

“TENT CITIES IN THE LAST DAYS ?”

By Roger K. Young

*And they shall be gathered into the garners, that they are
not wasted.*

*Yea, they shall not be beaten down by the storm at the last
day; yea, neither shall they be harrowed up by the whirlwinds;
but when the storm cometh they shall be gathered together in
their place, that the storm cannot penetrate to them; yea,
neither shall they be driven with fierce winds whithersoever the
enemy listeth to carry them.*

*But behold, they are in the hands of the Lord of the harvest,
and they are his; and he will raise them up at the last day.*

*Blessed be the name of the our God; let us sing to his
praise, yea, let us give thanks to his holy name, for he doth
work righteousness forever.*

Alma 26: 5-8

FORWARD

As a young missionary in Chile in 1973, after a night of being able to preach the gospel to a large group of potential investigators, I was recording in my journal the wonderful opportunity and the spirit that had been present and was still present as I was writing. All of a sudden the veil grew thin and among other things I saw the formation of a tent city near St. George as the people were called to leave the Los Angeles area. I was given to understand several things concerning the event, which I dutifully recorded in my journal.

For many years afterward, every once in a while I puzzled over what I had seen and recorded, but for the most part it lay forgotten while the matters of life occupied my time. A few years ago, while I was beginning to give firesides and lectures concerning the events of the last days, a number of people began sharing with me their own personal dreams and visions. After a while I started hearing a few of the people describe in their visions & dreams almost exactly the same things that I had seen in my brief vision. I then began to research more into tent encampments or cities, particularly in the last days. This short book is the culmination of that research up to this point in time.

PURPOSE

This book is dedicated to the personal belief that in the very near future (within a few years perhaps) there will probably come a call from the Prophet of the Church (the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve), through the proper priesthood channels, to the members of the Church to voluntarily gather to tent cities that will be primarily located in and around the Rocky Mountains. It will not be by commandment (as in “thou shalt”), but it will be an invitation to gather in a time of burgeoning adversity.

I believe that initially, such an invitation would come during a time of increasing widespread financial/depression like conditions, (increasing unemployment, loss of houses and personal property, scarcity of food) but before such conditions become “desperate” and will precede (perhaps by as much as a year or more) some sudden, catastrophic events that happen in the United States.

Those few Church members who exercise much faith to walk into the “unknown” and heed such an invitation by the living prophet and the presiding quorums of the Church will avoid much, (but not all) of the ensuing prophesied disasters and destruction which will befall the American nation as a result of increasing wickedness.

I also believe that it will be a chance to further “perfect the saints” in preparing to live the law of consecration, because a larger portion of that law will be lived in these encampments than is currently being done. (In preparation of living the full law of consecration in the city of Zion.)

The hope is, that this book will help prepare and encourage members of the Church to be ready to heed such an invitation if and when it comes, so that perhaps instead of just a few responding, there might be many more who will brave their own doubts & fears, the “naysayers,” the derision, and the persecution (subtle and open from friends, family and fellow Church members) that will be inflicted upon them.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL PATTERNS

The ways of the Lord are often repetitive. Given generally the same set of circumstance, the Lord will almost always respond in the same way. This is because He doesn’t change and His methods of operation do not change either. In other words, the Master most often works according to a set pattern which is based upon principles that were established a long, long time ago. By reviewing

history, we can begin to see and understand such patterns of the Master and the principles they are based upon.

All throughout recorded history there have been groups of people, some small and some large, that have been directed by the Lord to withdraw themselves from a larger wicked society in order to avoid suffering from impending catastrophic disasters. A partial list of such known groups looks like this:

GROUP	CURRENT OR IMPENDING DISASTER
Enos	Wars and bloodshed, secret combinations
Enoch	Increased wars and bloodshed, secret combinations
Noah	Destruction of all of the wicked
Jaredites	Wickedness
Abraham	First time...Wickedness in Ur, fled to save life Second time... famine, moved from Haran Third time....famines, moved to Egypt
Lot	Destruction of Sodom & Gomorah by fire from heaven
Israel/Joseph	Terrible famines (moved to Egypt)
Moses	Slavery under Egyptians
Lehi	Destruction of Jerusalem because of wickedness
Nephi	Destruction at hand of wicked brothers
Mosiah I	War & wickedness(prophesied by Jacob (Jacob 3:4)
Mulek	Destruction of Jerusalem
Alma I	Destruction at the hands of wicked king Noah Slavery under the hands of Amulon/Lamanites
Limhi/Gideon	War with the Lamanites
Righteous of Amonihah Church in Jerusalem	Complete destruction by the Lamanites in one day 70 AD, complete destruction by the Romans

Of course, let us not forget how many times the members of the Church moved in the early days of the restoration. It has been noted that the final removal of the Church to the Salt Lake Valley allowed the Church members to escape the terrible devastations that occurred during the civil war.

Joseph Smith	From Palmyra to Fayette, increased persecution
Joseph & Saints	D&C 38:28-33 From Fayette to Kirtland, increasing persecution
Church members	From Independence. Forced removal by mobs.
The Church	Wickedness, apostasy, persecution in Kirtland, Ohio moved to Far West.
The Church	Far West, persecution, forced removal by militia/mobs
The Church	Nauvoo to Salt Lake. Persecution, approaching mobs/militias

Also, it should be pointed out that those who heeded the call and left Europe/Britain to gather with

the saints in Utah, missed out on a lot of wars, devastations, etc. that later occurred there.

