

Chapter Six: The Parable of the Ten Virgins

(v 1.03)

Multiple Interpretations

“As you study this parable, consider the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “[The Savior’s] parables had multiple meanings or applications according to the spiritual maturity of the listener. They had a message for both children and gospel scholars” (“Scripture Reading and Revelation,” Ensign, Jan. 1995, 8). Look for multiple meanings and applications in this parable (see also Bible Dictionary, “Parables”).” (D&C 101 Seminary Manual)

There are many interpretations to parables. If you have heard somebody interpret a parable or teach a parable in a different way, good for you and good for them. Someone else’s interpretation does not invalidate learning gained from other interpretations. So we need to understand, going into any parable, that there will be multiple interpretations and multiple ways to apply the parable.

Elder Bednar, speaking of the ten virgins parable specifically teaches and reaffirms this truth: “I now want to use *one of many* possible interpretations of the parable of the ten virgins to highlight the relationship between testimony and conversion.” (Converted unto the Lord, 2012, emphasis added)

Primary vs. Secondary Interpretations

With that said however, that there are many interpretations or applications of parables that can be of use and edification, that is not what we will be doing in our parable breakdowns. Even though there are multiple interpretations and applications, there is only one primary interpretation or application.

In this book I will go over parables of the utmost importance that have been used so often in their secondary and tertiary forms that most members don’t understand or even know the primary interpretation of the parables. Can parables be interpreted or likened in multiple ways for the benefit of man? Yes. Can washing the vase and the dishes and placing them on a clean cloth add symbolic weight to traditions and ordinances (Mark 7:4-23)? Yes. The problem comes when the washing of the dishes in the eyes of the participant becomes the primary activity and they neglect the actual primary purpose. Jesus, pointing the Jews towards their behavior in doing this very thing, said you “have omitted the weightier matters of the law” (Matthew 23:23-28).

Unlocking the Primary Interpretation

Understanding how the Lord teaches is crucial to understanding the primary intent of the parable. Joseph Smith had a laugh at a member who thought that the beast kingdoms described in Daniel’s vision were symbols of God’s kingdoms. Joseph Smith said, “the Lord would never make use of a figure of a beast nor any of the brute kind to represent His Kingdom” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 289). Joseph Smith taught that every jot and tittle of the word

had to be literally fulfilled and this included parables, visions etc. Joseph Smith in identifying that the Lord even in a parable or vision wouldn't use something ungodly to represent something godly clarifies that even the symbols in parables have to make sense. Joseph Smith also taught on another occasion the best way to go about trying to find this primary purpose; "I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I inquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable?" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.276-277) Joseph then goes on to explain that the question being answered is the primary interpretation and "all straining on this point is a bubble" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.277).

So in summary, if your interpretation doesn't:

1. Answer the question being asked specifically
2. Have all of the symbols make sense,

then what you are teaching is a secondary interpretation of the parable. For it to be the primary interpretation it must answer the question and all symbols in the parable must make sense.

Be Not Deceived

"And at that day... shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins. For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day." (D&C 45:56-57)

How were they deceived? They were not taught and/or did not understand the primary interpretation of this parable by seeking the Holy Ghost as their guide, and thus did not prepare accordingly. Instead, they have done what Joseph Smith warned of, "if the people departed from the Lord, they must fall—that they were depending on the prophet, hence were darkened in their minds, in consequence of neglecting the duties devolving upon themselves, envious towards the innocent, while they afflict the virtuous with their shafts of envy" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.238). Thus they were deceived, thinking they were prepared because they took no responsibility for themselves but dumped all responsibility for learning and warning on the prophet, but in that day they will find they have "no oil" in their lamps. Let us learn the primary interpretation and prepare accordingly.

The Question

Firstly, what drew this parable out from the Savior?

JS-Matthew

1 Then understood his disciples that [Jesus] should come again on the earth, after that he was glorified and crowned on the right hand of God.

4 And Jesus left them, and went upon the Mount of Olives. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying: Tell us when shall these things be which thou hast said concerning the destruction of the temple, and the Jews; and what is the sign of thy

coming, and of the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world?

The parable of the 10 virgins and the parable of the talents both begin with “the kingdom of heaven will be likened...” The JST makes this crystal clear, “And then, at that day, before the Son of Man comes, *the kingdom of heaven* will be likened as...” The kingdom of *heaven* is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It is not referencing the world. Jesus, in these parables, is describing the state and events that will transpire in the church preparatory for the Second Coming.

In summary, the questions was, “when are you coming back and how will we recognize it?” and Jesus answers and gives an entire chapter on the state of the world generally and then proceeds to explain what the church and its membership will be like at that day.

The Symbols

Matthew 25:1-13

“And then, at that day, before the Son of Man comes, the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, ye know me not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

Eight out of the ten symbols we know and they should be obvious to members as we go through them:

1. **The Bridegroom:** this is Jesus. This is confirmed when the Lord says “for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein *the Son of man* cometh.” This is proof that this parable is dealing with New Jerusalem and not the events at Old Jerusalem or the Great and Dreadful Day, for the Saints of God will know the day and the hour of the Mount of Olives and the Great and Dreadful Day after the events in New Jerusalem.
2. **The Marriage:** the Lord only refers to marriage in context of “the kingdom of heaven” in one way- married to His people. We know from Daniel 7 what event the actual marriage is: it is when Christ is crowned in Adam-ondi-ahman, that all nations should serve Him (the anointing). The people attending the marriage are the same people the Lord is marrying. So to argue that the Lord is marrying someone else and not the virgins in the parable is purely semantics, it is one step removed, for all intent and purposes they are the same thing. This is further proof that the primary interpretation of this parable does not

refer to the events at Old Jerusalem or the Great and Dreadful Day. There are some members who view this parable as though the Bridegroom was already married and the ten virgins are merely waiting to go to the wedding feast- this is utter pish posh. The Lord clearly says “he was tarrying”, he did not say he was getting married. And when the five wise virgins went in with him the Lord clearly says “to the marriage” not to a marriage feast. Once again, secondary interpretations can be useful and prophecies and parables can have multiple fulfillments, however this cannot be the primary interpretation.

