

The Gospel News

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THE LORD IS OUR COMPANION

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

Over the past few months, our nation and the entire world have been living through a crisis caused by a disease known as the coronavirus. Much has been written and said about this disease—what caused it, how to prevent catching it, how to not help spread it, etc. So, it is not the intent of this article to provide further detail about this disease as the same information can be found elsewhere and it will be much more current than what is known at the time this article is being written.

Rather, we would like to share some counsel as to how to get through a situation such as this as the people of God—whether this crisis in particular or any similar one that may come in the future. Even in a situation as extreme as this has been, where we have found ourselves physically separated from each other, we can take comfort in knowing that God is with us. To paraphrase the psalm: The Lord is my companion, I shall not be alone.

The Righteous Need Not Fear

No matter how bleak things may appear, we can be assured that God is in control of the situation. There is nothing that can occur that would be too much for God to handle. So, if you believe in God and you are serving God righteously, you have no need to fear.

By saying that “the righteous need not fear” (1 Nephi 22:17), are we saying that anybody who serves God will not get the disease or be affected by whatever the crisis is? No, each of us is living in the flesh so we’re all subject to the perils of life and some number of us could possibly be affected. In fact, it is worth noting that the declaration to live without fear is made in the midst of expounding latter-day prophecies concerning Israel and God’s plan to resolve unrighteousness. As Saints, we should be aware and prepared for disruptions. However, we still don’t need to fear. Here’s why:

We are blessed with God’s protection

Whether God chooses to preserve us in our mortality or to simply embrace our souls, we can be courageous through His power. When we are working for the Lord, we can be confident of His protection. For example, it’s been our experience that ministers typically don’t get sick as a result of anointing the sick. So, even as we observe the recommendations and edicts of the government and health experts, we should not totally forget about the work of the Lord. Don’t take unnecessary risks, but don’t live in fear either—God is with us.

We have an additional resource when we are sick

If we happen to get sick, we usually have access to medical attention which helps the large majority of

(Continued on page 4)



Think of the many comforting and uplifting scriptures we have studied in these crazy months... Look them up, and write the missing words on the lines provided.



...like Christ said to Peter as he started to sink, after Peter cried, "Lord, save me."
Matt 14:30,31

...like Christ said to the man with the mad son, before he cried out, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!"
Mark 9:23,24



...like Christ said to His disciples, after He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation."
John 16:33



...like Christ said to the sea after He rebuked the wind, before He asked, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"
Mark 4:39,40



...like Christ said to Jairus, when his servants told him, "Thy daughter is dead."
Mark 5:35,36

...like Christ said to Alma and his people when they prayed silently in bondage, after He said, "...this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter..."
Mosiah 24:14



...like Christ said to each of us on the day of our baptisms, and promises if we would remain content with such things as we have.
Hebrews 13:5



"The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him." (Proverbs 20:7)

BFTIP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck

June 1939, eighty-one years ago this month, it was revealed to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles at a June conference in Monongahela, PA to recommend Brother Joseph Lovalvo to be ordained an apostle. When he was ordained, the gift of tongues was spoken and the interpretation given that God had called him as one of the apostles of old. Being only 29 years old, Brother Joe wondered how he could carry the weight of this calling. One day he had the following experience: "All of a sudden the Power of God came upon me and lifted me up from my bed and upon my feet in the middle of the room. A personage appeared to me, dressed all in white, with a sword in his hand. He spoke these words: 'I am Michael, the archangel, and I have been sent to you by God, to teach you how to use this sword.' He then proceeded to put the sword in my hand. It was about three feet long, two-edged, and the hilt was all engraved in gold. As I took the sword, he held his hand on mine and the Power of God came upon me and the Glory of God filled my soul. The sword just came alive!" Brother Joe felt as if he had grabbed a live wire. "The angel left and appeared again and said, 'God has sent me to you to teach you how to use this sword. Paul and Peter used this sword. Now you must use it.' He put the sword in my hand and this time let me go. He didn't hold my hand. The glory and power of God came upon me and once again, the sword became alive. All fear and every doubt left me. I knew now that God had called me as one of the twelve apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ."

Baptismal candidate Joabi Hill carried by Joe Reno (left) and Joe Lovalvo (right) ►



Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.



Vision Statement

- The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church.



