

Gospel Doctrine #46: "A Kingdom, Which Shall Never Be Destroyed" (Daniel 2)

Lesson Goal: To strengthen our testimonies of the restored Church of Jesus Christ and encourage us to help build the kingdom of God on earth.

1. Daniel receives a revelation in which he is shown King Nebuchadnezzar's dream and given its interpretation.

Daniel 2:19: "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

A great prayer of gratitude follows:

Dan. 2:19-23: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are his. . . . he giveth **wisdom** unto the wise, and **knowledge** to them that know understanding: **he revealeth the deep and secret things**: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and **the light dwelleth with him**. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, hast made known what we desired of thee, for **thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.**"

So Daniel went to Nebuchadnezzar and described the dream.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "Here we have seen the kingdoms of this world, **kingdoms drenched in blood and held together by the arm of flesh**, one following another until the set time for the great latter-day restoration of all things. Then a stone is cut out of the mountain without hands and a **kingdom is set up by the God of heaven**. It is a new kind of kingdom. The arm of flesh plays no part in its creation. **It is created without man's hand**. It comes from God. **It is established by revelation. It is the Church and kingdom of God on earth**" (*Millennial Messiah*, 131).

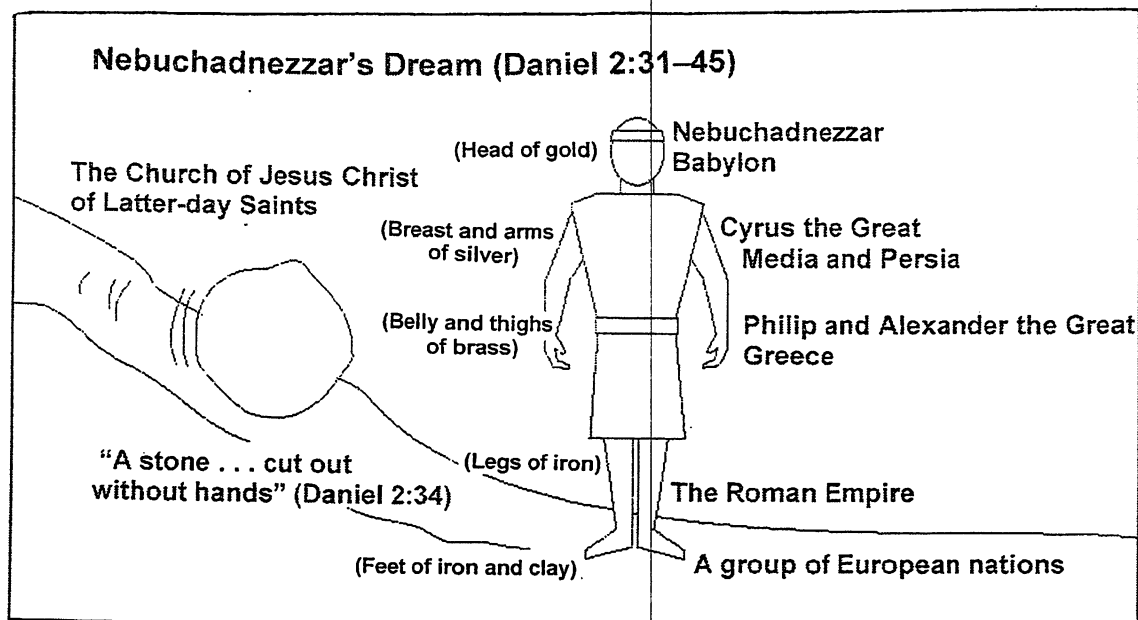
2. Daniel describes and interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Daniel 2:36-43 – The different parts of the image represented different kingdoms that would succeed each other as world powers. The following interpretation was provided by President Spencer W. Kimball:

- The **head of gold** represented Nebuchadnezzar and his **kingdom of Babylon**—605-539 B.C
- The **breast and arms of silver** represented Cyrus and his **kingdom of Media and Persia**—539-331 B..
- The **belly and thighs of brass** represented Philip and Alexander and the **Greek or Macedonian kingdom**.
- The **legs of iron** represented the **Roman Empire**. 161 B.C.-395 A.D.
- The **feet of iron and clay** represented a group of **European nations**. (*Ensign*, May 1976, 8).
- The **stone cut without hands**

D&C 65:2 "The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth."

Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation . . ." **The stone is Jesus Christ.**



Daniel prophesied that the Church would:

Daniel 2:34 - Be "cut out without hands".

Daniel 2:35 - Become "a **great mountain**, and [fill] the whole earth".

Daniel 2:44 - "Not be left [given] to other people".

Daniel 2:44 - "Never be destroyed".

Daniel 2:44 - "Consume all [other] kingdoms".

Daniel 2:44 - "Stand for ever".

President Faust: "It has been said that this church does not necessarily attract great people but more often makes ordinary people great. Many nameless people with gifts equal only to five loaves and two small fishes magnify their callings and serve without attention or recognition, feeding literally thousands. **In large measure, they make possible the fulfillment of Nebuchadnezzar's dream that the latter-day gospel of Christ would be like a stone cut out of the mountains without hands, rolling forth until it fills the whole earth (Dan. 2:34-35; D&C 65:2).** These are the hundreds of thousands of leaders and teachers in all of the auxiliaries and priesthood quorums, the home teachers, the Relief Society visiting teachers. These are the many humble bishops in the Church, some without formal training but greatly magnified, always learning, with a humble desire to serve the Lord and the people of their wards" ("Five Loaves and Two Fishes," Ensign, May 1994, 5).

Consider the following statistics regarding the growth of the Church:

	6 April 1830	1880	1930	1980	1995	2013
Members	6	133,628	670,017	4,639,822	9,340,898	15,082,028
Published Language Editions:Book of Mormon	1	10	16	44	88	100
Stakes	0	23	104	1,218	2,150	3,050
Missions	0	10	30	188	307	405
Temples in operation	0	1	7	19	47	141

3. We must be diligent and obedient in building up the kingdom of God on the earth

Ted Gibbons: I have thought that there are four ways we can interact with this stone. We can:

- **ignore it**, focusing our attention on more worldly things.
- **take our ease**, rejoicing in that which we have accomplished and waiting indifferently for the arrival of the rock.
- **actively oppose the progress of the boulder**, trying to impede the work and the workers.
- **get behind the stone and PUSH**, serving with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. D&C suggests the course:

D&C 58:44,45: And now, verily, I say concerning the residue of the elders of my church . . . behold, they shall **PUSH** the people together from the ends of the earth.

D&C 66:11: Keep these sayings, for they are true and faithful; and thou shalt magnify thine office, and **PUSH** many people to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads.

Our covenant duty, to help prepare the way for "the stone cut from the mountain without hands" to fill the earth, is:

D&C 65:4-5: Pray unto the Lord, call upon his holy name, **make known his wonderful works** among the people. **Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth** upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth.

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "This Church is true. It will weather every storm that beats against it. It will outlast every critic who rises to mock it. It was established by God our Eternal Father for the blessing of His sons and daughters of all generations. It carries the name of Him who stands as its head, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. It is governed and moves by the power of the priesthood. It sends forth to the world another witness of the divinity of the Lord. Be faithful, my friends. Be true. Be loyal to the great things of God which have been revealed in this dispensation" (*Ensign*, Sept. 1985, 6).

Mormon 8:22: For the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on, until all his promises shall be fulfilled.

D&C 1:38: "What I the Lord have spoken I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same."

BUT, too many of us have consecrated ourselves to building up the wrong kingdom in the "image of our own gods."

President Kimball: "I am afraid that many of us have been surfeited with flocks and herds and acres and barns and wealth and have begun to worship them as false gods, and they have power over us. **Do we have more of these good things than our faith can stand?** Many people spend most of their time working in the service of a self-image that includes sufficient money, stocks, bonds, investment portfolios, property, credit cards, furnishings, automobiles, and the like to guarantee carnal security throughout, it is hoped, a long and happy life.

