

1 **3 Nephi 22***Introduction*

This chapter shows the Lord's promise and devotion to Zion in the last days. As such, it is a natural continuation of the prophetic, covenantal promises Christ was giving the Nephites, promises that would be fulfilled as a result of the restoration of the gospel and the gathering of Israel that would flow from that...

| <i>Verses</i> | <i>Husband</i> | <i>Jehovah</i> |
|---------------|------------------------------|--|
| | <i>Provides Wife</i> | <i>Provides Israel</i> |
| 1-3 | Children | Gathering and Great Growth |
| 4-8 | Love | Mercy and Redemption |
| 9-10 | Commitment | Unbreakable Covenant |
| 11-12 | Material Comfort | Splendor in a New Jerusalem |
| 13-17 | Protection for The Family | Peace, Freedom from Fear and Oppression for Zion. |

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 289, 291.

2 In 3 Nephi 22, Jesus uses a poetic text from Isaiah to address the more righteous part of the Nephites and an audience of Book of Mormon readers in the latter days. The Lord promises to redeem Zion and reestablish her reputation of righteousness:

1. He sings a song of redeeming love to Zion.
2. He compares her to faithful covenant women, such as Sarah and Hannah
3. He trusts her to become a mother to children in the house of Israel.
4. He calls her to suffer as he suffered in the atonement.
5. He supports and protects her like a husband.
6. He compares her to Noah, a just and perfect man who walked with God (Genesis 6:9).
7. He extends temple blessings to Zion and her children.
8. He counts Zion among his servants.

The Lord redeems Zion through his covenants of peace and perfect love. Zion respond by singing a song of redeeming love and by bringing her children into the new and everlasting covenant.

Cynthia L. Hallen, "Redeeming the desolate Woman," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* [Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998], 7, no.1:47.

3 Nephi 22: 1*Singing and Cry Aloud*3 The Hebrew name for the poetic form the Lord uses in 3 Nephi 22 is a "song of loves" or wedding song. The text reads like an *epithalamium*, a wedding poem from classical Greece that celebrates the joy of a bride and her groom. Singing is a symbol of the vibrant love that is possible between a man, a woman, and their children when they follow the Lord's way.

In Bible lands, childbirth is often associated with rejoicing, singing, or chanting poetry in the form of psalms. A woman sings when she first discovers that she will have a baby. Mary sang after Noah appeared as the angel Gabriel to announce that she would bear the Christ child: "My

soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46-47). A woman also sings when her baby is safely delivered, as Hannah did after the birth of Samuel: “My heart rejoiceth in the Lord... I rejoice in my salvation” (1 Sam. 2:1). Nursing professor Lynn Callister reports that even today an orthodox Jewish mother will recite the words of a psalm to give thanks for the birth of her firstborn child: “Sing aloud unto God our strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob” (Ps. 81:1). Singing is a token of the promise that the Lord’s covenant people will have children in their homes.

Paradoxically, Zion will cry aloud with pain as well as joy as she experiences the miracle and labor of bearing children, literally or figuratively. The cry of a woman enduring labor pains as she gives birth to a child mirrors the anguished prayers of Christ as he suffered agony to give new life to us through his atoning sacrifice (see Luke 22:44).

Cynthia L. Hallen, “Redeeming the Desolate Woman,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* [Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998], 7, no. 1:46.

3 Nephi 22:1

4 *Children of the Desolate*

The “barren” and the “children of the desolate” are “those who for generations have lived without the light of the gospel...The children of the married wife [are] the members of the Church.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary*, 4:155.

- 5 “More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.” That is, greater are the numbers of Israel born outside of the covenant than those born within it. Joseph F. McConkie, *Studies in Scriptures*, ed. Kent Jackson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988], 8:192-193.

- 6 The comparison of Zion to a childless woman evokes the stories of Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth, and other female ancestors in Israel who received the blessings of posterity after a trial of their faith. Children are the greatest blessing that the Lord can bestow, so to be barren is a great affliction. In Near Eastern societies of the Bible, barren women were among the most vulnerable people, often subject to disgrace...