“The Settle Is Incredible” *By Elder Doug Obradovich*

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28)

One Saturday night, ESPN's Top 10 included an amazing soccer highlight. The video clip began with a 60-plus yard pass to a player who, using only his foot, stopped the ball in midair. (This move, used to gain control of a moving ball, is known as a “settle.”) Then, the striker gently dropped the ball towards the ground and before it touched down, he kicked it again for a 20 yard goal. All of this followed by the announcer screaming, “Gooooaaaaa!!!” The shot was absolutely beautiful, but the settle was incredible.

When traveling at such distances, a soccer ball moves at 50-plus mph. Such abrupt stoppage, in one skillful move, confounds the laws of momentum. How can this possibly happen? I watched and processed this phenomenon, then quickly transitioned to a metaphor what I had just witnessed. This is not unlike the “settle” we experience when we bring our high-speed momentum to Jesus Christ. We come, spinning in multiple directions, at multiple speeds, with multiple purposes. With seemingly no effort (like the striker above), He receives our confusion and miraculously transforms our lives into calm and order (“peace that passeth all understanding” – Phillipeans 4:7).

Jesus Christ invites, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” His “rest” is the incredible settle. Our submission to Him provides new reference points: the “before” and “after” effects of His soothing harmony. We are introduced to a better

way with new and improved options. Why would we ever go back to our lives of chaos? It may seem intellectually senseless, but years of behavior, whether right or wrong, supply a familiar comfortability that calls us back.

Paul of Tarsus understood this, as he wrote to the Galatians, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (5:1). Paul had been key in the Galatians’ conversions, a eyewitness to the grace-filled change in their lives. He also then saw their clinging to a reliance upon old beliefs (i.e. “circumcision”) in the law, feeling justified by their obedience. He offered this wise guidance back to Jesus, whose “settle” had already provided all they needed. And He still does.

Those consumed in violence trade it for peaceable living. People trapped by addiction are made free of any dependence. Affections misplaced in codependent, tumultuous relationships are cleansed of any toxicity.

Like a soccer ball propelled at high speeds, lives are settled miraculously in the moment. Like the soccer ball shown on ESPN, these lives are then able to be redirected towards the ultimate goal: salvation. All of this followed by the Lord cheering, “Gooooaaaaa!!!” But only after His incredible “settle,” when the misguided velocity of your life was changed by the firm but gentle touch of Jesus Christ. Stand firm in the freedom of your conversion and let Him redirect your life towards your salvation! That settle is incredible!

The Righteous Need Not Fear

Continued from cover

people to recover. God does work through doctors and medical staff, inspiring them with the knowledge they need to help people. However, beyond this temporal help, we can look to the Lord directly and seek healing from Him. “And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; . . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:15-16).

Even in the worst case, we don’t need to fear

We of course don’t want this to happen to any of us but, even if we were to be facing death, we wouldn’t face it with “that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked” (Mormon 6:7) but rather with the peace and confidence of knowing that we are on our way to the paradise of God (where we all hope to be someday).

The Work of the Lord Cannot Be Stopped

The recent crisis has affected many businesses—some have had to close, and some have had to lay off workers. As a result, many people are out of work. However, the Church remains open for business. Even while our physical meeting places are unavailable to us, the work of the Lord goes on because His spirit dwells within us—we are the temple of God, we are God’s building (see 1 Corinthians 3, Alma 32).

It has been gratifying to see many branches of the Church using current technological tools to hold Sunday services and midweek scripture studies with everyone participating from their respective homes. Reports indicate that the attendance at these meetings has been very high. Many first-time visitors are even attending and being exposed to the restored gospel. So, the work of the Lord moves on, regardless of the circumstances, because God is with us.

In addition to attending virtual church meetings, there are other spiritual activities that we can be doing on our own. We often say we’re “too busy” to do these types of things. So, when we have unexpectedly available time, let’s be prayerful and allow the spirit of God to inspire us to continue with the work of the Lord within us. Here are some examples of spiritual activities that can be considered even while confined to our homes:

- Spend time in fasting and prayer
- Study a passage of scripture on your own or with your family
- Watch some faith-based or scripture-based movies
- Watch recorded sermons or scripture lessons
- Call some brothers and sisters on the phone to uplift them

Perhaps after doing any of the above or other spiritual activities on an extended basis, you may find a way to incorporate some of them into your regular schedule even when the crisis is over. You can

be another example of the Lord accomplishing His work during a challenging time.

God Doesn’t Want Us to be Alone

At the beginning of the Bible, God created more than one person because He observed that “it is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Although we typically use this verse in reference to marriage, it can also be applied generally to observe that people were not created with the intention that they would be totally alone in life.

