept them from comprehending the truth of Samuel's message: "We know that this is a wicked tradition, which has been handed down unto us by our fathers, to cause us that we should believe in some great and marvelous thing which should come to pass, but not among us, but in a land which is far distant, a land which we know not; therefore they can keep us in

ignorance, for we cannot witness with our own eyes that they are true. And they will, by the cunning and the mysterious arts of the evil one, work some great mystery which we cannot understand, which will keep us down to be servants to their words, and also servants unto them, for we depend upon them to teach us the word; and thus will they keep us in ignorance if we will yield ourselves unto them, all the days of our lives.” (Helaman 16:20-21.)

This is not the speech of persons who admit they have abandoned religion and are rebelling willfully against God. It seems very likely that the great wickedness of these people was not very different from what the world today accepts as normal. And in that world, where the pursuit of wealth, power, and pleasure is the norm and where religion is mostly a formal ritual, it is usually the true prophet, not the sinner, who is made to appear abnormal.

Brian Best, “Nephi, Lehi and Samuel the Lamanite”, *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with the Family*, pp. 171-172.

28 In 1787 Edward Gibbon completed his noble work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Here is the way he accounted for the fall.

1. The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.
2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace.
3. The mad craze for pleasure, sports becoming every year more and more exciting and brutal.
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within the decadence of the people.
5. The decay of religion—faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people.

29 Is there a parallel for us in America today? Could the same reasons that destroyed Rome destroy America? ... The lessons of history, many of them very sobering, ought to be turned to during this hour of our great achievements, because during the hour of our success is our greatest danger. Even during the hour of our great prosperity, a nation may sow the seeds of its own destruction. History reveals that rarely is a great civilization conquered from without unless it has weakened or destroyed itself within.

Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country*, pp. 363-364.

30 Great nations rise and fall—the people go from bondage to spiritual faith, from spiritual faith to great courage, from courage to liberty, from liberty to abundance, from abundance to selfishness, from selfishness to complacency, from complacency to apathy, from apathy to dependency, from dependency back to bondage.

Robert Muntzel, *Marriage Magazine*, Jan. 1961.

31 The great and dreadful of the Lord is near at hand. In preparation for this great event and as a means of escaping the impending judgments, inspired messengers have gone forth to the nations of the earth carrying this testimony and warning.

The nations of the earth continue in their sinful and unrighteous ways. The unbounded knowledge with which men have been blessed has been used to destroy mankind instead of to bless the children of men as the Lord intended. Two great world wars in the past twenty-five years, with fruitless efforts at lasting peace, are solemn evidence that peace has been taken from the earth because of the wickedness of the people. Nations cannot endure in sin. They will be broken up, but the kingdom of God will endure forever.

Therefore, as a humble servant of the Lord, I call upon leaders of nations to humble themselves before God, to seek his inspiration and guidance. I call upon rulers and people alike to repent of their evil ways. Turn unto the Lord, seek his forgiveness and unite yourselves in humility with his kingdom. There is no other way.

If you will do this, your sins will be blotted out, peace will come and remain, and you will become a part of the kingdom of God in preparation for Christ's second coming, which is near at hand. But if you refuse to repent or to accept the testimony of his inspired messengers and unite yourselves with God's kingdom, then the terrible judgments and calamities promised the wicked will be yours.

Ezra Taft Benson, *A Labor of Love: The 1946 European Mission of Ezra Taft Benson*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989], 244.

- 32 We have nothing to fear. God is at the helm. He will overrule for the good of this work. He will shower down blessings upon those who walk in obedience to His commandments. Such has been His promise. Of His ability to keep that promise none of us can doubt.
Gordon B. Hinckley, "This is the Work of the Master," *Ensign*, May 1995, p.71.

- 33 The conclusion to this whole matter is to see that the days of wickedness and vengeance are in reality the days of righteousness and blessing. The wickedness through which each of us must pass is but the fire which proves our love for the Lord and his righteousness; it is the special opportunity to be especially righteous in these last days. The vengeance is itself a blessing, a cleansing of the earth that greater blessings may follow, even as being in hell is a blessing which makes possible the greater blessings of inheriting glory afterwards. All that God does is a blessing to those who will receive a blessing at his hand. To live in the days of wickedness and vengeance is thus to live in the very days of the greatest faith, righteousness, and blessing which the world has ever seen, albeit on the part of but a few. Each of us individually chooses for himself or herself whether these will be days of wickedness and vengeance or days of righteousness and blessing.

Chauncey C. Riddle, *Days of Wickedness and Vengeance*.