Zion will receive so many children that she will not know where they came from, just as Saints in the latter-days marvel when missionaries throughout the world bring nearly 1000 persons per day into the new life of the gospel.

Cynthia L. Hallen, “Redeeming the Desolate Woman,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* [Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998], 7, no. 1:43.

3 Nephi 22:2

Lengthen thy Cords, Strengthen Thy Stakes

- 7 We are not suggesting in the “lengthening of our stride” that we try to move faster than we are able, or that would be wise.... The idea of “lengthening our stride” or “stretching our muscles” or “reaching our highest” has an interesting scripture base. The second verse in the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah proclaims: “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and then stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.” Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 175.

8 In the early years of this last dispensation, a gathering to Zion involved various locations in the United States: to Kirkland, to Missouri, to Nauvoo, and to the tops of the mountains. Always these were gatherings to prospective temples. With the creation of stakes and the construction of temples in most nations with sizeable populations of the faithful, the current commandment is not to gather to one place but to gather in stakes in our own homelands... There, in their own homelands, they can obey the Lord's command to enlarge the borders of His people and strengthen her stakes (see D&C 101:21; 133:9, 14).

Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, May 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 8.

The term *stake* is a symboliuc experssion.

9 Picture in your mind a great tent held up by cords extended to many stakes that are firmly secured in the ground.

The prophets likened latter-day Zion to a great tent encompassing the earth. That tent was supported by cords fastened to stakes. Those stakes, of course, are various geographical organizations spread out over the earth. Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion... (D&C 68:25-26).

Here we see one of the major purposes of stakes. They are organized to assist parents who have "children in Zion" to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ and administer the ordinances of salvation. Stakes are formed to perfect the Saints, and that development begins in the home with effective gospel instruction...

Stakes of Ziion are to be "for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from the wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" (D&C 115:5-6). Stakes are a defense for the Saints from enemies both seen and unseen. The defense is direction provided through priesthood channels that strengthens testimony and promotes family solidarity and individual righteousness...

The Lord also states... that He "shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst" (D&C 1:36).

He does this as He works through His anointed servants and stake and ward aauthorities.

The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi foresaw the day when the Saints would be scattered in stakes all over the world. He saw the time when the Lord would extend His protection to them when menaced by a storm of destruction that threatened their existence. Nephi prophesied:

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory" (1 Ne. 14:14).

From the revelations, we can see that a stake has at least four purposes:

1. Each stake, presided over by three high priests and supported by twelve men known as a high council, becomes a minature Church to the Saints in a specific geographic area. The purpose is to unify and perfect the members who live in those boundaries by extending to them the Church programs, the ordinances, and gospel instruction.
2. Members of stakes are to be models, or standards, of righteousness.

3. Stakes are to be a defense. They do this as stake members unify under their local priesthood officers and consecrate themselves to do their duty and keep their covenants. Those covenants, if kept, become a protection from error, evil, or calamity.
4. Stakes are a refuge from the storm to be poured out over the earth.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Jan. 1991 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1991], 2-5

10 The tent figuratively represents the priesthood organization of the church in Zion. The images of enlarging and stretching suggest the preparations in a woman's body for the birth of a child. The lengthened and strengthened cords and stakes represent the growth of the church. Furthermore, the Lord transforms the portable tent of Zion into a permanent temple, just as he transforms the temporal tabernacle of our mortal bodies into perfect temples of immortal glory in the resurrection. Zion's tent in the wilderness becomes the House of the Lord in the New Jerusalem, a new home for all the families of the earth. The tent is thus a metaphor for the Lord's covenant with Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Children from all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples will eventually have the opportunity to dwell in the haven of gospel covenants in the latter days.

Cynthia L. Hallen, "Redeeming the Desolate Woman," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* [Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998], 7, no. 1:42-43.