While it’s true we are never completely alone with the Lord as our companion, it should also be observed that God has given us each other so that we will not be alone. As a result, even though we have seen how we can function as a church without being physically together, we should not adapt to that as the new normal way of life.

Although we can hold a church service with everyone at home, we have seen that it is only a meager substitute for meeting in person. Although we can speak to each other and see each other with our electronic devices, it’s not the same as being in each other’s presence. When in-person church meetings resume (if they haven’t already by the time this is published), we would encourage all to go and be a blessing to your brothers and sisters rather than adopting the more self-centered position of just personally receiving the preached message at home.

And, with all due respect to how the concept of “social distancing” appears to have slowed the spread of the coronavirus, that should not be the new normal either when the crisis is past. Especially when we are together in church, we should long to greet each other in the way we are accustomed to. If anything, we should be even more excited to see and greet each other after many weeks of being apart.

In Conclusion

So, in the face of a threat such as this (or anything similar that comes in the future), be wise and take appropriate precautions but don’t live in fear. Draw closer to God. The Lord is your companion, so you’re not alone. Feel His protection about you.

Continue in whatever work of the Lord you are called to do. God will bless our efforts regardless of the circumstances. Also, the way we live our lives in a time of crisis demonstrates who we are as people of God, allowing others to see that we have something that they should desire.

And finally, always remember that you are not alone. Not only is God with you but you are also part of the body of Christ in The Church of Jesus Christ. Embrace each other (figuratively and physically) as we work together to build the kingdom of God in the latter days.

In the Love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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Salted *By Elder Anthony Scolaro*

The Lord's instruction in Leviticus 2:13 regarding meat sacrifices (ref. Ezekiel 43:24) required salt as an ingredient not to be omitted. During Jesus' ministry, He told His followers, "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13) and in 3 Nephi 12:13, "I give unto you to be the salt of the earth."

While the scriptures above all have salt in common, the contrast between Old Testament and New Testament perspectives becomes apparent. Salting the sacrifice, like so many practices under the Law, is a matter of "doing," while depicting God's saints as salt suggests a state of "being." Jesus ties these two together in another scripture, however, after teaching that it is better to be rid of a hand, foot, or eye that causes you to stumble (Mark 9:43-50), when He concludes:

For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Recently our Sunday School looked at many scriptures, including the ones above, supporting the idea of salt signifying a pure devotion to Christ and a willingness to give up anything in order to serve Him. It denotes a true covenant relationship with God.

While the Old Testament Law may have taken more of a "doing" (or not doing) approach to serving God, it's important to understand that from the beginning the Lord's primary concern was about us "being" in a relationship with Him. The "doing" is secondary; the precepts and statutes being an outward show of the inner heart our heavenly Father desires His children to have toward Him.

An emphasis on "doing," no matter how well intentioned, can lead to rote habit if we're not careful. We can "do" all the right things without "being" right with God. That is what was going on in Judea when Jesus appeared on the scene. Because their focus was on "doing" rather than "being," the priests and religious leaders of that day found fault with everything Jesus did, even while He fulfilled the prophecies of the long-awaited Messiah. They were blinded as to Who He actually was, and ultimately had Him crucified.

The Spring of 2020 will perhaps be remembered as time when opportunities for "doing" were dramatically curtailed. This created a lot more room for "being" versus "doing," perhaps reversing them in priority from the way we had them arranged. I've had to ask myself, Is this what it's taken for me to focus on becoming more 'salted' than I was prior to this? I was reminded that "doing" is something I tend to take upon myself to accomplish, while I need to depend on Jesus and His atoning blood to achieve the state of "being" that He intends for me.

The Lord has been prompting us as a Church to prepare for the great things He said He would bring about in the last days. While "no man knows the day nor the hour" when these things will come forth, I think we've all been reminded how suddenly and unexpectedly life as we know it can change due to things completely beyond our imagination or control. In the end it will be—as it ever has been—what we "are," rather than what we "do," that salts our sacrifice unto the Lord.

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God Is Our Help (February 1971)

By Thomas Ross

The above title is gleaned from the opening line of Isaac Watts's grand hymn, O God, Our Help in Ages Past. For the benefit of some of our Gospel News readers who may not have ready access to a hymnal that includes this beautiful hymn, it is submitted herewith:

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home;

Under the shadow of Thy throne, Thy Saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God, to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

The busy tribes of flesh and blood, with all their cares and fears,
Are carried downward by the flood and lost in following years.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guide while life shall last, and our perpetual home.

