

Introduction to 3 Nephi 8

Many of Samuel's prophecies are fulfilled in this chapter

1

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Helaman 14:21,23	3 Nephi 8:5-7, 17-18
Helaman 14:24	3 Nephi 8:8-10, 14-15

3 Nephi 8:1

2

Now, my brothers and sisters, there must be worthiness on the part of the officiators in administration; there must be worthiness and faith on the part of the applicant who seeks the blessing.

It was said of Nephi who lived at the time the Savior came among the Nephites: "... for he truly did many miracles in the name of Jesus; and there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity." (3 Nephi 8:1.) Those, therefore, exercising the authority of the priesthood not only must do so in faith but in worthiness, having eliminated all the iniquity from their souls. Joseph Smith taught that "the power, glory, and blessings of the priesthood could continue with those who received ordination only as their righteousness continued." The priesthood then, to be effective can only be exercised in righteousness and faith. Worthy men endowed with the Holy Priesthood, administering to those of faith, have power given them of God to heal the sick.

Delbert L. Stapley, *The Power of Faith, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year*, 4 Feb. 1958, p. 9; see also D&C 121:34-35.

3

Now, my young friends of both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood, not every prayer is answered so immediately and not every priesthood declaration can command the renewal or the sustaining of life. Sometimes the will of God is otherwise. But young men, you will learn, if you have not already, that in frightening, even perilous moments, your faith and your priesthood will demand the very best of you and the best you call down from heaven. You Aaronic Priesthood boys will not use your priesthood in exactly the same way an ordained elder uses the Melchizedek [Priesthood], but all priesthood bearers must be instruments in the hand of God, and to be so, you must, as Joshua said, "sanctify yourselves" [Joshua 3:5]. You must be ready and worthy to act.

Jeffrey R. Holland, Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov 2000, 39.

4

The following story told by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone while serving in the Presiding Bishopric illustrates the need for priesthood holders to be pure at all times:

"People cannot hide sin. You cannot mock God and hold the Lord's holy priesthood and pretend to propose that you are his servant.

I know of a great man who held his dead son in his arms, and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power and authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, I command you to live." And the dead boy opened up his eyes.

This great brother could not have possibly done that had he been looking at a pornographic piece of material a few nights before or if he had been involved in any other transgression of that kind. The priesthood has to have a pure conduit to operate.

Vaughn J. Featherstone, Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 100; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 66.

3 Nephi 8: 5-23

5 *Tempests, Earthquakes, Fires, Whirlwinds, Physical Upheavals.*

Elder Spencer W Kimball: “Those earth spasms [were] a revolt by the created earth against the crucifixion of its Creator.”

Conference Report , April 1963, p. 64-66.

6 This was earth’s God being crucified, this was creation’s benefactor, this was “the God of nature” suffering on the cross, and nature would not receive that injustice passively.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Crist and the New Covenant*, 43-44.

7 Those of us who read and believe the scriptures are aware of the warnings of prophets concerning catastrophes that have come to pass and are yet to come to pass....

If anyone has any doubt concerning the terrible things that can and will afflict mankind, let him read the 24th chapter of Matthew....

In the Book of Mormon we read of unimaginable destruction in the Western Hemisphere at the time of the Savior’s death in Jerusalem... (3 Nephi 89:5-10, 12-14).

What a terrible catastrophe that must have been....

How portentous are the words of revelation found in the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants concerning the calamities that should befall after the testimonies of the elders... (D&C 88:89-91).

How interesting are descriptions of the tsunami and the recent hurricanes in terms of the language of this revelation, which says, “The voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds.”...

What we have experienced in the past was all foretold, and the end is not yet. Just as there have been calamities in the past, expect more in the future. What do we do?

Someone has said it was not raining when Noah built the ark. But he built it, and the rains came.

The Lord has said, “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30)....

We can so live that we can call upon the Lord for His protection and guidance. This is a first priority. We cannot expect His help if we are unwilling to keep His commandments. We in the Church have evidence enough of the penalties of disobedience in the examples of both the Jaredites and the Nephite nations. Each went from glory to utter destruction because of wickedness.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Nov. 2005 [Salt Lake City:The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 61-62.

8 In an ancient situation somewhat comparable to our own, there was a great destruction, and when the quiet came, those who were spared were wailing:

“... O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and then would our brethren have been spared... and our mothers and our fair daughters, and our children... *not* have been buried...” (3 Nephi 8:24-25 [emphasis added]).

