

February 21 2021 Fireside

**“Leaving Babylon; Building Zion”**

1. “What is Babylon today? What are some summer cottages in Babylon we might still be keeping?”

The simple answer is in the Topical Guide; The church of the devil, Worldliness, and the Bondage of Israel. **The church of the devil** is anything that is not the church of God; and that is sadly most things in the world today.

**Worldliness** can be explained in Doctrine and Covenants 1:16:

“They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall.” And finally, the **Bondage of Israel**. Last Conference President Nelson told the church members that one of the translations of Israel is “Let God Prevail”. The Antithesis of us not letting God prevail is then bondage or the bondage of Israel. If we take time to examine our lives and take note of areas in which we are not letting God prevail, this would lead us to conclude that we then are in bondage and are in Babylon.

In the October 2017 General Conference President Nelson asked us:

“My brothers and sisters, how precious is the Book of Mormon to you? If you were offered diamonds or rubies (insert whatever would be the most desirous to you, ie. Touring around Europe) or the Book of Mormon, which would you choose? Honestly, which is of greater worth to you? (one obviously is Babylon and the other is Zion) ... consider three related questions that I urge you to think about today: First, what would your life be like without the Book of Mormon? Second, what would you not know and third, what would you not have? (My life would be an endless cycle of searching for truth. I would not have a knowledge of the restoration and a correct understanding of who my Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ are. I would not be sealed to my family. Are those worth trading a trip to Europe?)

I think a good “Test”, as Elder Bednar expressed, for us on were we were in Babylon or Zion was the start of Covid last year. It was not only a test to see how well prepared we were but also to see were our summer cottages or gods were. When we were locked down suddenly there was no going shopping, no going to movies or other forms of entertainment, there was no traveling, there was no going to church and other church activities, there was no going to the temple. Think back to this time, or even for some who are still deep in this situation, what makes your heart groan the most deeply? President Nelson was perhaps giving us a warning for the future when he asked, what would your life be like with out the Book of Mormon? Today we observe what life is like without the opportunity to attend church in person or go to the temple.

As I pondered this Questions my thoughts keep moving in another direction, the Millennial reign... let me explain,

MY Gospel answer of what is Babylon is simple and brief, it is anything... and I mean anything that moves us away or distracts us from the Savior and building Zion His kingdom, that is What Babylon is to me.

Babylon to me is the devil and if we want to leave we need to bind the devil in our lives which is getting increasingly difficult in these the last days.

We need to keep in mind the lines between Babylon and Zion are being blurred more and more by the devil everyday

his deceptions are incredibly powerful he never sleeps, never eats never takes a break or goes on vacation or quits, he has one job to keep you and I distracted in Babylon.

he won't quit until the Savior stops him, and the Savior won't stop him until the the righteous Saint of Zion expand Zion and start living the millennium in their life.

Those of us who have left Babylon and are now in Zion, see that the "cover up" the devil is doing is actually a giant chasm that gets bigger everyday, and it has a false foundation you will fall right through.

Those of us whose eyes are wide open need to be helping the watchmen on the tower, we need to be sounding the warning for those still asleep, so we can all bind the devil in our life, grab the Iron Rod and help build Zion.

George Q. Cannon Stated

*We talk about Satan being bound. Satan will be bound by the power of God; but he will be bound also by the determination of the people of God not to listen to him, not to be governed by him. The Lord will not bind him and take his power from the earth while there are men and women willing to be governed by him. Gospel Truths 1:86*

Spencer W. Kimball taught that we need not wait until the Millennium for Satan to be bound: “When Satan is bound in a single home—when Satan is bound in a single life—the Millennium has already begun in that home, in that life”

*(The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 172).*

These two Quotes taught me a very simple truth: when we start living the Millennium in our life by binding Satan we are leaving Babylon behind and Building Zion and our example will bless and help others as we raise our ensign to the world, by leading and teaching and by example.

always keep in mind only his Covenant keeping Sons and daughter can, and will, do this work if not us then who? If not now then when?

This led me in my mind to ask another Question: where is Babylon?

Simply put it's everywhere, it's in all things, Things we once found to be innocent and worth our time has become tainted by Babylon.

Make no mistake Brothers and Sisters Babylon is controlled by the Devil he is the King there.

Zions King is Jesus Christ our older Brother,

Who are we following by our daily choices? What side are you really on? if you take a full inventory of your life and what is important to you, you might be surprised what side you are really on.

Keep in mind Babylon will fall, look how many times Babylon fell in the Scriptures.

It is falling now faster and faster each day.

If we dont wake up, Rise up We will fall with it. We see example, after example, after example, of this in the Scriptures.

We must wake up and wake up all those around us, fill our lamps with oil, trim the wick and hit the road, the BrideGroom is coming to the Marriage feast, ask yourself, am I ready?

I remember how powerful the reference Elder Neal A Maxwell made to people trying to leave Babylon but keeping a summer cottage there, what a great visual that is.

Nowadays in my opinion these cottages he referred to have turned into Air B&B's if you will...

what I mean by that is it's not just one or two cottages a person can struggle with leaving behind but it is now a buffet of choices and some of the biggest I see today you wouldn't even expect are choices but they are. we always have a choice.

So first lets rule out the obvious Air B&Bs of babylon

Cell phone addiction, Social media addiction, TV watching especially any form of binge watching, the comparison game, the, my life is better than yours syndrome, this one hurts more people that we can even understand and we need to be very careful of that

then on top of those... we have all the hard stuff, I don't even need to get into. like heavy addiction etc. etc. we all know that leads to The dark side of Babylon... real quick

I wanted to talk about Air B&Bs of babylon we might not suspect maybe like sins of commission vs sins of omission as an example

A few things I feel we could be overlooking are:

1. Fear, Fear is a choice, fear of the unknown or Fear of not understanding how to start, or where to start, or Fear you are too far Gone, or fear you are just beginning and don't have time, fear you can't help someone, or you will offend them. These are satan's lies in action in your life. Don't let him use fear, to keep you down and out of the fight and from building Zion

another Air B&B of Babylon we might be overlooking is  
2. Lack of knowledge, if we don't gain a powerful witness and understanding and Testimony... (if you will) of how and what to do to leave Babylon and build Zion, this could stop us dead in our tracks  
Its not easy but we must constantly be learning what is expected of us as devine Sons and Daughters of God. and then act. Appropriately and immediately. Our marching order from God can change thats why our Prophet has asked us to stay close to the Holy Ghost

A third example is Not Fully trusting in God... this is a big one

I believe all of us have Faith and hope, that God has a Plan for Zion and his Covenant keeping sons and daughters. But do we trust Him?