Another year has swiftly rolled away with all its joys and sorrows and a new year is ushered in bringing new hope and expectation. As we look back, we note how many wonderful times God has been our help in time of need; our shelter from many stormy blasts. His arm surely has proven sufficient in our defense in the midst of many cares and fears.

We are also comforted and strengthened as we call to mind the divine fact that long before the earth received its frame and the mountains and hills were brought forth, God is from Everlasting to Everlasting.

Our trust then, is in God who has helped us in the past. Without doubt many of us have been supported through numerous situations of disappointment, distress, and even tragedy, whether in our personal lives, or in the lives of our relatives and others around us. In the loss of loved ones and friends when grief and heartache seemed more than we were able to bear, God's sustaining grace and comfort were ever present.

In the past year and in recent years, events have transpired, and serious situations have arisen throughout our country which have caused us much concern and stress, as individuals and as a nation. Rebellion, rioting, and unruly protesting have become increasingly frequent. Civil disorder, violence, crime, and disrespect for law and order seem to have become the order of the day. There has been an alarming departure from goodly social behavior at all levels and classes of our populace.

(Continued on page 11)



GOSPEL NEWS FACTS 1970S

Did you know...

1. The cost to build the General Church Auditorium in 1970 was \$344,434.
2. In 1971, The Gospel News Editor and Assistant Editor were Brother Paul Palmieri and Brother Thomas Ross.
3. A new church building in Mexico City was dedicated in 1977. Brother Frank and Brother Joe Calabrese traveled to Mexico for this exciting occasion.
4. An advertisement for restoration-themed coloring books was printed in the January 1977 edition of The Gospel News. Each book was sold for \$0.75.
5. The price of a Gospel News annual subscription was \$4 in 1979.

What is your father's favorite scripture?

Continued from back cover

"O my son, do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way; for so was it with our fathers; for so was it prepared for them, that if they would look they might live; even so it is with us. The way is prepared, and if we will look we may live forever. And now, my son, see that ye take care of these sacred things, yea, see that ye look to God and live. Go unto this people and declare the word, and be sober. My son, farewell." (Alma 37:46-47) - *Sister KarenJo Pandone, Detroit, MI Branch #2*

"Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day." (Alma 37:37) - *Sister Kathy Golling, Monongahela, PA Branch*

"Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25) - *Sister Connie King Gottschall, Herdon, VA Branch*

"The story of Joseph in Genesis." - *Brother Michael Zaino, Edison, NJ Branch*

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13) - *Sister Janice Frammolino, Detroit, MI Branch #1 and SisterCarolynn O'Connor, Detroit Branch #2*

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Revelations 14:6-7) - *Sister Sharon Sloan, Atlanta, GA Branch*

"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be." (1 Nephi 13:37) - *Brother James Calabro, Hopelawn, NJ Branch*

"And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands." (1 Nephi 2:20) - *Sister Natalie Shawver, Cincinnati-Morrow, OH Mission*

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Hebrews 13:12) - *Sister Alanna Wiktorowicz, Mesa, AZ Branch*



"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD." (Isaiah 2:1-5) - *Sister Martha Gehly, Coastal Carolina Branch*

"Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25) - *Brother Chuck Maddox Jr., Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:1-2) - *Sister Diane Giannetti, McKees Rocks, PA Branch*



Can cancelled plans bring more than disappointment?

By Apostle Jerry Valenti

There's a saying that goes, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans." Perhaps that has never felt truer in our lives than these past months. For many, plans have been disrupted, preparations hijacked, lives thrown off course.

Maybe you were planning on walking in your high school or college graduation ceremony... and then it was cancelled. Perhaps you had been looking forward to attending GMBA Campout...and then it was cancelled. Maybe you were excited about an upcoming family vacation...and then it was cancelled.

CANCELLED. CANCELLED. CANCELLED.

In one way or another, we can all relate to this. The disappointment. The letdown. Plans we thought we had, suddenly gone. It's especially frustrating when all of this is the result of circumstances beyond our control, when it feels like there's nothing we can do to get things to go according to plan.

However, it is worth asking ourselves, according to whose plans? According to our plans? Our

first, but then what? Do we wallow in these feelings? Do we stare at the cancelled plans, refusing to see anything else?

Proverbs 19:21 reminds us that our plans, no matter how good, can be unpredictable: "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." Put another way, "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." This verse means two things to me. First, this verse tells me that my plans, no matter how good, are changeable. These plans might be small – I planned on meeting a friend for lunch, but then she cancelled. These plans might be large – I planned on staying at my job for a long time, but then the company closed. This is the first part of the verse, the part that tells us that our plans, although many, are not fixed.