"Forgotten is the fact that our assignment is to use these many resources in our families and quorums to build up the kingdom of God—to further the missionary effort and the genealogical and temple work; to raise our children up as fruitful servants unto the Lord; to bless others in every way, that they may also be fruitful. **Instead, we expend these blessings on our own desires,** and as Moroni said, 'Ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not.'" [Mormon 8:39.] (Spencer W. Kimball, "The False Gods We Worship," Ensign, June 1976.)

Breck England:

We must not forget

- that the Lord will ultimately destroy this world system of Babylon, and
- we may be destroyed with it if we are worshipers of our own self-image as Nebuchadnezzar was.
- On the other hand, if we follow the Savior, we will do his work—dedicating ourselves and our resources to the saving work of the Church, of missions and the temple and service to the hungry, the needy, and the afflicted. **We will be building up His kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.**

There will be "fiery furnaces" in life. The furnaces of rejection, hopelessness, disease, betrayal—these refining fires of life cannot be avoided. To stand up when everyone else is bowing to the image of the world can be frightening and lonely. This is why having a Savior means everything. **Regardless of the heat of the trial, He is there with those who have faith in Him.** Ultimately—and notwithstanding the pains of this life—because of His atoning sacrifice and His constant watch care, those who rely on the Son of God "have no hurt" (*Meridian Magazine*, November 30, 2010).

Joseph Smith: "The Standard of Truth has been erected; **no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing;** persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" ("Wentworth Letter," *History of The Church*, 4: 540).

Joseph Smith: "I calculate [I am] to be one of the instruments of setting up the kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord, and I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world. I once offered my life to the Missouri mob as a sacrifice for my people, and here I am. It will not be by sword or gun that this kingdom will roll on: the power of truth is such that all nations will be under the necessity of obeying the Gospel" (*History of the Church*, 6:365).

James E. Faust: "The dispensation of divine truth in which we now live, in distinction from previous dispensations, will not be destroyed by apostasy. This is in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy that "the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" nor "left to other people." **President John Taylor** affirmed this also when he said: "There is one thing very certain, ... and that is, whatever men may think, and however they may plot and contrive, that **this Kingdom will never be given into the hands of another people.** It will grow and spread and increase, and **no man living can stop its progress.**" ("The Prophetic Voice," *Ensign*, May 1996, 5)

Elder L. Tom Perry: "Not only did Daniel's service benefit the king, but **because of the faith that Daniel had in the Lord, it affected an entire land.** The king sent forth a proclamation that all the people of the kingdom should worship the true and living God, the God that Daniel worshiped. **How mighty was the power of the service of one righteous man,** affecting so many, as he served 'in the world' in which he lived! How effective will be the results of our service **if we will continue to serve in our own personal way** 'in the world' in which we live!" (*Ensign*, May 1988, 15).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell: "We will [not] always be rescued from proximate problems, but we will be rescued from everlasting death! Meanwhile, ultimate hope makes it possible to say the same three words used centuries ago by three valiant men. They knew God could rescue them from the fiery furnace if He chose. **'But if not,' they said, nevertheless, they would still serve Him!**" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1994).

An Example of How "A Stone Cut Out of the Mountain Without Hands" Will Prevail:

The trouble for the Mormons in Missouri began in the summer of 1833, but W.W. Phelps and other local leaders of the Church procured a ceasefire under conditions of duress. Despite the mob's promise of peace for evacuation, they could not contain their hatred toward the Mormons, and violence broke out on October 31, 1833— Halloween. Over the next week, the situation grew dire. On the night of November 5, 1833, many of the Saints in Missouri were assaulted by a vicious mob and forced from their homes at gunpoint into the freezing cold and dead of night. Now some were herded like cattle into the muddy streets of Independence and others fled for their lives.