3. **The Ten Virgins**: these are those members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who have the potential to become members of the Church of the Firstborn. If they had not done all that was required to at least hear the invitation they would not have been where they were. They are referred to as virgins; if the Lord would not use beasts or brutes to symbolize His kingdom, why would He liken a virgin to an inactive or non member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or in fine any unrighteous persons who did not have the right to be there? All ten were active, endowed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints wearing their “wedding clothes.” The Lord differentiates these ten virgins as foolish and wise, not wicked and righteous. In the Lord’s eyes, if you are an inactive member or somebody who does not pay tithing etc, you are wicked (D&C 84:53). Not paying tithing for example in the eyes of the Lord makes you a robber (3 Nephi 24:8; Malachi 3:8)- the Lord would not refer to you as a foolish virgin but a wicked servant who is robbing Him. If the five foolish were ready they would have been admitted.
4. **Wedding Clothes**: The Church of God or Bride of Christ will be “adorned as a bride” meaning wearing wedding clothes. The Wedding clothes are not specifically mentioned in Matthew 25 but are mentioned in the Book of Revelation, the parable of the King’s Son’s wedding in which the King kicks out of the wedding everyone not wearing the wedding garments and by the Lord himself when talking about the church as a bride (D&C 109:72-76). This was a customary piece of clothing that was required to be worn at the wedding. It can be assumed that if the virgins were attending this wedding to be married then wedding clothes/garments were present. This was clearly used to represent garments and righteousness/cleanliness, not just in the parable, but also in the Jewish custom. This should clarify beyond any doubt who these ten virgins are.
5. **Five Wise Virgins**: these are those of the ten who were “ready.” In the parable the only thing that differentiated the virgins was this readiness represented by oil.
6. **Five Foolish Virgins**: these are those of the ten who were not ready; they took no oil with them. It is important to note that they knew the importance of oil for they took their lamps with them, meaning, they were either procrastinating getting oil or felt entitled for it to be provided to them.
7. **The Wick**: is the revealer. You can hide the fact that you don’t have any oil. The wick reveals whether or not you have any oil at all. The act of lighting the wick and showing that you had some oil in your lamp was what got you into the procession to the wedding. It is interesting to note that even the foolish trimmed their wicks, an outward appearance, meaning even up to that point they still thought they were getting in, expecting oil to be provided.

8. **The Sellers:** these are those in the world that have the potential to sell oil. This bit of insight gives us understanding about the oil. The oil was something that was relatively easy to acquire. It also tells us that these people that sell are not members of the Church because they weren't invited to the wedding and they weren't referred to in any endearing terms (e.g. virgin, good shepherd, good man of the house etc). This also eliminates from the primary interpretation anything intangible for the use of oil, for if the Lord would not refer to anything regarding His kingdom in brutish terms, why would He compare anything of an intangible nature which can only be acquired in the church to something that can be commonly purchased with money from those not in the church. They are literally opposites. We know that the oil is significant enough that it will keep someone out from the wedding, but we also know that it is insignificant enough that random people in the streets sell it. Thus we know that the oil itself has no value, the holding of oil has value; the object itself isn't of eternal weight, but the acquisition and holding of it in preparedness/readiness is what grants one entry.

There are two things left that we need to identify; what do we know about these two things so far?

1. **The Lamp:** all endowed active members of the Church, all ten virgins, had one. All knew the value of it and took one with them. All knew that they needed oil in it for the lamp to function but they didn't need to currently have oil in order to hold the lamp. They didn't light the lamp because it wasn't required until the procession started moving. Every endowed member understands the importance of it, all knew it was required to get in. Five held the lamp and made sure there was always some oil in the lamp, whereas the other five held the lamp but expected oil to be provided.
2. **The Oil:** the very first and most important thing you need to understand about the oil is that the foolish virgins asked the wise virgins for some. We have already identified these virgins as active, endowed members. Would they ask for a testimony? Would they ask for any of these ridiculous things that people think the oil's primary representation is? Wouldn't they know more than anyone that those intangible things (such as prayers, acts of service, fasting etc.) can't simply be willed to someone else? So, the oil has to be something that in theory could move from party to party- else why would they ask? However, the transaction is denied, meaning the act of moving it from party to party would make both parties unworthy or there is a limited quantity of it and there is not enough to share, or both. The second thing to understand is that the foolish virgins wanted the oil. Asking for something implies both that it can be transferred **and** that the recipient wants it. Members of the church frankly aren't very good at missionary work, and not because of a lack of skill- they simply don't make the effort. Those who are familiar with missionary work get familiar with human nature and anyone who is familiar with human nature knows that when you offer an unworthy person intangible truths in exchange for their tangible actions, and if they are attached to their tangible actions, there is a good chance they become defensive or hostile ("for the wicked take the truth to be hard"). Simply put, unrighteous people never ask for such things and offering to give them such things make them hostile. When the Lord explains groups of people being

separated based off of worthiness, he says “there was weeping and gnashing of teeth” (i.e., they become hostile). These five virgins did not become hostile, they asked for the oil thinking it would be provided, went to the market to buy it, and then still tried to get in. Those are not the actions of individuals who have spent their whole lives unworthy, they are the actions of a desperate worthy person who was not ready.

The Oil

To further unpack the symbol of the oil, let us return to Joseph Smith’s advice, “what drew out the parable?” Directly before giving the parable of the ten virgins and the parable of the talents Jesus Christ taught his disciples:

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” (Matthew 24:36-42)

Then he continued and taught this:

“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 24:43-51)

First, why did he teach them these things? Because the apostles asked, “what is going to be the state of the church and the world before your second coming?” In Matthew 24 Jesus then proceeds to explain the state of the world leading up to the second coming, culminating in the last two paragraphs above. He then teaches the parable of the ten virgins and the parable of the talents, why? To further clarify verses 36-51. So what is taught in verses 36-42 is synonymous with the parable of the 10 virgins and what is taught in verses 43-51 is synonymous with the parable of the talents. What’s discussed in verses 43-51 as well as the parable of the talents deal with the events at Adam-ondi-ahman. McConkie stated “at this council, all who have held keys of authority will give an accounting of their stewardship to Adam. Christ will then come, receive back the keys, and thus take one of the final steps preparatory to reigning personally upon the earth (Daniel 7:9-14; Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith p.157).” The Savior taught three total parables in the next chapter, the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents and the

parable of the sheep and goats. These three appear in chronology- the parable of the ten virgins deals with the redemption of Zion and the initial building of New Jerusalem preparatory to that meeting in Adam-oni-ahman.