Sometimes we get stuck here, at least I know I do – focused solely on the cancelled plans, refusing to see beyond the change, the upset, the disappointment. However, this is not the end of the verse, and it is the second part of the verse that holds the power to refocus our vision: "...the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." The Lord's purpose is unchanging. It is never rescheduled, cancelled, or postponed. It always prevails.

From this perspective, cancelled plans become more than sources of frustration and disappointment. From this perspective, cancelled plans can open a space in our lives that

the Lord can fill with unexpected blessings. This doesn't mean that God is pleased that your graduation ceremony was cancelled or that we cannot attend GMBA Campout; however, what it does mean is that these disappointments, these cancelled plans, do not derail God's purpose for our lives. And, if we stay focused on that, He will fill the void in our hearts with joy.



Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

Proverbs 19:21



“The Lord’s purpose is unchanging. It is never rescheduled, cancelled, or postponed. It always prevails.”

plans are not inherently bad. Graduations, GMBA Campout, family vacations. There's nothing wrong with these plans; in fact, they are good plans. However, as we've learned recently, even good plans can get derailed.

And when this happens, what is our response? Maybe frustration and sadness, especially at

5 Trusting Only in God By Apostle Jerry Valenti

There are many accounts in the scriptures of people who allowed themselves to be placed in very unfavorable circumstances—even risking their lives—to trust only in God. I have selected 5 of these to use as 5 amazing facts for this month. In each case, “conventional wisdom” may have dictated certain actions which would have been perfectly logical to save lives, but the people involved chose to trust only in God and the results were very favorable.

1 Abraham sacrifices his son — Abraham had to wait until he was 100 years old for God to bless him with the birth of his son Isaac. When God then told him to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22), conventional wisdom would have dictated that Abraham either conclude that he heard the message wrong or just ignore the request. Instead, trusting that God could even raise Isaac from the dead if necessary (Hebrews 11:19), he went ahead with the sacrifice. An angel stopped him at the last minute and Abraham was known as the “Friend of God” (James 2:23).

2 David fights Goliath — Conventional wisdom would have been for young David to mind his own business and stick to his job as a shepherd rather than volunteer to fight the 9-foot giant. At least he should

have protected himself with proper armor. But David knew that he had the power of God on his side (1 Samuel 17:45) and he slew Goliath with a sling and stone.

3 Daniel prays openly — With a ban on prayer (Daniel 6), conventional wisdom would have been for Daniel to hide while speaking to God. However, he boldly prayed in the open and when he was then thrown into a den of lions, God shut the mouths of the lions and Daniel was spared. His accusers were then thrown into the same den of lions and the outcome was quite different.

4 Nephi obtains the plates of brass — After trying two times to obtain the plates of brass from Laban and being chased out by soldiers, conventional wisdom (which his brothers favored) would have been to

return without the plates. After all, it’s just a book. However, Nephi clung to the assurance that God would prepare a way for this to be accomplished (1 Nephi 3:7) and he risked his life by returning a third time by himself. This time, he was successful in obtaining the plates of brass such that the Nephites could carry the scriptures with them to the promised land.

5 Nephites refuse to recant belief in Christ — In 3 Nephi 1, the unbelievers set a day on which all who would not deny their belief in the prophesied birth of Christ would be executed. As the day approached, the Nephites rejected conventional wisdom and prepared to die if necessary, for their beliefs. Instead, on the appointed day, the sign prophesied by Samuel the Lamanite—a day, a night and a day with no darkness—was given and all knew that Christ had been born.



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Hope Whispers By Sisters LuAnn Carson

“I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I’m not enough.” (You Say—Lauren Daigle)

“The voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort.” (Mosiah 24:13)

“And the voice of truth says, ‘Do not be afraid!’” (The Voice of Truth—Casting Crowns)

“He told you you’re not strong enough. ..he told you you’re not loved...Fear he is a liar.” (Fear is a Liar—Zach Williams)

“Whispering hope, oh, how welcome thy voice, Making my heart in its sorrow rejoice.” (Whispering Hope—Jim Reeves)



Have you ever heard any or all of these voices in your head?

“During these unprecedented times” is a phrase used often during the Covid19 crisis. The word unprecedented is defined as never known before.