(Father manhole jump story) my father a contractor and maintenance man most his life grew up a farm boy, and he always had a simple way but effective way of teaching me so I would never forget lifes lessons, he wanted me to learn to trust him and trust my Father in Heaven he explained he was going down to the bottom of a manhole, in a maintenance tunnel and its pitch black down there and if he called to me and told me to jump down I would know he would catch me without fail, even though I couldn't see him.

I completely trusted my dad. I knew without a doubt he would catch me and he always did. He taught me something very powerful in this simple lesson

Do we truly Trust God has a plan for us or do we keep one hand on Babylon thinking there is safety there?

There is not... it a faults safety... and when it falls amen to Babylon it will never rise again and its master will be bound.

With God we can always take a leap of faith, in fact like my fathers manhole story our Heavenly Father and Brother are working very hard right now for us, to have that kind of Trust in them.

My question to you tonight, is where are you at on a "trust level scale" with God?

be honest with yourself, this is important you might find that you have faith and hope in his plan, but do you fully trust it ?

because a lack of trust might be keeping you from acting.

Will you let go of Babylon? completely and jump off the edge to Zion?  
into the arms of our loving God even though you can't see him?  
Think about it.

I love the scripture Marlene used in Doctrine and Covenants 1:16 to explain Babylon because if we take a moment to think about that scripture we might have the simplest definition yet:

“They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world...”

Let's ask the question, “if everyone in a room, church, family, etc. ‘was walking after their own way, after their own god, after their own opinions, whose image is in the likeness of the world’, what would that look like? Is there a single word to describe that?” I believe there is such a word, and such a word is “diversity”. Babylon is anything that supports diversity, or differences, or divergences or chaos. What does the Lord require? If “Babylon” is the world, then the opposite of that should be what the Lord requires if the principle were to hold true- so, what is the opposite of those things? “Unity”. The Lord said “if ye are not one ye are not mine”, the Lord also said (D&C 105:3-5) “But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them; And are not

*united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom; And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.*” President Lorenzo Snow said “I assure you we *will never* go back to Jackson County, Missouri, there to build up the New Jerusalem of the latter-days, until there is a *perfect willingness on our part to conform to its rules and principles*” meaning, “until we are willing to stop following our own gods, walking in “our own ways” and understandings and our own interpretations and opinions. Paul taught in Ephesians (4: 11-14):

“And [the Lord] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the *unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive...*”

This unity required absolutely includes unity of doctrine, unity of faith, etc. and “Babylon” is anything that teaches divergence of doctrine, yea, in fine anything or anyone who teaches that a “difference of doctrine is not only acceptable, but desired” is actually Babylon. President Brigham Young taught “Now, it is for you and me to prepare to return back again... to return east, and by-and-by to build up the center stake of Zion. We are not prepared to do this now, but we are here to learn until we are of one heart and of *one mind in the things of this life*. Do all the Latter-day Saints arrive at this? *No...* Of the great many who have been baptized into this Church, *but few are able to abide the word of the Lord.*” meaning if you have a divergence, difference, “opinion”, etc. of “the doctrine”, you won’t be a part of this. We need to become united in all things, most importantly, “doctrine”, anything else is “Babylon”. Our most damning “summer cottages” are our “itching ears” that lead us to the “winds of doctrine, the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, etc.” that we intentionally expose ourselves to. Anything that leads or teaches against the pure doctrine of Christ- that is the “Babylon” we should avoid and fear the most, and yet we embrace the most.

## 2. “How does one leave Babylon? How does salt lose it’s flavor? Are the two connected?”

Over and over again we put our hopes, faith, and trust in things of the world and not in God. Joseph Smith explained to us In the Lectures on Faith 2:2:

“...in him [God] the principle of faith dwells independently, and he is the object in whom the faith of all other rational and accountable beings center for life and salvation.”

From this we see that there is no life or salvation that could possibly come from any other person or thing that we keep hanging all our hopes and dreams on.

Step one to leaving Babylon then is recognizing where life and salvation lie and eliminating those things that do not lead to life and salvation.

Step two is determining where our heart is. Is watching episodes of “Wanda Vision”, or “The Good Doctor”, or having your house decorated nicely, or going on a vacation to Europe necessarily mean that we are living in Babylon. Well, yes because they are part of the world today. But where is your heart? If all the internet went down, would we mourn the loss of our favorite tv show or would we mourn the loss of being able to view our scriptures? Now obviously some things like rated R movies and other vulgar things of the world are clearly of Babylon. But we seek for the best things the world has to offer and then we tune our hearts to God so that he is the center of our faith and when it is time to leave behind even the best that this world has to offer, we will be able to do so without hesitation.

And that brings us to step three. Let God Prevail. God will always lead us in the right direction and He will always lead us in a direction that leaves Babylon. So let him lead you.

Literally salt loses its savor by being exposed to sun and water for too long and the salty flavor goes away rendering the salt generally useless. My mother is a wise woman and shared this analogy with me. She said, “The salt is like our bodies and the savor is like our spirits. When we refuse to leave Babylon and let God prevail our spirits will literally begin to die rendering us as a person just like the salt, useless.” It makes me think of Lot's wife

who turned into a pillar of salt. Using this analogy she would have been literally salt but salt that had lost its savor or a person who had died spiritually and had become useless.

First we need to Wake up, and Rise up, open our eyes to the Awful state we are in.  
We can't possibly leave Babylon until we as Zion, God's covenant keepers, break off the Chains of inhabitants.  
Babylon's enticement have never been stronger than they are right now  
but guess what??? we are stronger, Brothers and Sisters, we are, God's children endowed with his power saved for this day to Stand and build Zion.

Let's hear what President Benson said almost forty years ago...

He said You are a marked generation

*"For nearly six thousand years, God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the Second Coming of the Lord. Every previous gospel dispensation has drifted into apostasy, but ours will not. . . . God has saved for the final inning some of his strongest children, who will help bear off the Kingdom triumphantly. . . . Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us. Never before on the face of this earth have the forces of evil and the forces of good been as well organized. . . . Each day we personally make many decisions that show where our support will go. The final outcome is certain—the forces of righteousness will finally win. What remains to be seen is where each of us personally, now and in the future, will stand in this fight—and how tall we will stand. Will we be true to our last-days, foreordained mission?" Ezra Taft Benson, In His Steps, BYU Devotional Address, 3/79. (End quote)*

Brothers and Sisters we are at a crossroads right now.

This is our generation's defining moment.

How will you let yourself be defined? Are you a fence sitter?

Are you running from the fight?