11 New tents are very seldom made among the Bedouins. About the only time this happens is when a young groom and bride set up housekeeping for themselves in a different location from that of the groom's parents, and this rarely happens. The usual procedure is to accumulate the goat clippings of a year or so, and with these make a new strip with which to repair the old tent. The women do this work. The section of the tent roof that is most worn is ripped out, and a new piece of the cloth replaces it. The old piece is then used for a side curtain. Each year new strips of cloth replace old ones and the "house of hair" is handed down from father to son without its being completely new or completely old at any one time.

As the tent-dweller's family grows larger, or as he becomes richer and wishes to enlarge his tent, he does so by simply adding another section to his old tent, very much like the Occidental would build another room on to his house; but there is this difference: instead of building a new tent they just continue patching. Isaiah had this process in mind when he compared the prophetic prosperity of Israel to a Bedouin tent. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes" (Isa. 54:2).

Fred H. Wight, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1953], 17-18.

3 Nephi 22:3

12 *Break forth on the right and on the left*

Sometimes by choice and sometimes by circumstance, Israel has been a barren, childless woman who had not borne fruit or lived up to her promises, potential, and covenants. Nevertheless, desolate Israel can—and will—be fruitful, even in the times and places of her scattering and dispersion.

The large movement of Israel's conversion, gathering, and return to the lands of her inheritance will require strong, enlarged stakes in Zion. Growth will be "on the right hand and on the left," with Gentile cities (Probably left desolate by the wrath "poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" [D&C 115:6]) inhabited by the children of the covenant. It is from this imagery of Israel's wilderness tent/tabernacle with its cords, curtains, borders, and stakes that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints draws its use of the word *stake* for the name of its basic ecclesiastical unit.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 289-290.

- 13 In the day of their final gathering, the Saints will break forth on the right hand and on the left. The Israelites will not only occupy the mountains, valleys, desert, and plains, but they will invade the "desolate" and abandoned cities of the Gentiles. This would suggest that a certain amount of domestic warfare will have cleansed the land of Gentile wickedness. After each of the world wars ended, it was amazing how the people were able to clean up the rubble and erect magnificent modern cities in a relatively short time. The gathering Saints will do the same in America. They will take over the desolate cities of the Gentiles and cause them to be inhabited. W. Cleon Skousen, *Isaiah Speaks to Modern Times* [Salt Lake City: Ensign Publishing, 1984], 670

3 Nephi 22: 4-6

- 14 *Thou shalt not be ashamed*

The word "adultery" and the word "idolatry" were originally one, that is, they sprang from the same root, and mean essentially the condition of being false to a solemn covenant.

The Lord compared himself—though in terms of rebuke—to the Israelites of old, as their husband.

James E. Talmadge, in Conference Report, Oct. 1930 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930], 71.

- 15 Even though there has been barrenness and sometimes unfaithfulness, yet will the husband (Christ) reclaim and redeem his bride (Israel). The imagery of Jehovah as bridegroom and Israel as bride is among the most commonly used metaphors in scriptures, being used by the Lord and his prophets to describe the relationship between Deity and the children of the covenant. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 290.

- 16 Like people who are widowed, divorced, or never married, Zion is alone for a season, but not forever. The Savior of the whole earth is her husband. The etymology of the English word *husband* is a compound of *house* and *prepare*; thus, a husband is "one who prepares or builds a house." The Lord is Zion's husband or "house builder" because he makes the earth as a home for all creatures, he creates bodies as temples for spirit children, he builds temples as places of worship, and he prepares heavenly mansions for his children. Cynthia L. Hallen, "Redeeming the Desolate Woman," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998], 7, no. 1:44.

3 Nephi 22: 8*Wrath and hid my face*

17 A distinction should be made between the appropriate anger of God, which is a righteous application of the law of justice, and the unbridled anger of a fallible mortal. The Lord had consistently counseled his children against anger (Matt. 5:21-22; 3 Ne.11:21-22); furthermore, we have been instructed that the devil “is the father of contention...” (3 Ne. 11:29). One who is angry loses the Spirit and his love of his fellowman (Moroni 9:3-5). In contrast, properly understood, God’s anger is a divine display of his love. It is a manifestation to truth (see 2 Ne. 1:24-27).