“During these unprecedented times” the schools will be closed, restaurants will serve only take-out, many are out of work, social distancing and isolation are being encouraged...” During these unprecedented times fear reigns in the hearts of men. During

(Continued on page 11)



The Book Of Mormon History

follow God's laws or have their younger brother preach to them.

When God used their younger brother, Nephi to build a bow and arrow to get food, or even build an unusual ship to sail across the ocean, they would get jealous, be hateful, and plan to kill him. One time they started beating him and God even sent an angel to stop them. Another time they wanted to attack Nephi and refused to help build a ship. God gave Nephi huge power to shock their bodies. (Read 1 Nephi Chapter 17.) Then they believed for a short while that God was using

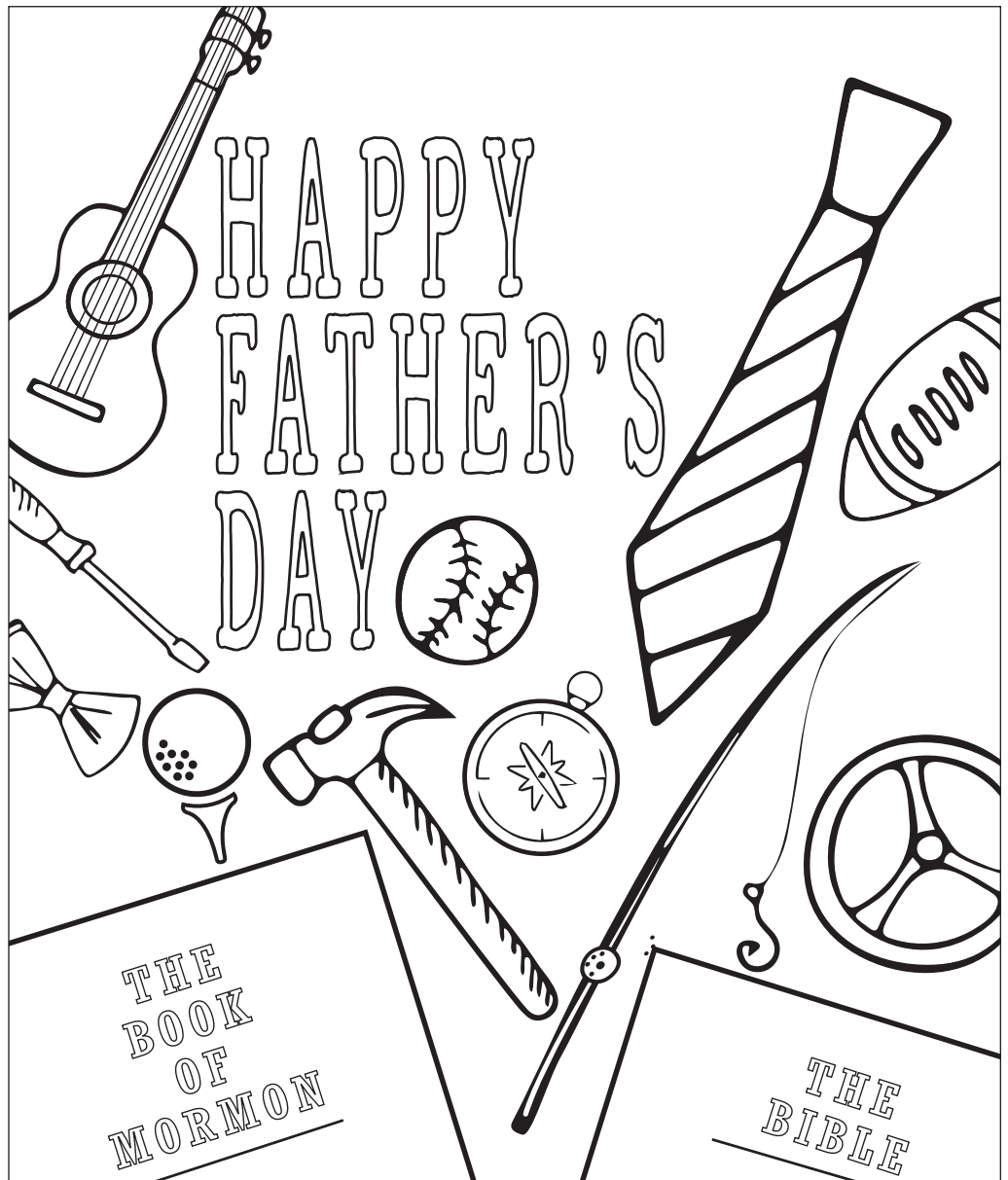
Nephi and that they were supposed to go to a new land. But even on the ship they were mean to him and tied him up until God sent a huge storm and they untied him.