Today is another day, but history repeats itself. We read the headlines. The great powers warn and threaten. Bombs are detonated. Terror is substituted for reason. Defense stockpiles increase. Nuclear races get swifter... Everybody expresses opinions, but few approach the real cause or the real cure.

What is the illness?... Its symptoms are carelessness, casualness, covetousness, slothfulness, selfishness, dishonesty, disobedience, immorality, uncleanness, unfaithfulness, ungodliness.

Our national and international authorities should know that men have”... been destroyed from generation to generation according to their iniquities; and never hath any of them been destroyed save it were foretold them by the prophets of the Lord” (2 Nephi 25:9). And modern prophets are warning frequently, constantly. People are destroyed by their own acts. Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, Sept. Oct. 1961 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961], 30.

9 Just as surely as Jesus was born in Bethlehem, just as surely will he come again, a resurrected, glorified being, and with him will come hosts, and there will be many spectacular changes. It will not be the end of the world in the sense of annihilation, but the end of its present relationships, and there will be many, many changes. Beginning with the bridegroom’s coming will come the celestializing of this earth and tremendous changes which we can hardly think of or believe.... At any rate, not anyone in this building knows when the end is coming or when the Christ will come.... And so the time is coming, I do not know when it will be. I only hope when the examination is put on the blackboard, we will all be able to answer the questions satisfactorily.

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. by Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 440-441.

10 Signs of the Second Coming are all around us and seem to be increasing in frequency and intensity. For example, the list of major earthquakes in *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 2004* shows twice as many earthquakes in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s as in the two preceding decades (see pages 189-90). It also shows further sharp increases in the first several years of this century. The list of notable floods and tidal waves and the list of hurricanes, typhoons, and blizzards worldwide show similar increases in recent years (see pages 188-89). Increases by comparison with 50 years ago can be dismissed as changes in reporting criteria, but the accelerating pattern of natural disasters in the last few decades is ominous.

Dallin H. Oaks, Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 5-6; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 7-8.

11 The Lord uses the weather sometimes to discipline his people for the violation of his laws. He said to the children of Israel:

“If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

“Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

“And your threshing shall reach into the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

“And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid:... neither shall the sword go through your land.” (Lev. 26:3-6.)

With the great worry and suffering in the East and threats of drought here in the West and elsewhere, we asked the people to join in a solemn prayer circle for moisture where needed. Quite immediately our prayers were answered, and we were grateful beyond expression...

Perhaps the day has come when we should take stock of ourselves and see if we are worthy to ask or if we have been breaking the commandments, making ourselves unworthy of receiving the blessings.

Spencer W. Kimball in CR, Apr. 1977, p. 4-5.

12 Since the earth has been in its present fallen or telestial state, it has been subject to earthquakes. These are part of the Lord’s plan; they come by his power and fulfil his purposes. By them he delivers his servants from perils, destroys the wicked, and leaves a sign that his hand has been in transcendent events. (Helaman 12:7-17.)

Earthquakes attended the delivery from prison of Paul and Silas in the old world, of Lehi and Nephi in the new. (Acts 16:25-26; Helaman 6:27.) Both the crucifixion and the resurrection of our Lord were attested by earthquakes. (Matt. 27:54; 28:2.) Among the Nephites the quakings and destructions at the time of the crucifixion were so extensive that the whole face of the land was changed and the wicked and rebellious were destroyed. (3 Ne. 8; 9:1-14; 10:9-10.)

Earthquakes are given as one of the signs of the times; they foreshadow the Second Coming. (Matt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:121; D&C 45:33; 87:6.) By them the testimony of the Lord’s power is borne to the people of the earth. (D&C 43:25; 88:89), and when the glorious Second Coming itself arrives there will be “a great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” (Rev. 16:18-20; 6:12-17; 8:5; 11:12-15; 19; Zech. 14:4-5; D&C 133:22-25.)

Mormon Doctrine, pp. 211-12.

3 Nephi 8:12

13 *Why was there more destruction “in the land northward” among the Nephites?*

“The more righteous part of the people had nearly all become wicked; yea there were but few righteous men among them.” There was a secret combination organized with Jacob as their leader. “He commanded his people that they should take their flight into the northernmost part of the land.” (3 Nephi 7:7, 12)

3 Nephi 8:23-2514 *Great & Terrible Day*

President Ezra Taft Benson: “The record of the Nephite history just prior to the Savior’s visit reveals many parallels to our own day as we anticipate the Savior’s second coming.”

“The Savior’s Visit to America,” *Ensign*, May 1987, p. 4.