Are you a prodigal son or daughter?

or MY HOPE is you are neck deep in the battle standing toe to toe with evil with God's armor, ready to fight for someone else's eternity, which in turn will save your own eternity, remember God chose you up there before we came down, and we fully sustained his plan, I pray each of us tonight realizes the gravity and magnitude of this moment in time, are you fully awake and you are rising up?

God's expectations is not just for you to hear but to go and do.

Jesus Christ did all of his work on his feet everyday, we must be found doing the same if we expect to earn the same reward and stand next to Him when he comes.

In April 1999 An Early-Morning Seminary Teacher named Jack Marshall in Texas wrote

This quote later quoted by one of my personal heroes Brad Wilcox, at Especially For Youth--

Listen close this one will get you and he is talking to you and I

*"You, the youth of the church today, were generals in the war of Heaven.*

*Someday when you are back in the Spirit World, you will be enthralled by other souls who will be from many other interesting time periods and who lived during the time of many great prophets.*

*You may ask one person, "When did you live?" and hear something like, "I was with Moses when he parted the Red Sea," or "I helped build one of the great pyramids," or "I fought with Captain Moroni."*

*And as you are standing there amazed at the people you are with, someone will ask you during which prophets' time you lived in; when you tell them that you lived during the time of President Kimball, President Benson, President Hunter, and President Hinckley,*

*a hush will fall over every hall and corridor of Heaven and all in attendance will bow in your presence.*

*This is a very important stewardship we have been given. We were held back for 6000 years because we were the most righteous, most talented, most obedient servants of our Heavenly Father."*

*ARE WE STILL?*

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Brothers and sister if that didn't fire you up you might be Spiritually dead inside (i'm just sayin)

Matthew 5:13

13 ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Keep in mind

Salt is a preserving and saving agent... likewise Zion is preserving saving body of Agents,

Agents are to act, not to be acted upon so we should be out daily seeking ways to build Zion. This is the charge God has given all his sons and daughter, none are exempt from this commandment.

In the LDS N.T. Student Manual for Matthew 5:13. "If the Salt Have Lost His Savour"

In addition to its uses in flavoring and preserving food, salt was added to sacrificial offerings under the law of Moses. Thus salt was associated with joy, permanence, and covenant making. When Jesus admonished disciples to be the "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13), part of the meaning was that their lives should reflect their covenants with the Lord and serve as a preservative for the world in general. Elder Carlos E. Asay (1926–99) of the Presidency of the Seventy explained that salt loses its savor by contamination and that we keep our "savor" by avoiding spiritual contamination. Though directed specifically to priesthood holders, Elder Asay's words have application to each of us:

"A world-renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. Savor is lost through mixture and contamination. Similarly, priesthood power does not dissipate with age; it, too, is lost through mixture and contamination. ("Salt of the Earth: Savor of Men and Saviors of Men," Ensign, May 1980, 42–43).

In other words, salt loses its savor when we add other items to it; mix things in with it, so we lose our savor by addition and we gain savor by subtraction. Once again, this is "unity vs diversity". We subtract by repentance and eliminating anything that differs from the Lord's will, including doctrines, opinions, theories, etc. When we mix the Word of God with our own opinions, theories etc, we are "as salt that has lost its savor, which is now good for nothing but to be cast under the feet of men". Salt losing its savor and Babylon are directly related and connected.

**3. "Have prophets warned us specifically as members what aspects of Babylon will be biggest problems for Saints? If so, what are some of these we should watch out for?"**

**2 Nephi 25:10** – warns of hardening of hearts which causes to be destroyed or led down into Babylon.

**D&C 1:16** – They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god..

**Isaiah 22:13** – Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we shall die.

**Isaiah 3:16** – daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

**Harold B. Lee 1972 October General Conference "Admonitions for the Priesthood of God"**

"...sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. I speak of the sin of adultery, ...unlicensed sexual sins of fornication as well as adultery; ...the equally grievous sin of homosexuality..."

**Elder Kevin W. Pearson of the Seventy 2015 April General Conference "Stay by the Tree"**

"Elders and sisters, you simply cannot return from your mission, do a swan dive back into Babylon, and spend endless hours scoring meaningless points on pointless video games without falling into a deep spiritual sleep. Nor can you indulge in online pornography and ignore virtue and chastity without dire spiritual consequences."

In my opinion the biggest road block from leaving Babylon and building Zion is ourselves we are the stumbling block, and I say "we" I mean the natural man or women in all of us.

To build Zion we must start by building Zion in our own hearts and minds.

I submit this means killing the natural man inside (for the natural man is an enemy to God) and letting the True disciple come forth the true Disciple knows how to build Zion, the Natural man doesn't even comprehend it, he is too busy with pride, selfishness, and self-absorbed tendencies to spend Time on Zion our most important work here on earth.

After we kill the natural man inside we have to rise to the level God expects and we can't do this without his arm and the Atonement.

President Ezra Taft Benson almost over 40 years

*"All through the ages prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it...this is a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short time than there is of us." The bar has clearly been set very high for us but we are totally up to the challenge.*

Not only is the bar being set high for us by God, but the devil has laid billions, that with a B, billions of land mines and traps to disable us, Babylon is covered every square inch with traps. Zion on the other hand does not have a single trap or land mine,

These traps and Landmines will break us, and slow or even stop us in our forward progress, and trust me when I tell you the road leaving away from Babylon to Zion, is the most heavily guarded passage.

Satan does not want you to leave, so only the most heavily armored sons and daughters of God will make it through. The ones who won't quit pushing through the traps to get to the light and safety of Zion.

our brothers and sisters might get injured on this road out of Babylon or you might, what do we do? We stop and help apply the heal med pack of the Atonement and pick them up and push forward with all the strength we have together.

but again if we don't stop to rescue who will? If we don't now then when?

In the Parable of the good Samaritan how many people walked passed?

we need to ask ourselves are we walking past or are we stopping to help those in our life, in our sphere of influence who are spiritual down being torn apart by the wolf? Only we we can offer the healing balm of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his Atonement which heals all wounds completely, no matter how bad

And we, (Zion the pure in heart) hold that power in our hands.

Let me ask you a question:

if you saw a person on the side of the road bleeding from the head or a small child with a broken leg or an elderly person who had fallen down, would you not stop and help?

I know you would, no doubt about it, So why is it any different when you see a Sister or Brother Spiritually wounded or even Spiritually dying and we just walk right by.

We all understand the Spirit is far more important than the temporal body but yet we will let them spiritually die right in front of us over what fear?

Fear of offending them? fear of saying the wrong thing? fear of not knowing what to say? or how to say it? or how to say it with perfection?

I feel we could be missing the whole point, we made a covenant in the pre-earth Grand Council to not let that happen. And then again here on earth when we were Baptized. And took upon us His name we recommitted.