The Saints had experienced a bad storm that day, which combined with frigid November temperatures. Nevertheless, they did the only thing they could do: they rushed to the banks of the Missouri River and tried to make shelter. Their only hope now was to ferry across the river to the safety offered in Clay County. Two days later, the storm hadn't let up, and the banks of the Missouri were now swollen with thousands of Mormons, who were pinned down in the mud in an effort to escape from the mob. They were terrified, hungry, wet and freezing, but they dared not return to town for fear that the mob would kill them. All that they could do for three days was sit in the mud and watch their beloved Zion and homes go up in smoke.

The only way to cross the river was by ferry, and the cost of transporting a family with a wagon and goods was a dollar and a half. Some of the families had the fee but many did not. The unfortunate ones watched friends traverse to Clay County while they remained behind in Jackson County, knowing that the mob could at any moment swarm down and murder them. It was not a matter of if, but when. Some twelve hundred Mormons had been driven from their homes. Their damaged property was valued at \$175,000, which included the burning of 203 homes, one gristmill, the destruction of crops, and the loss of livestock and furniture.

Things were about to get worse.

On the night of November 12, the mob assembled for a slaughter. Defenseless and with no place to retreat, the Mormons would be easy prey. Jackson County was about to see mass murder on an unprecedented scale, and all that the defenseless, starving, shivering Saints could do was huddle in the mud and wait for their demise.

In that moment of hopelessness and defeat, the Lord sent a miracle.

Earlier in the fall of 1833, the Prophet had prophesied that stars would soon fall from heaven as a "sign of the times." On one occasion when Joseph was preaching in Kirtland, a number of persons were present who did not belong to the Church, and one man, more bitter and skeptical than others, made note with pencil and paper of a prophecy uttered on that occasion, wherein Joseph said that 'Forty days shall not pass, and the stars shall fall from heaven.' The skeptic wrote the words as a sure evidence to prove Joseph to be a false Prophet.

On the thirty-ninth day after the utterance of that prophecy, a man and brother in the Church, Joseph Hancock, ... and another brother were out hunting game and got lost. They wandered about until night, when they found themselves at the house of this unbeliever, who produced this note of Joseph Smith's prophecy, and asked Brother Hancock what he thought of his Prophet now, that thirty-nine days had passed and the prophecy was not fulfilled. Brother Hancock was unmoved and quietly remarked, 'There is one night left of the time, and if Joseph said so, the stars will certainly fall tonight. This prophecy will all be fulfilled.' They stayed at the house of the skeptical unbeliever, as it was too far to return by night.

Suddenly, at about 10 p.m., the heavens exploded as thousands of meteors shot across the night sky. Parley P. Pratt wrote: "...to our great astonishment all the firmament seemed enveloped in splendid fireworks, as if every star in the broad expanse had been hurled from its course, and sent lawless through the wilds of ether. Thousands of bright meteors were shooting through space in every direction, with long trains of light following in their course." The Saints' salvation had come on the very night of the Leonid meteor showers, an event that occurs once every thirty-three years.

In the midst of the falling of the stars, he went to the door of his host and called him out to witness what he had thought impossible and the most improbable thing that could happen, especially as that was the last night in which Joseph Smith could be saved from the condemnation of 'a false prophet.' The whole heavens were lit up with the falling meteors, and the countenance of the skeptic turned pale as death, and spoke not a word.

The fiery display in the heavens continued all through the night, striking the mob with such awe that they halted their advance on the Saints to watch the magnificent celestial display. In the morning, they simply turned around and went home, and immediately thereafter, the Saints safely escaped to Clay County.