So taking a look at what was said in verses 36-42 will help us understand the primary interpretation of the oil and lamp in the parable of the ten virgins. The first thing he talks about is Noah- how does the story of Noah go? Noah preaches for 120 years, people ignore him, his family enters the ark, the other people were carrying on as if nothing was happening until the floods came. The flooding occurred for a year. What are the comparisons? Noah and his family would be the wise virgins, those outside the ark would be the foolish virgins, the ark would represent the lamps and the oil would be the year supply of food in the ark. Yes, the people should have listened to Noah's spiritual warnings but it was the physical rain that killed them; it was what was physically in the ark that they wanted, not anything of a spiritual nature. When people were fleeing to the ark, which was already shut, the people were not fleeing for a spiritual sermon, they were not asking for a tithing settlement, a temple recommend, prayers etc, they wanted in the ark. It is very likely that those unprepared for the flood thought that due to Noah's righteousness he would open the ark to them, but it was shut "lest there was not enough for him and thee." After teaching about Noah, the Lord said that people would start to be "taken" and he says "one here, one there" etc. which was 50% of the total "one out of two in a field, one out of two at the mill" just like 50% of the virgins being ready and 50% unready.

Doctrine and Covenants 63:52-54

52 Wherefore, for this cause preached the apostles unto the world the resurrection of the dead.

53 These things are the things that ye must look for; and, speaking after the manner of the Lord, they are now nigh at hand, and in a time to come, even in the day of the coming of the Son of Man.

54 And until that hour there will be foolish virgins among the wise; and at that hour cometh an entire separation of the righteous and the wicked; and in that day will I send mine angels to pluck out the wicked and cast them into unquenchable fire.

If the Past is Prologue

If we know that this parable deals with the redemption of Zion and the building of New Jerusalem in Jackson County Missouri, is there anything in the history of the Church and/or the revelations of the Church that could shed further light on the subject?

The answer is yes! When the revelation was received that the New Jerusalem was to be built in Missouri, the Lord laid out in revelation not only where New Jerusalem was to be built but how it was to be built, who would be the ones building it, when people would be allowed to come in to it, etc. This information should give us strong indications on who the Lord views as wise and foolish virgins. We know this for the Lord declared that the Saints were "laying the foundation of Zion" (D&C 58:7-12, 124:118) and that Zion would be built "by and by" (D&C 63:35-36) and "that the time is not yet" (D&C 58:44,58) "but according to the Lord's time it is nigh at hand."

(D&C 58:1-5; 63:52-54). Repeatedly the Lord made it clear that even though Zion would not be built in that generation (1830's), that the foundation would be the example, "the ensample" (D&C 58:35-56; 72:23-26) for how it will happen in the future.

D&C 58:7-12

7 And also that you might be honored in laying the foundation, and in bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand;

8 And also that a feast of fat things might be prepared for the poor; yea, a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined, that the earth may know that the mouths of the prophets shall not fail;

9 Yea, a supper of the house of the Lord, well prepared, unto which all nations shall be invited.

10 First, the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble;

11 And after that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come.

12 Behold, I, the Lord, have spoken it.

Members were required to commit to living the gospel in its fulness as well as to live the law of consecration. In order to get to the New Jerusalem/Zion members had to present multiple certificates to prove the above. These certificates were "required to be carried with them showing that they were in full fellowship *and* worthy to obtain the blessings which in Zion awaited the obedient" (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:271). A modern equivalent to one of these certificates is what is currently known as a temple recommend, but what was the other certificate and how did they acquire it? Members were required to "lay all things before the bishop in Zion" (D&C 42:31-42; 72:15)- this is referring to a temporal nature. Then, "the elders shall pay for that which they receive" (D&C 72:9-26)- they would use their temporal wealth to secure an inheritance at New Jerusalem. The individual/family would then be given stewardships in New Jerusalem. The spirit of revelation would be given to the bishop to be able to discern whether the individual had consecrated all they had (D&C 72:24). This is significant because one could not will portions of their resources to another and then consecrate what was left to the church, this would have been viewed by the Lord as "withholding" from him and thus "theft." A story of such individuals was recorded in the New Testament with Peter (Acts 4:34-37, 5:1-11). They were also commanded to live the law of consecration, yet Ananias and Sapphira did withhold a part of their consecration (for unlisted reasons, they could have been paying off their daughter's debt, we don't know) and that fact was revealed to Peter through the spirit and both individuals died for as the manual states "they also lied to God about the price they had received for a piece of land so they could avoid giving the full profit to the Church." (New Testament Student Manual, Chapter 30: Acts 3-7) Once an individual passed the consecration interview and was found to be "a wise steward" they were given a certificate to show such. They would then show the certificate as entry into Zion.

D&C 72

9 The word of the Lord, in addition to the law which has been given, making known the *duty of the bishop* who has been ordained unto the church in this part of the vineyard, which is verily this—

10 *To keep the Lord's storehouse; to receive the funds of the church* in this part of the vineyard;

11 To take an account of *the elders* as before has been commanded; and to administer to their wants, who *shall pay for that which they receive, inasmuch as they have wherewith to pay*;

13 *And he who hath not wherewith to pay, an account shall be taken and handed over to the bishop of Zion, who shall pay the debt out of that which the Lord shall put into his hands.*

14 *And the labors of the faithful who labor in spiritual things, in administering the gospel and the things of the kingdom unto the church, and unto the world, shall answer the debt unto the bishop in Zion;*

15 Thus it cometh out of the church, *for according to the law every man that cometh up to Zion must lay all things before the bishop in Zion.*

17 *A certificate from the judge or bishop in this part of the vineyard, unto the bishop in Zion, rendereth every man acceptable, and answereth all things, for an inheritance, and to be received as a wise steward and as a faithful laborer;*

18 *Otherwise he shall not be accepted* of the bishop of Zion.

19 And now, verily I say unto you, *let every elder who shall give an account unto the bishop of the church in this part of the vineyard be recommended by the church* or churches, in which he labors, *that he may render himself and his accounts approved in all things.*

22 That they also may render themselves approved in all things, and be accounted as *wise stewards.*

24 **A few words in addition to the laws of the kingdom, respecting the members of the church—they that are appointed by the Holy Spirit to go up unto Zion, and they who are privileged to go up unto Zion—**

25 **Let them carry up unto the bishop a certificate from three elders of the church, or a certificate from the bishop;**

26 **Otherwise he who shall go up unto the land of Zion shall not be accounted as a wise steward. This is also an ensample. Amen.**

The first to go to New Jerusalem and build it were to be “the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble” (D&C 58:10); the “poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, [were to] come in unto the marriage of the Lamb” *after* “the day of the Lord’s power” (D&C 58:11). Or in other words “what shall then answer the messengers of the nations? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people *shall trust in it*” (2 Nephi 24:32).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:41

41 Behold, I, the Lord, will give unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., power that he shall be enabled to discern by the Spirit those who shall go up unto the land of Zion, and those of my disciples who shall tarry.