My feeling is the Prophets and Apostles from the beginning of time have warned and warned and warned us, of the dangers of Babylon and not fully moving to Zion.

Some of the ways we have been warned recently are "natural man" weaknesses we suffer from that of Compliance and conformity to Babylon, Apathy toward Zion because of our comfort in Babylon, Stagnation in building Zion because of fear, lack of interest, lack of enthusiasm, or lack of concern for that which is of the highest importance.

Sisters and brothers we are stunting our own Spiritual Growth by not reaching out to others in love, we are holding ourselves back by not doing all we can to Daily build Zion.

Let's rise up, repent and start this very night on a new mission to serve our God and build his kingdom here on earth. Let's sacrifice everything for him who sacrificed everything for us. Let us open the eyes of our brothers and sisters who are asleep, to join the fight and double our saving ability, the strongest missionary I have ever met is my good brother David, you can meet David in my 5th video (Atheist to Agnostic to servant of the Lord) a convert of only 2 years he woke up, and now he spends every single day fighting for the cause of Jesus Christ in some way or another. Imagine if we all add one David this month to Zion's cause. Imagine the power of conversation from new members, there is an energy and power that you won't find anywhere else in the Gospel and that feeling to me is building Zion.

Lets us not forget We need to put on the Armor of God daily and quite our storms and find peace Let's turn to our ultimate example: our Savior Jesus Christ, who left Babylon often retreated to the mountains and prayed to Father fasted and meditated to find peace. He even taught his Apostles this, There is a type in this we need to pay attention to. He charged up got his orders from Our Father and then jumped back into the fight. We likewise need to do this daily, if we are in the fight we need to stop and get our marching orders from above and then get into the fight. Sometimes Babylon pushing on us constantly requires us to hit the reset or in my opinion GET OUT OF Babylon completely to become our most powerful self in service to God, My recommendation is to throw out everything in you life that distracts and especially that which destroys your solid connection to Zion and never look back.

I pray the Holy spirit sinks this deep in your heart right now and you feel the truth of this.

The Book of Mormon's "Big Three Warnings" are 1. Priestcraft, 2. Secret Combinations, and 3. Idolatry. I have written a very lengthy paper of Priestcraft, and am in the process of writing papers on the other two. All three of these should be extremely high on members' watch list and yet members don't seem to understand basic functioning definitions of these three anymore. I've beaten priestcraft to a pulp, so I won't do so here, I will just say "members should take it seriously, because it is extremely damning" and if you don't have a clue what it is, I'd recommend studying up on it, there are now a couple very good resources online dealing with it from this group. As far as secret combinations members need to once again, stop thinking broadly and outward, ie. "Evil men in dark robes in a back room somewhere over there", and more inward, the prophets saw us, the warnings were for us. A secret combination is any time someone takes an oath of secrecy to "get gain" (Yes, it's the same "get gain" from understanding priestcraft). Once again, it is a lot more broad and inclusive than members would like to realize. If someone comes to you and says "I have received revelation, something super-secret and sensitive, and I want to share it with you, but before I share it with you, you have to promise/swear an oath to keep it secret!" that individual is making a secret combination to "get gain", the gain in this case is the most expensive of currency, "knowledge". This whole process is 100% of the devil and does not come of Christ. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who are obsessed with secret combinations seem to be the members most likely to be a part of secret combinations themselves; once again this is because of looking broadly out vs specifically inward. The Lord does not work in secret chambers, the Lord works in sacred places; Satan works by oaths before giving while the Lord gives first and then asks you keep sacred. Lastly idolatry.

In the LDS N.T. Student Manual we read:

### **Revelation 9:20–21. Modern Idolatry**

As described at the conclusion of Revelation 9, the evil men who are not killed by the war and destruction described in earlier verses will still refuse to repent of their evil practices, including *idol worship*. While serving as a member of the Seventy, **Elder David R. Stone** taught that a prevalent form of *modern idolatry is adopting the tastes and attitudes of the worldly culture that surrounds us*:

"Our culture tends to determine what foods we like, how we dress, what constitutes polite behavior, what sports we should follow, what our taste in music should be, the importance of education, and our *attitudes toward honesty*. It also influences men as to the importance of recreation or religion, influences women about the priority of career or childbearing, and has a powerful effect on how we approach procreation and moral issues. All too often, we are like puppets on a string, as our culture determines what is 'cool.' ...

“Seduced by our culture, we often hardly recognize our idolatry, as our strings are pulled by that which is popular in the Babylonian world” (“Zion in the Midst of Babylon.” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2006, 91–92).

In here is identified forms of idolatry that members might not want to accept, or realize, but once again, are true and are so important for our eternal salvation- it will damn us and prevent us from exaltation. One cannot have one foot in Babylon and one in the world and hope to jump fences when things get rough; the Lord specifically warns against that belief in a multitude of locations in modern writ.

### **Revelation 18:3, 7–16. The Wealth and Materialism of Babylon**

John used phrases such as “waxed rich” and “lived deliciously” (Revelation 18:3, 7, 9) to highlight the lust for wealth and lavish possessions that define Babylon. These riches will be destroyed, and those who have placed their hearts upon them will lament (see Revelation 18:8–19; 2 Nephi 9:30; D&C 56:16). **President Harold B. Lee** (1899–1973) warned that with prosperity often comes the temptation to embrace the materialism of Babylon: “We are tested, we are tried, we are going through some of *the severest tests today and we don’t realize perhaps the severity of the tests that we’re going through.* ... Today we are basking in the lap of luxury, the like of which we’ve never seen before in the history of the world. It would seem that probably *this is the most severe test of any test that we’ve ever had in the history of the Church*” (“First Presidency Devotional” [unpublished Christmas devotional for Church employees, Dec. 13, 1973], 4–5; see Jacob 2:18–19).

Once again, members want to downplay priestcraft, idolatry, and secret combinations and they don’t realize that these three will be the “main three” test, Test, TEST, and will be primarily what causes the grand majority of Saints to not obtain exaltation. These are serious, we need to start acting like it. And finally one more quote from the LDS N.T. Student Manual that summarizes these “main three”, that is 1. Priestcraft, 2. Secret Combinations, and 3. Idolatry. When I read the quote see if you can pick up when it identifies each of these three:

### **Revelation 18:11–13. Merchandise and “Souls of Men”**

The list of merchandise sold in Babylon reveals a startling truth: people sell not only gold, precious stones, fine textiles, and many other luxury items, but even “slaves, and souls of men” (Revelation 18:13). This refers primarily to the abominable practice of *human trafficking* but can also be seen as a reference to the spiritually enslaving consequences of *materialism* and *other evils* (see 2 Nephi 26:10). It may also describe *corrupt religious practitioners who present themselves as ministering to people’s souls while seeking above all to profit financially*; in this sense, they traffic in the “souls of men.” Moroni recorded that in the last days “there shall be churches built up that shall say: Come unto me, and for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins” (Mormon 8:32). In contrast, the gospel of Jesus Christ offers spiritual nourishment “without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1; 2 Nephi 26:25; Alma 1:20).