The fire in the heavens saved the Saints at the very moment of their highest distress. This lasted for several hours, and was only closed by the dawn of the rising sun. "Now Let Us Rejoice," a hymn by W.W. Phelps, recalls the amazing, resilient faith of our pioneers and helps us strengthen our own. Even in the worst of times, we can still rejoice as we 'watch for the day when the Savior will come.' (Larry Barkdull, *Meridian Magazine*, November 11, 2014)

Gospel Doctrine # 48 “The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord” (Zechariah 10–14; Malachi)

1. Zechariah and Malachi prophesy of many events of the last days.

Prophecies that have been fulfilled in preparation for the Second Coming

- a. **Malachi 3:1.** Malachi prophesied that a messenger would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.
- b. **Malachi 4:5–6.** Malachi prophesied that the prophet Elijah would return before the Second Coming

Prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled before the Savior comes

- a. **Zechariah 10:6–8.** The people of Judah and Joseph will be gathered; the people of Ephraim will become mighty.
- b. **Zechariah 12:2–3, Zechariah 12:8–9.** A great war will be fought in and around Jerusalem, but the Lord will intervene and save the inhabitants of Jerusalem from destruction.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “All the desolation and waste which attended the former destruction of Jerusalem is but prelude to the coming siege. Titus and his legions slaughtered 1,100,000 Jews, destroyed the temple, and ploughed the city. In the coming reenactment of this “abomination of desolation,” **the whole world will be at war, Jerusalem will be the center of the conflict**, every modern weapon will be used, and in the midst of the siege the Son of Man shall come, setting his foot upon the mount of Olives and fighting the battle of his saints” (Zech. 12:1-9). (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. 1: 659)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “Oh, what sorrow, what mourning, **what wailing shall rise in that day from the lips of all men in all nations, from all who have not made Christ—the true Christ—their King.** How the Jews will mourn because they crucified their King. What sorrow will be in the hearts of the Mohammedans because they acclaimed him as one of the prophets and denied his divine Sonship. What tears will water the faces of all those whose fathers bequeathed false forms of worship to them. And how the Christians will wail—wail until it will seem their very souls shall dissolve into nothingness—for they, favored above all the kindreds of the earth, **had the Holy Scriptures and could read the words of the ancient prophets and the holy apostles, and yet they did not believe the true gospel of the lowly one by whom salvation came**” (The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man [Deseret Book Co., 1982], 469)

- c. **Zechariah 14:7,** “. . . that at evening time it shall be light.”

Elder Henry B. Eyring: “Many of the scriptures have become familiar to us. Yet in just a few weeks what I remembered about the Savior, and what I felt about Him, were enriched.

I began to read with purpose. Perhaps it was because of the Christmas season, perhaps it was because I wanted always to remember Him, but I found myself drawn to the accounts of His birth. I read again His words, spoken to a prophet named Nephi, recorded in the Book of Mormon, familiar to us all. And yet it seemed new to me:

Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfill all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh. And behold, the time is at hand, and this night shall the sign be given.

And it came to pass that the words which came unto Nephi were fulfilled, according as they had been spoken; for behold, at the going down of the sun there was no darkness; **and the people began to be astonished because there was no darkness when the night came** (3 Ne. 1:14–15).

And then, **because my mind was set to try to know more of Him, I noticed in my reading another scripture that had somehow never before caught my eye.** It is in Zechariah, not a frequent stopping place unless you are on a search. Zechariah prophesied of the Second Coming of the Savior with these words: “But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light” (Zech. 14:7).

Later, as I had never done before, **I felt that I saw in my mind and felt in my heart the fulfillment of Samuel the Lamanite’s prophecy that the sun would set without darkness** (Hel. 14:3–4). I saw it at His birth, as if I were somewhere among the people in those lands of promise. And I saw it as it will be when He comes to stand, in resurrected glory, on the Mount of Olives. **The darkness will be dispelled when the promised Messiah comes with healing in His wings. Knowing how much I need that healing, my heart nearly bursts with joy and love for Him at the thought of that light.** I believe I will never see the dawning of a new day, as the sun banishes the darkness, without the sight triggering love in my heart for Him. (“Always,” Ensign, Oct. 1999, 10)

- d. **Zechariah 14:8.** Living waters will flow from the temple in Jerusalem and will heal the Dead Sea (Ezekiel 47:1, 8–9).