Hoyt W. Brewster, jr. *Isaiah Plain and Simple*, p. 266.

18 Christ has, on occasion, been rightfully angry with backsliding Israel, but that has always been brief and temporary—“a small moment.” Compassion and mercy always return and prevail in a most reassuring way. The mountains and the hills may disappear. The water of the great seas may dry up. The least likely things in the world may happen, but the Lord’s kindness and peace will never be taken from his covenant people. He has sworn with a heavenly oath that he will not be wroth with them forever.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 290.

3 Nephi 22: 8*I hid my face*

19 Among orthodox Jews, a husband is not allowed to watch his wife going through the labor of childbirth. He sits in the corner of the delivery room with his back turned so that she will not feel embarrassed or immodest in her unavoidable hour of agony. He does not abandon her, although she may feel very much alone. The woman recites or sings psalms as she endures contractions. When the pain becomes too great for her to continue singing, the husband takes over, reciting psalms for her. Although Zion cannot see the Lord in the time of her probation, when she weeps, he weeps with her; when she sings, he rejoices with her.

Cynthia L. Hallen, “Redeeming the Desolate Woman,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* {Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998}, 7, no. 1:46.

3 Nephi 22: 8*Everlasting kindness*

20 The relationship between the Savior and Zion is one of “everlasting kindness.” The Hebrew word for kindness is *hesed*, which has connotations of mercy, courtship, favors, loyalty, cherishing, marital duty, and constant attention. The mercy of the Lord is linked with the intimacy of kindness within the family. The earliest known source for the English word *kindness* is the reconstructed Indo-European root *gen-*, meaning “to give birth, begat; with derivatives referring to ... procreation and to familial and tribal groups.” Several other terms come from the same root as kindness: kin, king, kindred, and kinder (the German word for “children”), gentile, gentle, generation, genology, genesis, progenitor, pregnant, natal, nation, nativity. Such terms of kindness and relationship are woven throughout the scriptures as a testimony of the Savior

Cynthia L. Hallen, "Redeeming the Desolate Woman," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* [Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998], 7, no. 1:45.

21 God's love is complete and without limit for you and for all mankind... He is perfectly kind and understands your circumstances and condition. He knows you better than you know yourself.

Because your heavenly Father is perfect, you can have complete faith in Him. You can trust Him.

Joseph B Withlin, *Ensign*, Nov. 1999 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999], 38

3 Nephi 22:9-10

Waters of Noah

22 After God cleansed the earth with a flood, he promised Noah that he would never again destroy the earth in that manner (Gen. 9:13-17). Here Isaiah impresses upon Israel that the promise God made to gather and redeem her is as valid as his promise to Noah.

As part of his promise, the Lord says that he will never again rebuke Israel (v. 9). The Lord cannot lie, and since he has sworn not to be angry with Israel nor to rebuke her, and since he has also promised that he will "chasten" or rebuke those whom he loves if they are wicked (D&C 95:1), Isaiah's prophecy means that a time will come when Israel will become righteous enough that she will need no chastisement from the Lord.

When all Israel and the earth as a whole is righteous, the Lord's millennial reign will be established.

Victor L. Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 461.

23 The destiny of later-day Zion is parallel to the pattern of Noah... Both Noah and Zion strive to remain faithful to their covenants in darkening days of abomination and desolation. They each witness a cleansing of the earth, first by flood and later by fire. Their lives are spared, but they mourn for those who are lost. Zion feels homeless and tempest-tossed, like Noah and his family must have felt during these stormy days in the ark (see Gen. 7:6-20). Zion longs for a place to rest just as Noah looked hopefully for the birds to bring signs of land. The Lord redeems Zion by renewing the covenant of peace that he made with Noah, whose name in Hebrew means "comfort" or "rest."

The new covenant is an unconditional "Royal Grant" of land and blessings, typically given by a king to his faithful servants in the ancient Near East.