## **4. “What is Zion generally? What is Zion specifically? Are there different definitions/understandings/uses/etc. for the same word?”**

### **What is Zion Generally?**

The Church of the First Born

### **What is Zion Specifically?**

A society that lives under the Holy Order of God by those who have learned to abide a Terrestrial law and are learning to abide a Celestial Law.

**Location** - the City of Zion or the New Jerusalem, the Ancient City of Jerusalem, Jackson County, Missouri, the

City of Enoch, the City of David, where Solomon build his temple on Mount Zion, All of North and South America, lands of inheritance (promised land), a place were the pure in heart live, the kingdom of God on Earth.

**State of Being** – The pure in heart, are of one mind and one heart, those consecrated by the Lord through the Priesthood

**Action** - The cause of Zion, strengthening the stakes of Zion, the mission of the Latter-day Saints (cause of Zion), perfecting the saints, out of Zion shall go the law, saints will gather and inherit the land.

DANIEL 2:44 reads

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Did you catch that?

it shall break into pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and shall stand for ever,  
Brothers and Sisters are we not seeing that today?, as the Church grows at an alarming rate, we see the kingdom and government of Babylon Crumbling to dust daily because of satan's power and influence, isn't it ironic that the very kingdoms he uses to reign with blood and horror on this earth fall apart, because of his corruption, he is destroying his own kingdom, because his influence is so toxic it destroys itself completely everything Satan puts his hand on dies and never comes back to life, in dramatic contrast everything Jesus Christ puts his hand on lives forever, the power of Jesus Christ will save all who desire with real intent to be saved and we call the saved Zion.

Zion is a people, the pure in heart,  
Zion is a place, a place of safety and learning,  
Zion to me is when I have hardships in my life that bring me to my knees, and I have love and support the same day my tragedy strikes,  
Zion is mourning with those that mourn,  
Loving those who need love,  
Blessing those who stand in need of blessing  
Zion is to me a Group of Brothers and Sister bound through the Eternities who will love and support each other no matter what,  
a people who can set aside differences and love each other with all their hearts might mind and strength,  
Zion is putting others before yourself,  
Zion is not caring about who get credit but who gets helped and love.  
Zion to me is the stone seen by Daniel that will eventually fill the earth. All the prophets have testified that the Lord guides the destiny of Zion.  
Zion has blessed countless lives, and Zion will continue to fulfill its destiny.  
Zion to me is a living breathing community with the Blood of our Savior running through it, it saves all blesses all and will be the ONLY kingdom standing pure and true in the end on the right hand of God an offering, to the Father from his Son Jesus Christ and we can be this people.  
Sisters, Brothers My only question to you tonight is,  
are you in? or out?  
we need to decide and commit to Zion to Christ to each other it's our time Brothers and Sisters.

Elder John Taylor

*“We believe that we shall rear splendid edifices, magnificent temples and beautiful cities that shall become the pride, praise and glory of the whole earth. We believe that this people will excel in literature, in science and the arts and in manufactures. In fact, there will be a concentration of wisdom, not only of the combined wisdom of the world as it now exists, but men will be inspired in regard to all these matters in a manner and to an extent that they never have been before, and we shall have eventually, when the Lord’s purposes are carried out, the most magnificent buildings, the most pleasant and beautiful gardens, the richest and most costly clothing, and be the most healthy and the most intellectual people that will reside upon the earth. This is part and parcel of our faith” (in Journal of Discourses, 10:147).*

G. Homer Durham

*“When Zion is established in her beauty and honor and glory, the kings and princes of the earth will come, in order that they may get information and teach the same to their people. They will come as they came to learn the wisdom of Solomon” (The Gospel Kingdom, sel. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987], 216).*

Marlene and Korte broke this down perfectly. I would just add if you are still confused see my paper “Zion, City of Holiness, New Jerusalem” for more break downs on these similarities and differences.

## 5. “How important to Zion is Celestial Law? What is Celestial Law? How does one prepare themselves to live it?”

There is no Zion without Celestial Law.

I've noticed that sometimes we talk about Celestial Law as if we don't yet have it. We say things like, “when we are living polygamy and the law of consecration, etc., we will then be living the Celestial Law or, when Celestial Law is restored....” Heber C. Kimball had this to say about the Celestial Law:

“What is the celestial law? A great many of you think that you have not come to it, but the fundamental principles of "Mormonism," faith in Jesus Christ, repentance for sins, and baptism for their remission, which is the door into the kingdom of God, are the first letters of the alphabet of the celestial law” (Heber C. Kimball *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols., 4:106; emphasis added)

Brigham Young also explained:

“When we talk of the celestial law which is revealed from heaven, that is, the Priesthood, we are talking about the principle of salvation, a perfect system of government, of laws and ordinances, by which we can be prepared to pass from one gate to another, and from one sentinel to another, until we go into the presence of our Father and God. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], p. 15, also p. 125).

In Short, the Celestial Law is the fullness of the Gospel that was restored to Joseph Smith. Just because we are not living every iota of that law ie. Polygamy, or a perfect system of government, does not mean that we are not living Celestial Law. It is all part of the restoration that will continue to unfold (unfold not restored because it was already restored), as we learned in the April 2020 General Conference.

“A man who has had his mind opened to the operation of the Priesthood of the Son of God—who understands anything of the government of heaven, must understand that finite beings are not capable of receiving and abiding the celestial law in its fullness. When can you abide a celestial law? When you become a celestial being, and never until then. (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel by John A. Widtsoe [1954], p.95; emphasis added)

So the key here is learning to abide a celestial law. It is not the law that makes us holy. It is by the law we learn to be holy.

### So better asked, how do we learn to abide a Celestial Law?

Hyrum Andrus in his discourse entitled “The Holy Order” gives us some insights. He Explains that the Holy Order of God was the Order of things in pre-earth life and then it extended to Earth. We can see an example of this in the Book of Mormon before the time of Alma. It is written that they lived by the Holy Order of God. Hyrum Andres explains that this involves building and attending temples, redeeming our dead, “And not only to do the ordinances there and to hold up your hand and say you'll do this and that but finally, to go out and *do* what you hold your hand up to do and establish a society that is centered in and founded upon the covenants of the Holy House of the Lord. Now when you do that, that's when you finally get to that Zion Society.”