15

For the Lord has said in this book (the Book of Mormon), which has been published for thirty eight years, that if they will not repent He will throw down all their strongholds and cut off the cities of the land, and will execute vengeance and fury on the nation, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard. That he will send a desolating scourge on the lands; that He will leave the cities desolate, without inhabitants. For instance the great, powerful and populous city of New York, that may be considered one of the greatest cities of the world, will in a few years become a mass of ruins. The people will wonder while gazing on the ruins that cost hundreds of millions to build, what has become of its inhabitants. Their houses will be there, but they will be left desolate. So saith the Lord God. That will be only a sample of numerous other towns and cities on the face of this continent.

Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1869], 12:3-44.

3 Nephi 8:24-25*Rejection of Prophet*

16

Today the world is rejecting the messages of the prophets of God. Is it not true that there is weeping and wailing over the face of the land because men are at war one with another? Do we not have among us many who lament the waywardness of their youth and the tragedies that befall them as they turn away from righteousness and suffer the consequences of tampering with alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, and other forbidden things? How many mourners do we have as a result of the lawlessness that is extant in our communities? We need to heed the lessons from the history of the past lest we be consumed as were some of those earlier civilizations.

This was the message Christ brought to those early Nephite people.

N. Eldon Tanner, Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 53; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 35-36.

17

On one occasion [Karl G. Maeser] was leading a party of young missionaries across the Alps. As they slowly ascended the steep slope, he looked back and saw a row of sticks thrust into the glacial snow to mark the one safe path across the otherwise treacherous mountains.

Something about those sticks impressed him, and halting the company of missionaries he gestured toward them and said, “Brethren, there stands the priesthood. They are just common sticks like the rest of us—some of them may even seem to be a little crooked, but the position they hold makes them what they are. If we step aside from the path they mark, we are lost.”

I bear witness, my brethren and sisters, fellow students, that in this Church men are as they indeed must be—called of God by prophecy. May we learn in our youth this lesson; it will see us faithful through all of the challenges of our lives. May we learn to follow the brethren.

Boyd K. Packer, *Follow the Brethren, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year*, 23 Mar. 1965, p. 10.

18 President Joseph Fielding Smith declared, “It is because men violate the commandments of God and refuse to hearken unto his word: . . . It is not the will of the Lord that there should come upon the people disaster, trouble, calamity, and depression. . . . but because man himself will violate the commandments of God and will not walk in righteousness, the Lord permits all of these evils to come upon him” 3:27-28).

Throughout the history of humankind the pattern remains the same. The people fall from righteousness to wickedness, the Lord sends his prophets to offer his gift of love—repentance—and sometimes it is accepted. But when it is not, when the prophets and the righteous are banished or killed, then the law of justice demands that those responsible be punished, the blood of the prophets and the saints cry out and the Lord hears. Not only do the wicked refuse to repent, but they create a society that works against righteousness in anyone. How could a child in Ammonihah or Sodom learn to obey God? By allowing such societies to continue, the Lord would condemn generations to the power of Satan. And in an ironic way, destruction, per se, can be seen as evidence of God’s love. Since those who fail to repent will be consigned to spirit prison after death and must suffer for their sins since they have not accepted Christ’s atonement, to cut short their sinning is an act of mercy. Death may be the beginning of wisdom for the wicked.

Taken from *Repentance: The Gift of Love* by Mae Blanch

President Packer spoke to the men and women of the Church Educational System on February 6, 2004, from the Salt Lake Tabernacle. He said some things to forty thousand religious educators that he repeated a few days later, verbatim, to thousands of Latter-day Saint lawyers and judges all over the world:

“The world is spiraling downward at an ever-quickening pace. I am sorry to tell you that it will not get better.

“It is my purpose to *charge* each of you . . . with the responsibility—to put you on alert. These are days of great spiritual danger. . .

“I know of nothing in the history of the Church or in the history of the world to compare with our present circumstances. Nothing happened in Sodom and Gomorrah which exceeds in wickedness and depravity that which surrounds us now.

“Words of profanity, vulgarity, and blasphemy are heard everywhere. Unspeakable wickedness and perversion were once hidden in dark places; now they are in the open, even accorded legal protection.

“At Sodom and Gomorrah these things were localized. Now they are spread across the world, and they are among us. . . .

“Satan uses every intrigue to disrupt the family. The sacred relationship between man and woman, husband and wife, through which mortal bodies are conceived and life passed to the next generation, is being showered with filth. Surely you can see what the adversary is about. The first line of defense, the home, is crumbling.”

“One Pure Defense”, p. 7