This family's ship crossed the wide ocean and landed on this great land of North, Central, and South America. After they landed, Nephi's group wanted to serve and praise God. Laman and Lemuel's families wanted to be wild. Their hatred for their brother grew. Then God warned Nephi to gather the good people, the brass plates, the sword of Laban, and the Liahona and secretly leave his brother's group.

The wonderful Book of Mormon tells the exciting and interesting histories of three separate groups of people who were brought to the Americas by God. The book starts out with the stories of the prophet Lehi, who fled the huge city of Jerusalem before it was destroyed. Zedekiah was king there. Lehi brought his friend Ishmael, his family, and a man named Zoram. Two of Lehi's sons, named Nephi and Sam also believed God had spoken to their father and had warned him to leave their city for the wilderness. But the two oldest sons, Laman and Lemuel, were angry that they had to leave their riches and the city behind.

Once they were in the wilderness God told Lehi to send his sons back to the city to bring the ancient records of their people with God's Laws and the same history we have in the Bible written on them. These records were kept by a tricky man named Laban. He told them to bring him their family's riches and he'd give up the precious records. When they arrived, he attacked them. Finally Nephi killed him with his own sword and then took the sword with him along with the records. These records were engraved on thin sheets, or plates, made out of brass. Paper would have crumbled or easily burned but brass metal would not. Now Lehi's people could never forget how to serve God and where they came from.

God promised the prophet Lehi that he would bring them to a Promised land above all others. Yet, over and over the older brothers fought against going. When they were lost in the wilderness God gave them a curious compass of sorts. They called it the Liahona. It had words to guide them in it. When they were evil it would not work. Even still, Laman and Lemuel's group did not want to



(Read II Nephi Chapter 5.) They packed their tents and journeyed to a land they named Nephi, deep in the wilderness, far from his brother Laman's group. God was with Nephi's people.

The Book of Mormon tells us that God truly blessed them in their new land. They built tall buildings for their church, planted seeds, had great flocks of animals and grew wonderful crops. They also found many precious metals like gold and silver that they could use. (Read II Nephi Chapter 5.) Nephi also made more thin metal plates to record their lives, and made swords in case the Lamanite attacked them. But they also loved God and had love for each other.

As the years passed, the Nephite people were discovered by the Lamanites. Both groups had grown to be thousands of people. They were constantly at war.

At one point in their history, scouts from the land of Nephi were exploring far from their land and they discovered a group of people not from their original group! Their leader had been a man called Mulek who was a son of King Zedekiah of Jerusalem. We don't know about

what kind of ship they came over on or how many people there were. They did not bring any records on metal plates to help them so even their language had been changed. They were the second group of people in this Promised Land at this time.

This group was also being attacked by the Lamanites. They wanted to leave with the Nephites, and they did. But first they had to learn each other's language and ask God to show them a secret way to leave. And they also had an amazing surprise to show their new Nephite friends: When their warriors were scouting far, far away in the empty land they called Desolation, they found huge empty cities, rusting weapons, and a book with twenty-four pages of gold, all written in a strange language no one could read!

Next month I will tell you about the first people that God brought to this Promised Land and why their cities and treasures were left behind! (See Ether in The Book of Mormon.)

With love, your friend, *Sister Jan*

God Is Our Help

Continued from page 6

The war in Vietnam and the tensions in the Middle East have added to the burdens and fears of the people of America and the people of the world. However, in spite of such a discouraging and distressing state of affairs, both here in America and throughout the world, there is much reason to look forward with anticipation for the years that lie ahead.

God is still on His throne, and in due course the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will gradually bring about His divine purposes; the will of God shall eventually be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Isaac Watts' hymn, inspired by Psalm 90, was written about 1714 at a time of acute national anxiety throughout his native England. Some two and a half centuries later, in the midst of our own anxiety and concern, we are moved to exclaim with him: O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.