It is about perfecting the saints. And we perfect the saints by following the commandments, magnifying our callings, and living up to our covenants.

To me living and understanding Celestial law is about doing two things one removing all our weakness and impurities from us which takes time even a lifetime and beyond and requires the Atonement of Jesus Christ applied daily, and two doing hard things well in our life,

In january's issue of the Liahona our beloved prophet teaches us

Grow into the Principle of Revelation By President Russell M. Nelson President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

“The standard is clear,” taught Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. If that which is intended to entertain, for example, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, then certainly that type of entertainment is not for us. Because the Spirit cannot abide that which is vulgar, crude, or immodest, then clearly such things are not for us.”<sup>4</sup>

When we couple increased purity and obedience with fasting, diligent seeking, study of the scriptures and the words of living prophets, and temple and family history work, the heavens will open. The Lord, in turn, will fulfill His promise: “I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind” (Doctrine and Covenants 11:13).

Secondly when we learn to do hard things well over and over and over again we will find ourselves living the Celestial laws with ease, we need to keep in mind leaving Babylon, building Zion, and living Celestial laws all go hand in hand, it is a progress step by step, line upon line here a little there a little, next thing you know you are a different person you have subdued the natural man and allowed the Disciple in you to start living the Celestial laws we need to return to our Father in heaven.

The Parable of the ten virgins teaches us some important principles to understanding this question: first the ten virgins are the body of Zion but five are training to live the Celestial laws and five are just going through the motions and not letting the laws sink into their hearts, therefore they will be left behind and not admitted into the marriage feast, how sad will this be, I believe the sorrow will be unbearable, if it is someone we could have influenced to help fill their lamp and trim their wick and get on the path to the Marriage feast.

In that day, If we will have a perfect knowledge then I assume we will have a perfect memory and we will be able to see all those we could of helped start living the higher laws the Celestial laws.

How important to Zion is Celestial law... it is everything, it is the whole point of our earthly training, the goal is for Zion to live these higher laws with perfect precision this will take time.

All of our commandments, principles, and laws and covenants that we have studied and make in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are leading us to living the Celestial laws this is part of Building Zion,

living and learning these laws, principles commandments and covenants are not easy sometimes, but as we go over and over, rinse, wash, repeat, we learn to live higher and higher laws

Other churches might accuse us of trying to earn our way into heaven with some of these works/commitments we make with the Lord, that is so far from the truth we are trying to learn heavens laws, we currently practice lessor laws, to help us learn these higher laws, Zion eventually will live a higher law we call the Celestial Law and it encompasses all of the Commandments, principles, Laws and Covenants and much more,

A precursor to the Celestial law of consecration, is the law of tithing likewise

A Precursor to the highest form of Celestial marriage is being seal in the new and everlasting covenant.

These are stepping stones if you will to the highest Laws.

In order to live the Celestial laws we have to first learn them, second practice them, third never forsake them, we need to be patient with ourselves in learning these laws

It takes a lifetime, and beyond.

(2 Nephi 28:30)

30 For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell “Now we are entering times wherein there will be for all of us as Church members, in my judgment, some special challenges which will require of us that we follow the Brethren. All the easy things that the Church has had to do have been done. From now on, it’s high adventure, and followership is going to be tested in some interesting ways” (“The Old Testament: Relevancy within Antiquity,” in A Symposium on the Old Testament [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979], p. 12).

Once again, Korte and Marlene did a great job breaking this down. For those still confused on this I’d recommend watching or reading my papers/videos “Celestial Law”, “The Parable of the Nobleman and His Olive Trees”, etc.

Remember the words of the prophets:

“We will not go back to redeem Zion, to build up the center stake of Zion, until there is a perfect willingness on our part to live Celestial Law. If Zion is never redeemed, if that city is never built, the Lord *will never* come for the Lord cannot accept any city not united living Celestial Law.”

**6. “Why should Zion and the building of it up, be our focus? As we do this, what should we expect to see in the days ahead?”**

Zion won't come until we are ready, but if we don't get ready on our own, the Lord through tribulation will get us ready. And, God will bring Zion one way or another because His works will not be frustrated. So we can either have learned to abide a Terrestrial Law and be committed to learning to abide a Celestial Law or we can stay in Babylon, loose our savor and be as Lot's wife.

In accordance with the changes that have been made recently in the church, we will see people actually ministering to each other and not because they are afraid they will be asked if they did by a Relief Society or Elder's Quorum President, but because they they sincerely love their neighbor. We will see a people who are more concerned about the well being of others than themselves. When temples open, we will see a temple attendance and family history work exponentially increase. We will see the rate of temple building increase even more. We will see the youth participating on an equal ground as the adults in the work of salvation, We will see parents taking responsibility for the education, and most importantly the spiritual education of their children making the majority of gospel learning in the home. We will see callings magnified with zeal. We will see gospel knowledge of the general membership grow from a trickle to a flood. We will see missionary work grow not just among called missionaries but among the general membership as they all truly understand that they are missionaries by virtue of being a member of Christ's church. As we do these things, more of the Restoration of the Celestial Law will be unfolded to us, ie. Polygamy, the law of consecration, a perfect system of government, more scripture, etc. And we will see more and more of those who are not willing to commit to be a Zion community and learn to abide a Celestial law, rapidly begin to fall away.

In the coming day as the calamities of the second coming increase, Zion will be the **ONLY** shelter from the storm and destruction.

We have to build Zion it's the only chance we have Jesus Christ is the way the only way and Zion is his Ark for our generation like in times of Noah or the parting of the red sea in the times of Moses what happened to those who didn't board the Ark or cross the red sea get my picture here,

Zion is our generation's Ark.

And Ark stands for Another random Act of kindness from our loving Father. Get on the Ark that is Zion

In the coming day in the not so distant future. Men's hearts will fail them, even the elect shall be deceived, the mighty shall fall, How do we stop this we build Zion right where we stand, all of God's children need a safe place to feel accepted, to learn, and grow, in the Gospel, with like minded individuals, who love each other like brothers and sisters because they know they are, this is the why we should build Zion as we build Zion right where we stand, we build a community of individuals who God will bless with abundant blessings, to prosper in any situation, he has shown this in the Scriptures for almost seven thousand years, we have all the evidence we need to Trust in the Lord's plan completely, and never back away from Zion to Babylon for any reason, there is nothing there for us, I encourage you to turn your life upside down cast out of your lives all the distractions that are hold you back, change your routine completely to focus on God's children everyday your sisters and brothers, instead of endlessly do what you want to do.