Like a rainbow after a storm, the promise moves from the waters of Noah to the shining beauty of the temple in the city of Zion. When the Lord redeems Zion, she and her children will receive all the blessings of the temple.

Cynthia L. Hallen, "Redeeming the Desolate Woman," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* [Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998], 7, no. 1:43-44.

3 Nephi 22:10*My kindness shall not depart*

24 Jesus taught... “For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed,” he said, “but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed [from thee]” (3 Nephi 22:10...). I love that. The hills and the mountains may disappear. The seas and oceans may dry up completely. The least likely things in the world may happen, but “my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed [from thee].” After all, he has, he reminds us, “graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (1 Ne. 21:16).

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, Apr. 1998 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998], 19

3 Nephi 22:11*Lay foundation with Rubies*

25 Even in the midst and aftermath of great affliction, the Lord will shower material and spiritual blessings on Israel, including those jewels and precious metals that will be used to build the New Jerusalem.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 291.

26 In the midst of a troubling world, the foundations I rely on come by my covenants with the Lord. They are indeed like sapphires and are treasures beyond price... They are the restored principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ which are available to righteous women and men alike through the power of the holy priesthood of God. They include baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the sacrament, and temple covenants.

Aileen H. Clyde, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 28.

3 Nephi 22:13

27 *Be taught of the Lord... great peace*

Surely every good parent would like this peace for his offspring. It comes from the simple life of the true Latter-day Saint as he makes his home and family supreme.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, July 1973, p. 16.

28 Peace. What a marvelous, desirable blessing to bring to the souls of our children. If they are at peace within themselves and secure in their knowledge of Heavenly Father and His eternal plan for them, they will be able to cope better with the unrest in the world around them and be prepared better for reaching their divine potential.

M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, April 1994, 60.

29 [Sister Wirthlin quoted 3 Ne. 22:7, 10, 13, and then said] “These words of the Savior are the theme for Primary... to teach children the gospel of Jesus Christ and help them to learn to live it. As we witness the unfolding events of the last days, we cannot doubt that in this scripture the Lord is speaking directly to us. We are Israel of the latter days... Peace that endures is not dependent upon outside forces that are beyond our control... The Lord’s words... give comfort to righteous parents who teach their children of Him. They speak to us at a time when peace in

the hearts of children can seem but an elusive dream. But the Savior has assured us that it can be a reality if we teach our children. Primary supports parents in this important responsibility.”

Anne G. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 1998, p. 9.

30 The Lord makes a great statement to your parents; it is given in the words of Isaiah and was repeated by the Savior when He was on the American continent. Said Isaiah, “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.” That is the commandment, and this is the promise: “And great shall be the peace of thy children” (Isaiah 54:13; 3 Nephi 22:13). Now, you are in high school. You see those who use illegal drugs. You know they do not have peace, do they?... It takes all their money, and before long they are stealing and doing this, that, and the other to try to satisfy their terrible appetite.

You are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You are children of a noble birthright. You have a special place in the plan of the Lord because you have accepted the gospel, you have been baptized, you partake of the sacrament. You impose upon yourselves each Sunday a renewal of your pledge and covenant to take upon yourselves the name of the Lord Jesus Christ... And He makes a pledge and a promise to you that He will give you His spirit to be with you. What a wonderful thing that is.

Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1995-1999 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:392-393

31 I hope that you are having your family home evenings. I said to a reporter who interviewed me today, “The family is falling apart all over the world. We see it everywhere. Children are turning to drugs and all of these other vicious things.”... Have you seen children who didn’t know peace? I have—children on drugs, children in jail, children in gangs, things of that kind. There is no peace in their lives. None whatever. “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.” I don’t know of a more wonderful blessing in all of this world than to have children who have peace in their hearts.

Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1995-99 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:482.

32 The scriptural theme for Primary is “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children” (3 Ne. 22:13). The world is not a safe place. It is not a place where children will feel peace, hope, and direction unless they are taught to love and follow the Savior...

We believe that Christ-centered Primaries can help parents as they teach their children the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the only knowledge that will give our children peace, hope, and direction.