Ladies' Uplift Circle

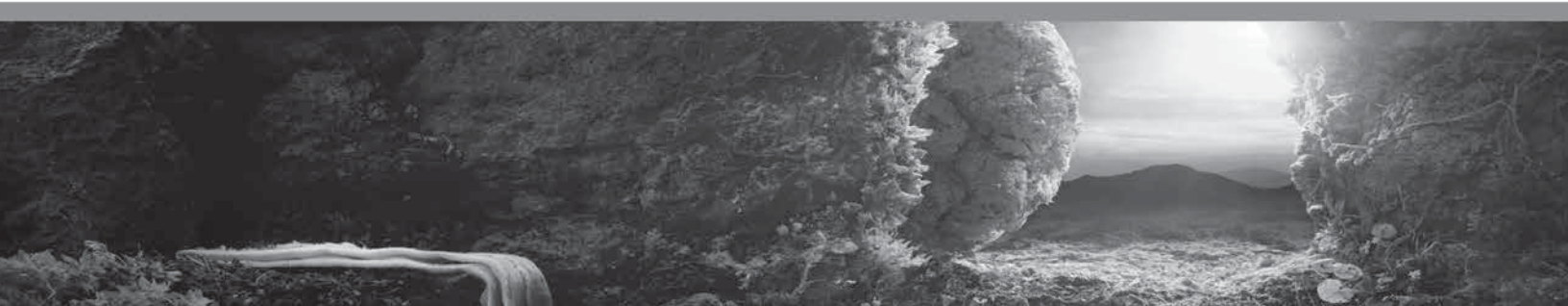
Continued from page 9

these unprecedented times the future is uncertain.

During these unprecedented times, we will unite in mighty fasting and prayer. During these unprecedented times, we will stay focused on the Lord. During these unprecedented times, we will pray for miracles, discernment, understanding, a greater portion of God's spirit.

The COVID-19 crisis may or may not be over as you read this. The words in the paragraph above can apply to any crisis in your life and mine. We may suffer illness, job loss, death of a loved one, disappointments. The list is endless. Do we get down and discouraged or do we pick ourselves up? I hope and pray that the voice that we are hearing whispering in our minds is a still small voice that says "Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are" (3 Nephi 9:15). I hope and pray that hope whispers in our hearts. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." (Hebrews 6:19)

"Perfect love casteth out fear." (1 John 4:18)



And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? Luke 24:5

Blessing Bits

BB Healed!

Although I was healed of meningitis when I was twenty, I ended up suffering with migraines from that episode on, for over eleven years. One night I went to bed with a headache, but then woke up in the middle of the night with a severe migraine. I was in extreme pain. I woke my husband up who had recently been ordained an elder and begged him to anoint me. It was not a lengthy or elegantly worded prayer, but as soon as he finished praying, I fell asleep. When I woke up my migraine was gone. That Sunday I testified of God's healing and over the last four years, I have not had another migraine. Praise God, He is so good to me! - *Sister Bethany Dyer, Mesa, AZ Branch*

BB He Brings Peace and Love

During the quarantine, most of us were missing our friends, family, and Church. I personally have missed all your hugs most. I have suffered with attention-deficit disorder (ADD) all my life. I love to socialize, but in large groups can take in only so much before I get a headache and need quiet time alone. When I say alone - I mean alone with the

Lord. After our first Campout event last year, the headache came. I went to my room and rested in communion with the Lord, without a nap, He quickly relieved the headache and brought me peace and much love. I was so grateful for this; I said to the Lord, "I love you so much, I wish I could hug and kiss you." The Lord quickly spoke to me... "When you hug and kiss a Saint you are hugging & kissing me." Looking forward to those hugs and kisses again! - *Sister Christina DiCenzo, McKees Rocks, PA Branch.*

BB He Blesses and Protect Us

My husband, brother Mike, was in New Orleans on business when the Corona virus was hitting the states. I called him the night before he was to return home and he told me he didn't feel well. He came home with a fever, low energy, and a cough. He did not isolate himself right away so my mom, son and I were exposed to his sickness. After 8 days of fever he went and got tested and to our disappointment he tested positive for COVID-19. The elders sent a blessed hankie and when the coughing was bad he would put the hankie on his chest and he would stop coughing for the rest of the night. He

stayed in isolation for 2 weeks. We fasted and prayed. Praise the Lord no one else in the house got sick, and that Mike has had a full recovery! The Lord truly put a blessing and protection on our house. God is so merciful and loving. - *Sister Denise Bodo, Br. 2 Farmington Hills, Michigan.*

Send us your Blessing Bits [in approximately 150 words] and answer the Question of the Month by contacting us at gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org



Question for this month: What do you miss most about attending Church in person during the COVID-19 Pandemic?



Answer from last month: What is your father's favorite scripture? "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31) - *Brother Jim Draskovich, Forest Hills, FL Branch and Sister Ruth Batson, Cincinnati-Morrow, OH Mission*

Turn back to page 7 for answers to this question.



"Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us." Psalm 62:8