As you do this going back to Babylon ie watching TV, playing games, cell phone surfing should feel weird like getting in the bathtub with your socks on, you will feel to say: something just isn't right, and you know it... Get out of Babylon completely... Now is the time to make that full commitment, make a covenant with yourself to cut all ties to Babylon and fully embrace God's kingdom here on earth... Zion.

May I make one suggestion, please please start building Zion in your own home President Lee and President Makay counseled us concerning this over 40 plus years ago "no other success can compensate for failure in the home, and the greatest work we can do on earth is within the walls of our own home" end quote we have been commanded to strengthen ourselves then we are strong go out and strengthen our brethren.

President Gordon B. Hinckley teaches "The progress of the Church in our day is truly astounding. The God of heaven has brought to pass this latter-day miracle, and what we have seen is but a foretaste of greater things yet to come" ("We Have a Work to Do," Ensign, Feb. 1988, p. 6).

D&C 121

34 Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?

35 Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson

36 That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

I end with my testimony,

I witness to you that what we have discussed tonight is true... the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, the last days are unfolding right before us and we have the blessing and opportunity to be a part of most fulfilling work in Heaven and on earth, that of building Zion and gathering scattered Israel on both sides of the veil, this is God's work and Glory and he has asked us to take part in it, I witness to you that Jesus Christ's second coming is closer than we think and he will do everything he promised, we must prepare and trust and we will find joy and happiness and safety from the storm in the stakes of Zion in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and King Amen

I'd like to answer this question, end my remarks, and share my testimony at this time using the words of Prophets of God:

**Lorenzo Snow:**

"Zion cannot be built up except on the principles of union required by the celestial law." Lorenzo Snow, April 21 1878, Journal of Discourse, 19:350)

And I think we are not justified in anticipating the privilege of returning to build up the Center Stake of Zion, until we shall have shown obedience to the law of consecration. One thing, however, is certain, we shall not be permitted to enter the land from whence we were expelled, *till our hearts are prepared to honor this law*, and we become sanctified through the practice of the truth." (Lorenzo Snow, October 7 1873, Journal of Discourses, 16:276)

**Wilford Woodruff:**

“Let us, therefore, try and do our duty. Let us attend to the ordinances of the house of God, and **unite ourselves according to his law**, for Jesus **will never** receive the Zion of God unless its people are united according to celestial law, for all who go into the presence of God have to go there by this law. Enoch had to practice this law, and we shall have to do the same **if we are ever accepted** of God as he was. It has been promised that the New Jerusalem will be built up in our day and generation, and it will have to be done by the United Order of Zion and according to celestial law. And not only so, but we have to keep that law ourselves if we ever inherit that kingdom, for no man will receive a celestial glory unless he abides a celestial law; no man will receive a terrestrial glory unless he abides a terrestrial law, and no man will receive a telestial glory unless he abides a telestial law. There is a great difference between the light of the sun at noonday and the glimmer of the stars at night, but that difference is no greater than the difference of the glory in the several portions of the kingdom of God.” (Wilford Woodruff, Oct 9 1874, Journal of Discourses, 17:250)

### **Brigham Young:**

“How long, Latter-day Saints, before you will believe the Gospel as it is? The Lord has declared it to be his will that his people enter into covenant, even as Enoch and his people did, which of necessity must be **before** we shall have the privilege of building the Center Stake of Zion, for the power and glory of God will be there, and none but the pure in heart will be able to live and enjoy it.” (Brigham Young, Oct 8 1876, Journal of Discourses, 18:263)

“Some may ask why we did not tarry at the Center Stake of Zion, when the Lord planted our feet there? We had eyes, but we did not see; we had ears, but we did not hear; we had hearts that were devoid of what the Lord required of his people; consequently we could not abide what the Lord revealed to us. We had to go from there to gain an experience. Can you understand this? I think there are some here who can. **If we could have received the words of life and lived according to them**, when we were first gathered to the Center Stake of Zion, we never would have been removed from that place. **But we did not abide the law the Lord gave to us**. We are here to gain an experience, and we cannot increase in that any faster than our capacities will admit. Our capacities are limited, though sometimes we could receive more than we do, but we will not. Preach the riches of eternal life to a congregation, and when the eyes and affections of that congregation are like the fool's eyes, to the ends of the earth, it is like throwing pearls before swine. If I can actually reach your understandings, you will know just what I know, and see just what I see in regard to what I may say.” (Brigham Young, May 15 1864 Journal of Discourses 10:290)

Do we know and understand that it is **our business** to build up Zion? To have seen the way this people have conducted themselves in years past, one would not have had the least idea that such was our business; but it made no difference whom we built cities for; many would build for Jew or Gentile, Greek, Mahommedan, or Pagan, every class of men on the earth, as readily, apparently, as they would build up Zion. Yet the word of the Lord to us is to build up Zion and her cities and stakes. Lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes, O ye House of Israel; add to her beauty and add to her strength! Why, to have seen the conduct of the people you might have supposed they knew no more about Zion than about a city of the Chinese, or a city in France, Italy, Germany, or Asia; just as soon build up a city in Asia or Africa as anywhere else, “no matter whom we build for if we only get the dollar, only get our pay for our work.” Yet the commandment of God **to us** is to build up Zion and her cities. I told you here last Sunday what Joseph said in this respect—what we should build and what we should not build up. This book [the book of Doctrine and Covenants] is full of it.

We **say** we believe Joseph was a prophet, that he had the priesthood and was called of God to gather the people together and establish Zion. If we believe this, why not **let our lives prove** that we believe the doctrine that we profess? Can you see any of the Christians in the world who do not believe the doctrine they profess? It is a very dark picture to look upon—a sad affair that we disbelieve our own doctrines. Let us remember them and live accordingly.” (Brigham Young, February 10 1867, Journal of Discourses, 11:324)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Additional References

Elder Neal A. Maxwell “We have long heard, and believed, that the Lord has reserved special spirits to come forth in the last days of the last dispensation. The Church’s rising generation of young men and women are a part of that vanguard. Reserved by the Lord for this time, they must now be preserved by parents and prepared for their special moment in human history! They have been held back to come forth at this time, but now they need to be pushed forward to meet their rendezvous” (“Unto the Rising Generation,” Ensign, Apr. 1985, p. 8).