Patricia Pinegar, *Ensign*, Nov. 1999 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999], 68

33 Seven-year-old Jamie loved her mother dearly. The family had known for nearly a year that their wife and mother was dying of cancer. The father and seven children fasted and prayed; they pled with the Lord to heal her. Everything possible was done for their mother, yet at the end of three painfully difficult months, she passed from this life.

In the first hours following her death, the father brought the grieving family together. After prayer, the children went to their own rooms to prepare for bed. Jamie, who had spent many hours with her mother and was devoted to her, knelt at her own bedside. “Heavenly Father,” she prayed through tears, “we thank thee for the great mom you gave us. We thank thee for helping us try to make her well. Help us to be good so we can live with her again.” Without a hint of bitterness, this little seven-year-old girl continued for several minutes in a sweet attitude of peaceful prayer, reflecting her understanding and acceptance of her mother’s death.

Jamie was a child at peace. How did she come to that peace? She had been prepared by parents with spiritual understanding. Such preparation brings peace...

Our Heavenly Father has promised peace to his children. “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children” (3 Ne. 22:13). Peace in the Lord can give them freedom from self-doubt, freedom from fear, freedom from confinement of their environment, freedom from enslaving habits. His peace can free them to unfold from the tender buds they are to the mature and fruitful adults they can be.”

Michaelene Grassli, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998], 90.

3 Nephi 22:16

34 *The smith*

Speaking through Isaiah in a passage that was later quoted by the Savior to the Nephites, the Lord said, “Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work,” (Isa. 54:16; 3 Ne. 22:16). Joseph was surely the smith who forged the instrument by which the Lord’s people continue to prepare individually and collectively for the Savior’s return—and that instrument is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Gerald N. Lund, *Ensign*, January 1997, 52.

3 Nephi 22: 17

No Weapon shall prosper

35 He [Ezra Taft Benson] always kept this verse from the Book of Mormon in his wallet: [3 Nephi 22:17]. And always this statement was kept on his desk or in his study: “Be right, and then be easy to live with, if possible, but in that order.”

Boyd K. Packer (remarks made at the funeral of President Benson).

36 Now, I think we all understand that this great latter-day kingdom has been set up for the last time, never again to be destroyed, and that never again will the necessity arise for another and future restoration. ...But there is one great thing about this dispensation which differs from all the dispensations of the past. It is that this time, with the opening of the heavens and the revealing of the gospel in our day, there came the positive, unqualified assurance that the gospel was to remain on earth; that the kingdom was to be secure; that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was to remain among men to prepare a people for the second coming of the Son of man.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1958, pp. 114-115

37 [A portion of the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple] “We ask thee, Holy Father, to establish the people that shall worship, and honorably hold a name and standing in this thy house, to all generations and for eternity; That no weapon formed against them shall prosper; that he who diggeth a pit for them shall fall into the same himself.”
Joseph Smith, (as quoted in *Isaiah Plain and Simple*, Brewster, p. 271)

38 No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.
Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:540.

39 Opposition has always existed whenever and wherever the gospel has been taught, but God has set bounds and limits to its influence and everyone that shall revile against the truth will stand condemned and ultimately fall.

By chapter’s end, the relationship between the Lord and his children of covenant is seen fully and poetically.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 291

40 If we will do our part, and if we will fulfill our destiny we will achieve exactly what the Lord has for us, and we will be protected in doing it... You do not need to fear about anybody. Just serve the Lord and keep his commandments and build the Kingdom, and as you do so you will be protected in these last days. God will have his hand over you, and you can plan your lives in confidence.

Mark E. Petersem, in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1960 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960], 81-83.

41 Can you tell me where the people are who will be shielded and protected from these great calamities and judgments which are even now at our door? I’ll tell you. The priesthood of God who honor their priesthood, and who are worthy of their blessings are the only ones who shall have this safety and protection... They are at our very doors; not even this people will escape them entirely... If you do your duty, and I do my duty, we’ll have protection and shall pass through the afflictions in peace and safety.