D&C 58:44–48, 56. Why Were the Saints Commanded Not to All Gather Immediately to the Land of Zion?

The time had not yet come, and would not for “many years” (D&C 58:44), for all the Saints to receive their inheritances in Zion. A great deal of work, preparation, and patience is required before Zion can be fully established. The Church had neither the strength nor the means to purchase lands sufficient for all the Saints in Zion. So, before Zion could be established, a great deal of...work needed to be done. (“Section 58, The Land of Zion,” Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual (2002), 119–24)

D&C 63 Historical Background:

On 27 August 1831 Joseph Smith and his party returned to Kirtland, Ohio, from their first trip to Zion, bringing news that the center place of Zion was now known. “When the report spread among the members of the Church that the Lord had revealed definitely where the city New Jerusalem was to be built, naturally there was rejoicing and many expressed the desire to know what they were to do in order to obtain inheritances. *The Lord has given instruction repeatedly that all who go to Zion shall obey His law—the celestial law on which Zion was to be built. Those who were weak in the faith, or indifferent to the commandments, were warned that they would not be made welcome in that land unless they repented.* ‘Hearken, O ye people, and open your hearts and give ear from afar; and listen, you that call yourselves the people of the Lord, and hear the word of the Lord and his will concerning you.’ These are the words by which this revelation is introduced.” (Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:229.)

D&C 63:24–31. How Is the Land of Zion to Be Obtained?

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that land in Zion was to be purchased. “This fact was taught the early members. They were warned against creating antagonism among their neighbors, many of whom were extremely bitter towards the members of the Church...*Those who had the privilege of assembling there should not go up to Zion in haste, but gradually. The reason for this advice is apparent, for haste would lead to confusion, unsatisfactory conditions and pestilence, and then, also, it creates consternation and fear in the hearts of their enemies and arouses greater opposition.* Satan desired to destroy them and in his anger endeavored to stir them up to strife and contention as well as the older settlers in Missouri.” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:232.)

The Original Failure

We know what was supposed to have happened; what did happen? What was the original failure? The poor did not trust in Zion. They did not have patience. The rich then seeing the chaos stopped sending money. The D&C manual summarized this failure thus:

Doctrine and Covenants 63:24-31,41. “They should assemble themselves together unto the land of Zion, not in haste”

“To manage the number of Saints gathering to Zion, Church leaders required those in Ohio desiring to go to Missouri to obtain a Church-issued certificate before they could migrate and participate in the law of consecration in Missouri. However, many enthusiastic members disregarded the instruction and went to Missouri in large numbers. A Church historian appointed by the Prophet Joseph Smith later wrote, “The church immediately began to gather in Jackson County, and on this subject they became quite enthusiastic. They had been commanded not to go up in haste, nor by flight, but to have all things prepared before them. Money was to be sent up to the bishop, and as fast as lands were purchased, and preparations made, the bishop was to let it be known, that the church might be gathered in. But this regulation was not attended to, for the church got crazy to go up to Zion, as it was then called. The rich were afraid to send up their money to purchase lands, and the poor crowded up in numbers, without having any places provided, contrary to the advice of the bishop and others, until the old citizens began to be highly displeased” (John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* [1839], 18–19, josephsmithpapers.org; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847*, ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 146).”

This failure is what drove the Saints from Missouri and that generation lost the privilege of building New Jerusalem.

President Ezra Taft Benson further clarified this failure in his now famous talk “Beware of Pride.”

“Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves. Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down at the rest of us. (See 2 Ne. 9:42.) ***There is, however, a far more common ailment among us—and that is pride from the bottom looking up.*** It is manifest in so many ways, such as faultfinding, gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous.

My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion. It was essentially the sin of pride that kept us from establishing Zion in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was the same sin of pride that brought consecration to an end among the Nephites. (See 4 Ne. 1:24–25.)

Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion. I repeat: Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion.” (Beware of Pride, 1989)

Joseph Smith’s error was not turning away the foolish uncertified virgins from Zion.

The Righteous Suffer with the Guilty

“When I contemplate upon all things that have been manifested, I am aware that I ought not to murmur,²⁵ and do not murmur, only in this, that those who are innocent are compelled to suffer²⁶ for the iniquities of the guilty; and I cannot account for this, only on this wise, that the saying of the Savior has not been strictly observed: “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; or if thy right arm offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from

thee.”¹ Now the fact is, if any of the members of our body is disordered,² the rest of our body will be affected with it, and then all are brought into bondage together” (TPJS, p.34-35)

The Old Testament Student Manual provides this quote about preparedness, “For the disciples to suppose that they can come to this land without ought to eat, or to drink, or to wear, or anything to purchase these necessaries with, is a vain thought. For them to suppose that the Lord will open the windows of heaven, and rain down angel’s food for them by the way, when their whole journey lies through a fertile country, stored with the blessings of life from His own hand for them to subsist upon, is also vain. For them to suppose that their clothes and shoes will not wear out upon the journey, when the whole of it lies through a country where there are thousands of sheep from which wool in abundance can be procured to make them garments, and cattle upon a thousand hills, to afford leather for shoes, is just as vain. ...

“... Do not conclude from these remarks, brethren, that we doubt in the least, that the Lord will provide for His Saints in these last days; or think that we would extend our hands to steady the ark; for this is not the case. We know that the Saints have the unchangeable word of God that they shall be provided for; yet we know, if any are imprudent, or lavish, or negligent, or indolent, in taking that proper care, and making that proper use of what the Lord has made them stewards over, they are not counted wise; for a strict account of every one’s stewardship is required, not only in time, but will be in eternity. Neither do we apprehend that we shall be considered putting out our hands to steady the ark of God by giving advice to our brethren upon important points relative to their coming to Zion, when the experience of almost two years’ gathering, has taught us to revere that sacred word from heaven, ‘Let not your flight be in haste, but let all things be prepared before you.’” (History of the Church, 1:382–83.)

Knowing the original failure of the building of New Jerusalem will help us to be able to understand why the Lord in the parable of the ten virgins has to forcibly deny the five foolish virgins when Zion is redeemed and built.