Elder Dean L. Larsen “I do not believe that you are here upon the earth at this time by accident. I believe you qualified in the premortal life to come into mortality at a time when great things would be required of you. I believe you demonstrated before you came here that you were capable of being trusted under unusually difficult circumstances—that you could measure up to the most difficult challenges. Don’t misunderstand me. I don’t suggest that you are inherently better than or superior to any of the other generations that have come to the earth. You do not automatically qualify for any more blessings or advantages than anyone else who has lived since the earth was created. You can go astray, become involved in transgression, and incur the judgments of God as readily as any who have preceded you here. In fact, you live in an environment in which it is probably as easy to disqualify yourselves in this way as any generation has ever experienced. But God trusts that you will not. He relies upon you to keep yourselves eligible to accomplish the monumental tasks that he expects you to achieve” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, p. 47; or Ensign, May 1983, p. 33).

President Ezra Taft Benson “I pray for the inspiration of heaven as I direct my brief remarks to the youth of the Church—‘the rising generation,’ as the [Book of Mormon](#) calls you (see [Alma 5:49](#)).

“... I presume you know that we love you. As leaders of the Church, there isn’t anything in this world that is right for you that we wouldn’t do. We have great confidence in you. You are not just ordinary young men and women. You are choice spirits, many of you having been held in reserve for almost 6,000 years to come forth in this day, at this time, when the temptations, responsibilities, and opportunities are the very greatest.

“God loves you as He loves each and every one of His children, and His desire and purpose and glory is to have you return to Him pure and undefiled, having proven yourselves worthy of an eternity in His presence.

“Your Father in Heaven is mindful of you. He has given you commandments to guide you, to discipline you. He has also given you your agency—freedom of choice—to see if [you] will do all things whatsoever [He] shall command’ ([Abr. 3:25](#)). Freedom of choice is a God-given, eternal principle. His kingdom here on earth is well organized, and your leaders are dedicated to helping you. May you know that you have our constant love, our concern and prayers.

“Satan is also mindful of you. He is committed to your destruction. He does not discipline you with commandments but offers instead a freedom to ‘do your own thing’—the freedom to smoke, to drink, to misuse drugs or rebel against the counsel and commandments of God and His servants. ...

“... Satan’s program is ‘play now and pay later.’ He seeks for all to be miserable like unto himself (see [2 Ne. 2:27](#)).

The Lord’s program is happiness now and joy forever through gospel living. As one of His servants—and out of the love of my heart for the youth of Zion—I offer this counsel for your happiness now:

“First, I counsel you to live a morally clean life. ...

“Second, I counsel you to stay close to your parents. ...

“Yes, beloved youth, you will have your trials and temptations through which you must pass, but there are great moments of eternity which lie ahead. You have our love and our confidence. We pray that you will be prepared for the reins of leadership. We say to you, ‘Arise and shine forth’ ([D&C 115:5](#)) and be a light unto the world, a standard to others. ...

“I pray that you—the young and rising generation—will keep your bodies and minds clean, free from the contaminations of the world, that you will be fit and pure vessels to bear triumphantly the responsibilities of the kingdom of God in preparation for the second coming of our Savior, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen” (“To ‘the Rising Generation,’” New Era, June 1986, pp. 4–6, 8).

- Heavenly Father is mindful of you. Ask: In what ways is Satan also mindful of you? What must each Latter-day Saint do to prepare for the Second Coming of the Lord?

### Theme Sources

- Gordon B. Hinckley, [“We Have a Work to Do.”](#) Ensign, Feb. 1988, pp. 2–6. President Hinckley, as a member of the First Presidency, emphasizes the responsibility of Church members to spread the gospel to every nation.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997), pp. 97–102.

In a section entitled “Church Growth and Progress,” President Hinckley shares some of his experiences traveling around the world to meet with the Saints.

- Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, pp. 97–99; or [Ensign, May 1988, pp. 84–85](#). President Benson challenges Church members to come unto Christ by preaching the gospel, redeeming the dead, and striving for perfection.
- Ezra Taft Benson, [“Feed My Sheep.”](#) Ensign, Sept. 1987, pp. 2–5. President Benson counsels Church members to go out and seek the lost sheep.
- [“June Videoconference: ‘Accomplishing the Mission of the Church,’”](#) Ensign, Sept. 1987, pp. 73–77. Church leaders counsel the Saints to help the Church fulfill its mission.
- [“What Joseph Smith Has Said about Our Dispensation.”](#) Ensign, Apr. 1980, pp. 6–8. A collection of prophetic statements by the Prophet [Joseph Smith](#) about the dispensation of the fulness of times.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, [“150-Year Drama: A Personal View of Our History.”](#) Ensign, Apr. 1980, pp. 10–14. A look at the history of the Church to the year 1980.
- Bruce R. McConkie, [“This Final Glorious Gospel Dispensation.”](#) Ensign, Apr. 1980, pp. 20–25. Elder McConkie discusses the blessings of the Restoration and the work yet to be accomplished in this dispensation.
- Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, pp. 4–6; or [Ensign, May 1980, pp. 4–6](#). President Kimball challenges the Saints to continue on in faith as they carry the Church into the future.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, pp. 91–95; or [Ensign, Nov. 1999, pp. 72–74](#). President Hinckley urges the Saints to realize their place in history and strive to do their part.

**Temptations of Satan and the Natural Man** We cannot “come off conqueror,” except we first “put off” the selfish, natural man!—Elder Neal A. Maxwell

**Neal A. Maxwell** Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles Whenever Church members speak of consecration, it should be done reverently while acknowledging that each of us “come [s] short of the glory of God,” some of us far short (Rom. 3:23). Even the conscientious have not arrived, but they sense the shortfall and are genuinely striving.

Put Off the Natural Man, and Come Off Conqueror Neal A. Maxwell *Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles* So many times prophets warn about the dangers of selfishness—the inordinate and excessive concern with self. The distance between constant self-pleasing and self-worship is shorter than we think. Stubborn selfishness is actually rebellion against God, because, warned Samuel, “stubbornness is as . . . idolatry.” (1 Sam. 15:23.) Selfishness is much more than an ordinary problem because it activates all the cardinal sins! It is the detonator in the breaking of the Ten Commandments. By focusing on oneself, it is naturally easier to bear false witness if it serves one’s purpose. It is easier to ignore one’s parents instead of honoring them. It is easier to steal, because what one wants prevails. It is easier to covet, since the selfish conclude that nothing should be denied them. It is easier to commit sexual sins, because to please oneself is the name of that deadly game in which others are often cruelly used. The Sabbath day is easily neglected, since one day soon becomes just like another. If selfish, it is easier to lie, because the truth is conveniently subordinated. The selfish individual thus seeks to please not God, but himself. He will even break a covenant in order to fix an appetite. Selfishness has little time to regard the sufferings of others seriously, hence the love of many waxes cold. (See [Moses 6:27](#); [Matt. 24:12](#); [D&C 45:27](#).)