The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, ed. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946], 230.

We are fast approaching that moment prophesied by Joseph Smith when he said:

42 “Even this nation will be on the very verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground, and when the Constitution is upon the brink of ruin, this people will be the staff upon which the nation shall lean, and they shall bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction...”

The sentiments of John Adams were these:

“But whatever may be our fate, be assured that this [Constitution] will stand... It may... cost

us blood before we are through. It is my conviction, however, that when the Lord comes, the Stars and Stripes will be floating on the breeze over this people.

Ezra Taft Benson, *The Constitution, a Heavenly Banner* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987], 28, 32-33.

43 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... (D&C 97:23, 25-26).

Bruce R. McConkie, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1979 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979], 133.

These are perilous times—times of great international turmoil...

44 We are confronted with economic problems, we are confronted with great faces of evil which wash over us like a flood... I would just like to say that whatever happens in the world... that God will be with us. He will watch over us. He will protect us. He will see that we are provided for. And we shall endure under His watchful care if we will be true and faithful and obedient and harken to His word.

President Hinckley told Church members they may be inconvenienced, they may suffer a curtailment of some of their liberties, they may find themselves in more economic difficulties.

“But,” he promised, “the peace of the Lord will be with us, sustain us, and help us go forward if we will be faithful and true unto the Lord.”

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Church News*, 22 Feb. 2003, 3.

45 The day is not far distant when this nation will be shaken from centre to circumference. And now, you may write it down, any of you, and I will prophesy it in the name of God. And then will be fulfilled that prediction to be found in one of the revelations given through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Those who will not take up their sword to fight against their neighbor must needs flee to Zion for safety. And they will come, saying, we do not know anything of the principles of your religion, but we perceive that you are an honest community; you administer justice and righteousness, and we want to live with you and receive the protection of your laws, but as for your religion we will talk about that some other time. Will we protect such people? Yes, all honorable men. When the people shall have torn to shreds the Constitution of the United States, the Elders of Israel will be found holding it up to the nations of the earth and proclaiming liberty and equal rights to all men, and extending the hand of fellowship to the oppressed of all nations. John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1833], 203:333.

46 Neither this nation nor any other nation can do anything more than God permits. He sets up one nation, and puts down another, according to the counsels of his own will... All men are but human; their breath is in their nostrils, and they have no power but that which God gives them.

Anything beyond this they are powerless to do; and why, then, should His people fear? We certainly have a work to perform on the earth, and God our Father has selected us for that purpose.

John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1833], 23:333.

47 We are constantly fed a steady and sour diet of pessimism, faultfinding, second-guessing, and evil speaking one of another... Surely this is the age and place of the gifted pickle sucker!

A sustained diet of a negative point of view has serious repercussions... This spirit of negativism grows and begins to hang as a cloud over the land ... reaching down to the individual man and woman and influencing attitudes, outlook, and even values...

There is too much fruitless carping and criticism of America. What might become of this land if we spoke less of its weaknesses and more of its goodness and strength, its capacity and potential? Without doubt, we shall have days of trial... But if we will turn our time and talents away from vituperative criticism, away from constantly looking for evil, and will emphasize instead the greater good, America will continue to go forward with the blessing of the Almighty and stand as an ensign of strength and peace and generosity to all the world. This is a great land, a choice land, a chosen land.

I am an optimist... With that frame of reference, my plea is that we stop seeking out the storms and enjoy more fully the sunlight... I am not suggesting that our conversation be all sweetness and honey... What I am suggesting is that we have had missing from our society a buoyant spirit of optimism. What I am asking is that we turn from the negativism that so permeates our culture and look for the remarkable good in the land and times in which we live... that optimism replace pessimism; that uncertainly and worry be pushed aside by an enduring feeling of hope...

We are creatures of our thinking. We can talk ourselves into defeat, or we can talk ourselves into victory...

We all tend to worry about the future. And yes, there may be lean days ahead for many of us... But we must not despair or give up. We must look for the sunlight through the clouds...