Back to the Parable

To quickly summarize the parable of the ten virgins: active endowed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are represented as ten virgins. Five of the virgins were wise and were prepared, where five were foolish and did not prepare but who expected oil to be provided for them. When the admittance process began, those virgins were revealed and the foolish virgins now realizing that oil was a requirement ask the wise for some of theirs. The wise virgins deny the request knowing that such a transaction would either A) make they themselves unworthy, B) there wasn’t enough to share or C) all of the above. The wise tell the foolish to go to the market and take care of their own oil. The wise proceed, the foolish rush to get oil. The foolish show up again but the door is shut and the Savior says, “ye know me not.”

To summarize the events of the original building of New Jerusalem: members of the Church were told to get certificates from their bishop, (one dealt with spiritual salvation and the other dealt with temporal salvation) who would reveal the member’s worthiness. Both certificates were required to get into Zion. While the wise were getting their certificates, the foolish rushed to

Jackson County, asking for their temporal salvation to be provided for them. The wise, seeing the problem, halted their progress to go. This caused a collapse of the entire program.

Can we not see the similarities and difference between these two? The parable of the ten virgins is the success story, whereas our past is the failure story. Understanding this, can we not clearly see what the oil represents? What makes the five virgins faithful and wise?

Who is Faithful and Wise?

Doctrine and Covenants 72:4

4 For he who is faithful and wise in time is accounted worthy to inherit the mansions prepared for him of my Father.

The Church manual answers “who is faithful and wise?”

“The scriptures teach that the station and rewards we inherit in the life after this are determined by how firmly we commit ourselves to the gospel, seek the power of the Atonement to overcome our sins, and take responsibility for our stewardship over temporal blessings. The Savior said, “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. . . . If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?” (Luke 16:8, 11). Elder James E. Talmage explained: “Worldly minded men do not neglect provision for their future years, and often are sinfully eager to amass plenty; while the ‘children of light,’ or those who believe spiritual wealth to be above all earthly possessions, are less energetic, prudent, or **wise**. By ‘mammon of unrighteousness’ we may understand material wealth or worldly things. While far inferior to the treasures of heaven, money or that which it represents may be the means of accomplishing good, and of furthering the purposes of God. Our Lord’s admonition was to utilize ‘mammon’ in good works, while it lasted, for some day it shall fail, and only the results achieved through its use shall endure. If the wicked steward, when cast out from his master’s house because of unworthiness, might hope to be received into the homes of those whom he had favored, how much more confidently may they who are genuinely devoted to the right hope to be received into the everlasting mansions of God! Such seems to be part of the lesson. “Make such use of your wealth as shall insure you friends hereafter. Be diligent; for the day in which you can use your earthly riches will soon pass. If you have not learned wisdom and prudence in the use of ‘unrighteous mammon,’ how can you be trusted with the more enduring riches? If you have not learned how to use properly the wealth of another, which has been committed to you as steward, how can you expect to be successful in the handling of great wealth should such be given you as your own? Emulate the unjust steward and the lovers of mammon, not in their dishonesty, cupidity, and miserly hoarding of the wealth that is at best but transitory, but in their zeal, forethought, and provision for the future.” (Jesus the Christ, pp. 463–64.)” (Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, D&C 72:3–4. “He Who Is Faithful and Wise in Time”)

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are to prepare themselves for the Wedding.

Doctrine and Covenants 105:9-13

9 Therefore, in consequence of the transgressions of my people, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion—

10 That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands.

11 And this cannot be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high.

12 For behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful and continue in humility before me.

13 Therefore it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season, for the redemption of Zion.

Certain members of the Church, virgins, prepare themselves spiritually, clothing themselves in righteousness, endowments, etc. Half of those virgins neglect their temporal salvation, believing that it will be provided for them. The other half take care to also preserve their temporal salvation, knowing that the days of tribulation, flood, famine will come and they have been commanded to be ready for it. When these events trigger the foolish virgins expect/demand a redistribution of wealth, or in other words, “give me of thine oil”, however, this redistribution will be denied on righteous grounds; there isn’t enough and/or such an exchange would make both parties unworthy. The wise virgins, or in other words, “the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble” (D&C 58:10), go into the marriage procession, also known as the redemption of Zion, and begin to build the New Jerusalem. The “poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf” are to trust in Zion and wait. But the foolish, just like the original failure, will try to force their way in, but unlike the original failure, the foolish will be forcibly denied entry.

D&C 42:30–35. What Is the Relationship between the Building of Zion and the Law of Consecration?

“In this revelation the Law of Consecration is stated definitely as the law on which the New Jerusalem is to be built. This law is given for the benefit of the poor, for the building of Zion and the work of the ministry. . . . Through this celestial law (Consecration) the Saints are to become the covenant people of the Lord. We cannot enter into the fulness of the covenants pertaining to Zion until we have reached the point where we can live such a divine law. Those who cannot abide the law of tithing cannot partake of this law of consecration, or the higher law and *they will be deprived of an inheritance when the inheritances are divided.*” (Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:185; see also Enrichment L.)

Doctrine and Covenants 63:1–6. “Listen, you that call yourselves the people of the Lord”

In earlier revelations the Lord had told the Saints that in order to establish and inhabit Zion they must be a righteous people (see D&C 58:19; 59:1, 3). He opened the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63 with a solemn reminder that His commandments are not to be taken lightly and that those who ignore them or rebel against them will be punished. This reminder was

necessary because many Church members claimed to be anxious to build Zion but were not obeying God's laws.

President Benson said, "Should the Lord decide at this time to cleanse the Church—and the need for that cleansing seems to be increasing—a famine in this land of one year's duration could wipe out a large percentage of slothful members, including some ward and stake officers. Yet we cannot say we have not been warned." (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.265, 266)

Doctrine and Covenants 72:3, 5, 6

3 And verily in this thing ye have done wisely, *for it is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity.*

5 Verily I say unto you, *the elders of the church* in this part of my vineyard *shall render an account of their stewardship unto the bishop*, who shall be appointed of me in this part of my vineyard.