Prophecies that will be fulfilled when the Savior comes

- a. **Zechariah 14:3–4.** The Savior will stand on the Mount of Olives, and the mount will be divided in half (**D&C 45:48**).
- b. **Zechariah 12:10; Zechariah 13:6.** The Jewish people living at the time of Jerusalem's deliverance will see Jesus Christ and will mourn because they as a people have rejected him as the Messiah (see also D&C 45:51–53).
- c. **Zechariah 13:2.** False idols, unclean spirits, and false prophets will be destroyed.
- d. **Zechariah 14:5.** The righteous who are alive on the earth will be caught up to meet the Savior. The righteous who have died will be resurrected and will also be caught up to meet him (D&C 88:96–98).
- e. **Zechariah 14:9.** The Lord will be king over all the earth and will rule during the Millennium.

President John Taylor: "The Lord will be king over all the earth, and all mankind literally under his sovereignty, and every nation under the heavens will have to acknowledge his authority, and bow to his sceptre. **Those who serve him in righteousness will have communications with God, and with Jesus;** will have the ministering of angels, and will know the past, the present, and the future; and other people, who may not yield full obedience to his laws, nor be fully instructed in his covenants, will, nevertheless, have to yield full obedience to his government. For it will be reign of God upon the earth, and he will enforce his laws, and command that obedience from the nations of the world which is legitimately his right. Satan will not then be permitted to control its inhabitants, for the Lord God will be king over all the earth, and the kingdom and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the saints. (*The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor*, edited, by G. Homer Durham [Improvement Era, 1941], 207 - 208)

- f. **Zechariah 14:12–13; Malachi 3:13–18; Malachi 4:1–3.** The wicked will be destroyed; the righteous will be spared

President Ezra Taft Benson: "As we live the commandments of God, **we can look forward with joyful anticipation to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and know that through our efforts we are worthy,** with our loved ones, to dwell in His presence for all eternity. Surely nothing is too hard to gain this great goal. We cannot let down for a moment. **We must prove, every day of our lives, that we are willing to do the will of the Lord—to spread the re-stored gospel, to bear testimony to the world, to share the gospel with others"** (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 341).

2. Malachi teaches about the blessings that come to those who pay tithes and offerings. (Mal.3:8–12)

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "Now, do not get me wrong. I am not here to say that if you pay an honest tithing you will realize your dream of a fine house, a Rolls Royce, and a condominium in Hawaii. **The Lord will open the windows of heaven according to our need, and not according to our greed.** If we are paying tithing to get rich, we are doing it for the wrong reason. The purpose for tithing is to provide the Church with the means needed to carry on His work" (CR, May 1982, 40)

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin: "A major reason this church has grown from its humble beginnings to its current strength is the faithfulness and devotion of millions of humble and devoted [members]... He encourages us to "be not weary in well-doing, for [we] are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great." May we be faithful in fulfilling the duties of whatever calling we have in the kingdom. **Let us pay heed to the "small things" that make all the difference.** Let us be faithful in keeping the commandments as we have made sacred covenants to do. As our heritage and our growth clearly show, we are, indeed, "laying the foundation of a great work."

"Let us dedicate ourselves to doing the Lord's work to the best of our abilities. May we honor the faith of our fathers by giving our own faithful service to this great cause. ("Faith of Our Fathers," *Ensign*, May 1996, 34)

3. Malachi prophesies Elijah's return to the earth to restore the keys of sealing power. (Mal.4:5–6)

Joseph Smith: "The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is that ye have power to hold the key of the revelation, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the hearts of the children unto the fathers, even those who are in heaven...."

"I wish you to understand this subject, and if you will receive it, this is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection; and **here we want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those who dwell in heaven"** (HC, 6:251-252)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks: "We need to make both temporal and spiritual preparation for the events prophesied at the time of the Second Coming. **And the preparation most likely to be neglected is the one less visible and more difficult—the spiritual.** A 72-hour kit of temporal supplies may prove valuable for earthly challenges, but, as the foolish virgins learned to their sorrow, **a 24-hour kit of spiritual preparation is of greater and more enduring value"** (*Ensign*, May 2004, 7, 9).

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