Criticism and pessimism... spread a shroud of gloom over entire nations. We must resist partaking of the spirit of our times. We need rather to look for the good all about us... To the extent we cultivate this virtue of optimism, we will bless all the world's peoples.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something* [New York: Times Books, 2000], 103, 106-107.

48 There were threats of a mob on June 19, 1834. As the Mormons were making camp, five men rode up and told them that they would "see hell before morning." They stated that an armed force from Richmond, Ray, and Clay counties was to join a Jackson County force at the Fishing River ford, bent on the utter destruction of the camp.

While these five men were in the camp, cursing and swearing vengeance, signs of an approaching storm were seen. No sooner had these men left the camp than the storm burst forth in all its fury. Hailstones struck, so large that they cut limbs from the trees, and the limbs fell all around the camp while the trees were twisted from their roots by the force of the wind. The earth trembled and quaked, and the streams became raging torrents, and the mobbers dispersed, seeking shelter that could not be found. One mobber was killed by lightning and another had

his hand torn off by a fractious horse, and in fear they dispersed, saying that if that was the way God fought for the “Mormons” they would go about their business.

On the morning of June 21 (just two days later) Colonel Sconce, with two companions, visited the camp to learn what the intentions of the members were. He said: “I see there is an almighty power that protects this people, for I started from Richmond, Ray county, with a company of armed men, having a fixed determination to destroy you, but was kept back by the storm.”

The Prophet then related to these men the suffering of the Saints, and they left the camp offering to use their influence (see *History of the Church*, 2:103-6).

During all this storm the members of the camp were protected from its fury. Why were they protected? Because of their collective *obedience* to the Lord.

Teddy E. Brewerton, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1981 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981], 94-95.

49 If we will be faithful to the gospel plan of life, if we will keep the commandments of God without compromise, without attempting to willfully, purposefully cheat against that which we know to be right and pure and good, we will have the preserving, protecting power of the Lord to be with us, regardless of the course the world may take and its inevitable consequences.

We have a solemn obligation to the Lord, to ourselves, to our posterity, and to the many good people in the world who are looking for the right way, to preserve a community of Saints whom the Lord can bless.

Dean L. Larsen, *A Book of Mormon Treasury—Gospel Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 78-79.

50 But bear in mind that the Lord is directing this world. We are frequently reminded that conditions have been so developed in the powers of warfare that an accident or a rash move could set in operation those powers which might destroy our civilization. But let us bear in mind that this world is in the hands of God. All these things will happen only so far as they are in accordance with his plans and his purposes. And *let us not waste our time and our energy and get into a nervous condition about what is going to happen to the world...* The Lord will take care of that. It remains for us to be devoted to the upbuilding of his kingdom and facing whatever conditions may come to us.

George Q. Morris, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1959 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1959], 102; emphasis added.

51 We must *never*, in *any age* or circumstance, let fear and the father of fear (Satan himself) divert us from our faith and faithful living... It will be okay. Just be faithful. God is in charge. He knows your name and He knows your need...

So, in a world of tribulation—and there will always be plenty of it—let’s remember our faith. Let’s recall the *other* promises and prophecies that have been given, all the reassuring ones, and let’s live life more fully, with more boldness and courage than at any other time in our history...

God is watching over His world, His Church, His leaders, and He is certainly watching over you. Let’s just make sure we are the “pure in heart” and that we *are* faithful. How blessed you will be. How fortunate your children and grandchildren will be...

Is there a happy future for you and your posterity in these latter days? Absolutely!... Will there be difficult times when those ominous latter-day warnings and prophecies are fulfilled? Of course there will...

God not only lives, He loves us. He loves *you*. Everything He does is for our good and our protection... He will shelter us from the storm...

I leave an apostolic blessing on each one of you individually within the sound of my voice that you will live with confidence, optimism, faith, and devotion... I bless you to feel the joy of the Saints in the latter days—never crippling anxiety or destructive despair.

Jeffrey R. Holland, CES Fireside for Young Adults, BYU, 12 Sept. 2004, 2-7.