6 *These things shall be had on record, to be handed over unto the bishop in Zion.*

Doctrine and Covenants 63:47-49

47 *He that is faithful and endureth shall overcome the world.*

48 *He that sendeth up treasures unto the land of Zion shall receive an inheritance in this world, and his works shall follow him, and also a reward in the world to come.*

49 Yea, and blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, when the Lord shall come, and old things shall pass away, and all things become new, they shall rise from the dead and shall not die after, and *shall receive an inheritance before the Lord, in the holy city.*

A Second Witness

Prepare for the Days of Tribulation (President Benson, October 1980)

"For over forty years, in a spirit of love, members of the Church have been counseled to be thrifty and self-reliant; to avoid debt; pay tithes and a generous fast offering; be industrious; and have sufficient food, clothing, and fuel on hand to last at least one year.

Today there are compelling reasons to reemphasize this counsel. We heard it done effectively in that great welfare meeting this morning. May I add just a word.

Members of the Church are feeling the economic pinch of higher taxes and inflation coupled with conditions of continuing recession. Some have come to their bishops seeking assistance to pay for house payments, car loans, and utilities.

Unfortunately, there has been fostered in the minds of some an expectation that when we experience hard times, when we have been unwise and extravagant with our resources and have lived beyond our means, we should look to either the Church or government to bail us out. Forgotten by some of our members is an underlying principle of the Church welfare plan that "no

true Latter-day Saint will, while physically able, voluntarily shift from himself the burden of his own support” (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, p. 106).

One of the first principles revealed to father Adam when he was driven out of the Garden of Eden was this: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground” (Gen. 3:19). All we obtain in life of a material nature comes as a product of labor and the providence of God. Work alone produces life’s necessities.

In saying this, I am aware of and sympathetic to the plight of many young families who are struggling to make ends meet. They are faced with the financial burden of providing for the three great necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. I am also sympathetic to the situation of widows and other sisters who rear families alone. By revelation, the Lord made provision for their care and support. (See D&C 83:1–2, 4–6.)

More than ever before, we need to learn and apply the principles of economic self-reliance. We do not know when the crisis involving sickness or unemployment may affect our own circumstances. We do know that the Lord has decreed global calamities for the future and has warned and forewarned us to be prepared. For this reason the Brethren have repeatedly stressed a “back to basics” program for temporal and spiritual welfare.

Today, I emphasize a most basic principle: home production and storage. Have you ever paused to realize what would happen to your community or nation if transportation were paralyzed or if we had a war or depression? How would you and your neighbors obtain food? How long would the corner grocery store—or supermarket—sustain the needs of the community?

Shortly after World War II, I was called by the First Presidency to go to Europe to reestablish our missions and set up a program for the distribution of food and clothing to the Saints. Vivid in my memory are the people who got on trains each morning with all kinds of bric-a-brac in their arms to go out to the countryside to trade their possessions for food. At evening time, the train station was filled with people with arms full of vegetables and fruits, and a menagerie of squealing pigs and chickens. You never heard such a commotion. These people were, of course, willing to barter practically anything for that commodity which sustains life—food.

An almost forgotten means of economic self-reliance is the home production of food. We are too accustomed to going to stores and purchasing what we need. By producing some of our food we reduce, to a great extent, the impact of inflation on our money. More importantly, we learn how to produce our own food and involve all family members in a beneficial project. No more timely counsel, I feel, has been given by President Kimball than his repeated emphasis to grow our own gardens. Here is one sample of his emphasis over the past seven years:

“We encourage you to grow all the food that you feasibly can on your own property. Berry bushes, grapevines, fruit trees—plant them if your climate is right for their growth. Grow vegetables and eat them from your own yard.” (Ensign, May 1976, p. 124).

Many of you have listened and done as President Kimball counseled, and you have been blessed for it. Others have rationalized that they had no time or space. May I suggest you do what others have done. Get together with others and seek permission to use a vacant lot for a garden, or rent

a plot of ground and grow your gardens. Some elders quorums have done this as a quorum, and all who have participated have reaped the benefits of a vegetable and fruit harvest and the blessings of cooperation and family involvement. Many families have dug up lawn space for gardens.

We encourage you to be more self-reliant so that, as the Lord has declared, “notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend upon you, ... the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world” (D&C 78:14). The Lord wants us to be independent and self-reliant because these will be days of tribulation. He has warned and forewarned us of the eventuality.

President Brigham Young said, “If you are without bread, how much wisdom can you boast, and of what real utility are your talents, if you cannot procure for yourselves and save against a day of scarcity those substances designed to sustain your natural lives?” (In Journal of Discourses, 8:68.)

Food production is just one part of the repeated emphasis that you store a provision of food which will last for at least a year wherever it is legally permissible to do so. The Church has not told you what foods should be stored. This decision is left up to individual members. However, some excellent suggestions are available in the booklet produced by the Church entitled “Essentials of Home Production & Storage” (stock no. PGWE1125; 35¢ each). There are also booklets available on gardening from BYU.

From the standpoint of food production, storage, handling, and the Lord’s counsel, wheat should have high priority. “There is more salvation and security in wheat,” said Orson Hyde years ago, “than in all the political schemes of the world” (in Journal of Discourses, 2:207). Water, of course, is essential. Other basics could include honey or sugar, legumes, milk products or substitutes, and salt or its equivalent. The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah.

Elder Harold B. Lee counseled,

“Perhaps if we think not in terms of a year’s supply of what we ordinarily would use, and think more in terms of what it would take to keep us alive in case we didn’t have anything else to eat, that last would be very easy to put in storage for a year ... just enough to keep us alive if we didn’t have anything else to eat. We wouldn’t get fat on it, but we would live; and if you think in terms of that kind of annual storage rather than a whole year’s supply of everything that you are accustomed to eat which, in most cases, is utterly impossible for the average family, I think we will come nearer to what President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., advised us way back in 1937.” (In Welfare Conference, 1 October 1966.)

There are blessings in being close to the soil, in raising your own food even if it is only a garden in your yard and a fruit tree or two. Those families will be fortunate who, in the last days, have an adequate supply of food because of their foresight and ability to produce their own.

The counsel from Church authorities has been consistent over the years and is well summarized in these words:

“First, and above and beyond everything else, let us live righteously. ...

“Let us avoid debt as we would avoid a plague; where we are now in debt, let us get out of debt; if not today, then tomorrow.

“Let us straitly and strictly live within our incomes, and save a little.

“Let every head of every household see to it that he has on hand enough food and clothing, and, where possible, fuel also, for at least a year ahead. You of small means put your money in foodstuffs and wearing apparel, not in stocks and bonds; you of large means will think you know how to care for yourselves, but I may venture to suggest that you do not speculate. Let every head of every household aim to own his own home, free from mortgage. Let every man who has a garden spot, garden it; every man who owns a farm, farm it.” (President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., in Conference Report, Apr. 1937, p. 26.)

You do not need to go into debt, may I add, to obtain a year’s supply. Plan to build up your food supply just as you would a savings account. Save a little for storage each pay-check. Can or bottle fruit and vegetables from your gardens and orchards. Learn how to preserve food through drying and possibly freezing. Make your storage a part of your budget. Store seeds and have sufficient tools on hand to do the job. If you are saving and planning for a second car or a TV set or some item which merely adds to your comfort or pleasure, you may need to change your priorities. We urge you to do this prayerfully and do it now.

I speak with a feeling of great urgency. I have seen what the days of tribulation can do to people. I have seen hunger stalk the streets of Europe. I have witnessed the appalling, emaciated shadows of human figures. I have seen women and children scavenge army garbage dumps for scraps of food. Those scenes and nameless faces cannot be erased from my memory.

I shall never forget the Saints of Hamburg who appeared on the verge of collapse from starvation, or their small children whom I invited to come to the stand as we emptied our pockets of edibles. Most had never seen these items before because of the wartime conditions. Nor can I forget the expectant and nursing mothers whose eyes watered with tears when we gave them each an orange. We saw the terrible physical and social side effects of hunger and malnutrition. One sister walked over a thousand miles with four small children, leaving her home in Poland. She lost all four to starvation and the freezing conditions. Yet she stood before us in her emaciated condition, her clothing shredded, and her feet wrapped in burlap, and bore testimony of how blessed she was.

I cannot forget the French Saints who, unable to obtain bread, used potato peelings for the emblems of the sacrament. Nor will I ever forget the faith of the Dutch Saints who accepted our suggestion to grow potatoes to alleviate their own starving conditions, and then sent a portion of their first harvest to the German people who had been their bitter enemies. The following year they sent them the entire harvest. The annals of Church history have seldom recorded a more Christlike act of love and compassion.

Too often we bask in our comfortable complacency and rationalize that the ravages of war, economic disaster, famine, and earthquake cannot happen here. Those who believe this are either not acquainted with the revelations of the Lord, or they do not believe them. Those who smugly think these calamities will not happen, that they somehow will be set aside because of the righteousness of the Saints, are deceived and will rue the day they harbored such a delusion.

The Lord has warned and forewarned us against a day of great tribulation and given us counsel, through His servants, on how we can be prepared for these difficult times. Have we heeded His counsel?

I bear you my testimony that President Heber J. Grant was inspired of the Lord in establishing the Church Welfare program. The First Presidency was inspired when they made the first public announcement in 1936 and declared the prime purpose of Church welfare was “to help the people help themselves” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3). I bear witness to that inspired counsel from 1936 to the present day that the Saints lay up a year’s supply of food. When President Spencer W. Kimball persistently admonishes the members to plant gardens and fruit trees and produce our own food, he is likewise inspired of the Lord.

Be faithful, my brothers and sisters, to this counsel and you will be blessed—yes, the most blessed people in all the earth. You are good people. I know that. But all of us need to be better than we are. Let us be in a position so we are able to not only feed ourselves through the home production and storage, but others as well.

May God bless us to be prepared for the days which lie ahead, which may be the most severe yet. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Food Storage (Vaughn J. Featherstone, April 1976)

Brethren of the priesthood, sisters of the Relief Society, President Henry D. Moyle suggested that when someone speaks we ought to get three things out of the message. First and least important (but still very important), we ought to get what is said. Second, and more important, we ought to have a spiritual experience. Third, and most important, we should keep the commitments we make to ourselves. Let’s write them down and follow through. Don’t ever make a commitment to yourself you don’t intend to keep—if you do, you weaken your character.

For twenty-six years, since I was fifteen, I was involved in the grocery industry. I learned much about human nature during those years. I remember the effects that strikes, earthquakes, and rumors of war had on many very active Latter-day Saints. Like the five foolish virgins, they rushed to the store to buy food, caught in the panic of knowing that direction had been given by the prophet but not having followed that direction—fearful that maybe they had procrastinated until it was everlastingly too late.

It was interesting because only in Latter-day Saint communities did people seem to buy with abandon. It was not a few Latter-day Saints—it was a significant number. It caused great increases in sales. One such experience came when a so-called prophecy by someone outside the Church was greatly publicized.

How foolish we can sometimes be! We have a living prophet; we have God's living oracles, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Let us follow the Brethren and be constant. We need have no fear if we are prepared.

Brothers and sisters, what have we done in our stakes and wards to see that every Latter-day Saint has a year's reserve of food to sustain life? Let's not only keep teaching the principle, but let's also teach our people how.

This morning I would like to discuss food storage. Let me suggest three or four things we can do. Start by taking an inventory—take a physical count of all of your reserves. This would be a great family home evening project if you're prepared. If not, it may be terribly embarrassing to you in front of your family. Imagine how the powerful testimony you bear concerning a living prophet must sound to your children, who know that as a family head you have been counseled for years to have a year's reserve of food on hand. We need to know where we are. Every family should take an inventory—get all the facts.

Second, decide what is needed to bring your present reserve levels to a year's supply. Then make a list and prepare a plan. Consider first, what are the basics?—wheat (or grain from your locale), sugar or honey, dried milk, salt, and water. Most of us can afford such basics. Buy them from your monthly food budget allowance. The Church discourages going into debt to buy for storage.

Now that you know where you are and where you need to be, the third step is to work out a time schedule for when you will reach your goal. I suggest that one year from today we ought to have a year's supply of food in all active—and many inactive—members' homes in the Church. Where food storage violates the law of your land, then abide the law. However, even in those cases we can plant gardens and fruit trees and raise rabbits or chickens. Do all you can within the laws of your community, and the Lord will bless you when the time of need comes. Now here are some suggestions how:

1. Follow the prophet. He has counseled us to plant a garden and fruit trees. This year don't just think about it—do it. Grow all the food you possibly can. Also remember to buy a year's supply of garden seeds so that, in case of a shortage, you will have them for the following spring. I'm going to tell you where to get the money for all the things I'm going to suggest.
2. Find someone who sells large bulk of grains, depending on your locale. Make arrangements to buy a ton or so of grain.
3. Find someone who sells honey in large containers and make arrangements to buy what you can afford on a regular basis or buy a little additional sugar each time you go to the store.
4. Purchase dry milk from the store or dairy, on a systematic basis.
5. Buy a case of salt the next time you go to the store. In most areas, 24 one-pound packages will cost you less than \$5.
6. Store enough water for each member of your family to last for at least two weeks.

Where the foods I mentioned are not available or are not basic in your culture or area, make appropriate substitutions.

Now you ask, “Where do I get the money for these things? I agree we need them, but I’m having a hard time making ends meet.”

Here is how you do it. Use any one or all of these suggestions, some of which may not be applicable in your country:

1. Decide as a family this year that 25 or 50 percent of your Christmas will be spent on a year’s supply. Many families in the Church spend considerable sums of money for Christmas. Half or part of these Christmas monies will go a long way toward purchasing the basics. I recall the Scotsman who went to the doctor and had an X-ray taken of his chest. Then he had the X-ray gift-wrapped and gave it to his wife for their anniversary. He couldn’t afford a gift, but he wanted her to know his heart was in the right place. Brethren, give your wife a year’s supply of wheat for Christmas, and she’ll know your heart is in the right place.
2. When you desire new clothes, don’t buy them. Repair and mend and make your present wardrobe last a few months longer. Use that money for the food basics. Make all of your nonfood necessities that you feasibly can, such as furniture and clothing.
3. Cut the amount of money you spend on recreation by 50 percent. Do fun things that do not require money outlay but make more lasting impressions on your children.
4. Decide as a family that there will be no vacation or holiday next year unless you have your year’s supply. Many Church members could buy a full year’s supply of the basics from what they would save by not taking a vacation. Take the vacation time and work on a family garden. Be together, and it can be just as much fun.
5. If you haven’t a year’s supply yet and you do have boats, snowmobiles, campers, or other luxury possessions, sell or trade one or two or more of them and get your year’s supply.
6. Watch advertised specials in the grocery stores and pick up extra supplies of those items that are of exceptional value.
7. Change the mix in your family’s diet. Get your protein from sources less expensive than meat. The grocery bill is one bill that can be cut. Every time you enter the store and feel tempted by effective and honest merchandising to buy cookies, candy, ice cream, non-food items, or magazines—don’t! Think carefully; buy only the essentials. Then figure what you have saved and spend it on powdered milk, sugar, honey, salt, or grain.

The Lord will make it possible, if we make a firm commitment, for every Latter-day Saint family to have a year’s supply of food reserves by April 1977. All we have to do is to decide, commit to do it, and then keep the commitment. Miracles will take place; the way will be opened, and next April we will have our storage areas filled. We will prove through our actions our willingness to follow our beloved prophet and the Brethren, which will bring security to us and our families.

Now regarding home production: Raise animals where means and local laws permit. Plant fruit trees, grapevines, berry bushes, and vegetables. You will provide food for your family, much of which can be eaten fresh. Other food you grow can be preserved and included as part of your home storage. Wherever possible, produce your nonfood necessities of life. Sew and mend your own clothing. Make or build needed items. I might also add, beautify, repair, and maintain all of your property.

Home production of food and nonfood items is a way to stretch your income and to increase your skills and talents. It is a way to teach your family to be self-sufficient. Our children are provided with much needed opportunities to learn the fundamentals of work, industry, and thrift. President Romney has said, “We will see the day when we will live on what we produce.” (*Conference Reports*, April 1975, p. 165.)

I should like to address a few remarks to those who ask, “Do I share with my neighbors who have not followed the counsel? And what about the nonmembers who do not have a year’s supply? Do we have to share with them?” No, we don’t *have* to share—we *get* to share! Let us not be concerned about silly thoughts of whether we would share or not. Of course we would share! What would Jesus do? I could not possibly eat food and see my neighbors starving. And if you starve to death after sharing, “greater love hath no man than this ...” (John 15:13.)

Now what about those who would plunder and break in and take that which we have stored for our families’ needs? Don’t give this one more idle thought. There is a God in heaven whom we have obeyed. Do you suppose he would abandon those who have kept his commandments? He said, “If ye are prepared, ye need not fear.” (D&C 38:30.) Prepare, O men of Zion, and fear not. Let Zion put on her beautiful garments. Let us put on the full armor of God. Let us be pure in heart, love mercy, be just, and stand in holy places. Commit to have a year’s supply of food by April 1977.

Bishops and stake presidents, let us accept the challenge on behalf of the Saints in our wards and stakes. It will prove to be a very Christlike deed on your part. Follow through and check up one year from now and make certain we achieve results.

In his October 1973 conference address, President Ezra Taft Benson gave some excellent instructions about home storage:

“For the righteous the gospel provides a warning before a calamity, a program for the crises, a refuge for each disaster. ...

“The Lord has warned us of famines, but the righteous will have listened to prophets and stored at least a year’s supply of survival food. ...

“Brethren and sisters, I know that this welfare program is inspired of God. I have witnessed with my own eyes the ravages of hunger and destitution as, under the direction of the president of the Church, I spent a year in war-torn Europe at the close of World War II, without my family, distributing food, clothing, and bedding to our needy members. I have looked into the sunken eyes of Saints, in almost the last stages of starvation. I have seen faithful mothers carrying their children, three and four years of age, who were unable to walk because of malnutrition. I have seen a hungry woman turn down food for a spool of thread. I have seen grown men weep as they ran their hands through the wheat and beans sent to them from Zion—America.

“Thanks be to God for a prophet, for this inspired program, and for Saints who so managed their stewardship that they could provide for their own and still share with others.” (“Prepare Ye,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, pp. 69, 81–82.)

I bear my humble witness to you that the great God of heaven will open doors and means in a way we never would have supposed to help all those who truly want to get their year’s supply. I know we will have time and money if we will commit and keep the commitment. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Welfare Services: Past, Present, and Future (Bishop Victor L. Brown, 1980)

I am afraid some members are laboring under the illusion that in difficult times the Church will take care of them. This is not so. The Church is prepared to take care of a limited number of members for a relatively short period of time.

There should be no misunderstanding on this point. The fundamental principle of welfare services is that you and I provide for our own needs. If serious economic disruption were to occur, the Church would do all in its power to alleviate suffering by supplementing member efforts. But it would not be able to do for the Saints what we have been taught to do for ourselves for over forty years—that is, to have a year’s supply of food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel; to have savings in reserve; and to possess basic production skills. This counsel has been given at least twice a year for all these years. Some have followed the counsel of the Brethren and are prepared, as were the five wise virgins. Some, like the foolish virgins, do not have enough oil in their lamps. (See Matt. 25:1–13)