In addition, the scriptures indicate that there are many such groups that we have no record of at least at this point in time:

“For behold, the Lord God has led away from time to time from the house of Israel, according to his will and pleasure. And now behold, the Lord remembereth all them who have been broken off, wherefore he remembereth us also.”¹

Almost always, it appears that when these groups leave... they live in temporary housing which we commonly call tents. The most famous scripture (which every seminary student has memorized) that records this fact for Lehi and his group is *“And my father dwelt in a tent”.*²

The scriptures are very clear in several places and many of the ancient prophets (both new world and old world) have prophesied that the majority of the ‘Gentile’ society that would come to inhabit North America, would become a very wicked society full of *“witchcrafts...lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms”* and that it will be cleansed by several impending disasters, including plague, pestilence, storms, floods, drought, earthquakes, famine, internal strife attributed to Gadianton Robbers/secret combinations lusting for power and finally war.

We currently live in that wicked society described by the ancient prophets. (If anyone has any doubt of this, please read conference talks of President Kimball, President Benson and many others.)

With such prophesied impending destruction hanging over the heads of the people of this nation, is there any indication that the Lord is going to do as he has done in the past with other groups...namely direct a group or groups of the more righteous people to leave or break off from the current society, to gather separately off by themselves...to live in tents (as it seems that tradition has it) in order to avoid the major portion of such impending disasters and destruction?

The answer is....yes.

This short article is an attempt to outline the principles, prophecies, descriptions, visions of, and preparation of such tenting groups.

THE PRINCIPLE(S) BEHIND TENT CITIES

As mentioned previously, sacred history reveals to us clearly the principle(s) involved in such tent cities. The main principle was outlined by Jacob as a warning to the people of his day who had

¹2 Nephi 10:22

²1 Nephi 2:15

started to become wicked:

*“And the time speedily cometh, that except ye repent they shall possess the land of your inheritance, **and the Lord God will lead away the righteous out from among you.**”*³

Alma also mentions this principle as well, in a little more detail to the people of Ammonihah:

“Yea, and I say unto you that if it were not for the prayers of the righteous, who are now in the land, that ye would even now be visited with utter destruction; yet it would not be by flood, as were the people in the days of Noah, but it would be by famine, and by pestilence, and the sword.

*“**But it is by the prayers of the righteous that ye are spared; now therefore, if ye will cast out the righteous from among you then will not the Lord stay his hand; but in his fierce anger he will come out against you; then ye shall be smitten by famine, and by pestilence, and by the sword; and the time is soon at hand except ye repent.**”*⁴

In studying the examples listed above, the application of the principle appears to be in three parts or stages:

A. Both members and non-members or righteous and not-so-righteous live together for a period of time. This allows the righteous or the members to teach the gospel (missionary work) to the non-members or help encourage the not-so-righteous to do better. (Reactivation) During this period of time the message is one of invitation

B. The wicked become more wicked and persecution becomes severe. A division begins to appear between the people, the righteous and faithful on one side (the minority in all cases) and the wicked on the other. As the message begins to be rejected by a majority of the people, prophets are sent forth to declare the gospel message with very strong testimonies. The message is still one of invitation, however it is often mixed with the message of you need to repent or there will be serious consequences.

C. The wicked have become so wicked and the persecution so severe that the very lives of the righteous are in danger. The division between the two groups of people have become very public knowledge, very wide, and a source of much “focus” on behalf of the wicked. Prophets are sent forth at this time or just prior to this time with a special, specific message: repent speedily or be destroyed. These prophets are willing to suffer, often even unto death, so that their message is sealed by their testimonies. The righteous are then invited by the Lord to flee out for their lives (no one is ever forced) or sometimes the wicked force the

³ Jacob 3:4

⁴Alma 10:22-23

righteous to flee or suffer severe consequences. **Almost always, (and this is important) the decision to suffer or not suffer is based upon denying ones membership in the Church and/or belief in Jesus Christ.**

Of course when the righteous flee, often without much warning or preparation, they suffer as they travel to a place of safety. Tents seem to be the main method of providing temporary shelter during these times of fleeing. Many times these places of safety are places of promised blessings...but those who flee to them have to perform much work to receive the blessings.

THE FALSE ASSUMPTION

It is important to address a great false assumption that seems to be a favorite of the adversary to befuddle and put at ease the general membership of the Church in these situations. This is part of the “*All is well in Zion*” syndrome and is a subset of the principles of fleeing or gathering out. We have seen this in past history and we even see it happening today to a tremendous degree.

The False Assumption which particularly plagues us today is this: Many Church members have assumed (are assuming) that they will never have to flee their current homes, that they are already living in a place of safety...and that the wicked will be cleansed from among them. After all, their ancestors had been brought to the place of safety by the hand of the Lord.

The problem with this assumption is simple...**No where in sacred history does such a scenario ever present itself.** In fact the opposite seems to be true.. The righteous gather to a place of peace and safety and are blessed. After a period of time the people began to be divided into the two groups...those who still keep the commandments and those who don't. The longer the time period...the greater the division and the more those who have become wicked dominate the once righteous society. They take over control of the government and pass laws to help them in their quest for power and riches. The true humble followers of Christ become the very small (and diminishing) minority of the society.

It is important to note that in almost all past examples, the once righteous who are now wicked...go around pretending and loudly proclaiming that they are still righteous and still the chosen of the Lord. Many, if not most of them are still members of the Church. Some are even its lower level leaders and teachers. However, upon close scrutiny their actions point to the fact that they have started to become hypocrites/apostates-in-heart. They first ignore, then tacitly support, encourage the growth of, and even participate with the wicked practices of the society. Such actions put them in admiration of the majority of the population of the society who are now participating in these wicked practices, including, unfortunately, the majority of the membership of the Church.

The vision of Lehi expressly focuses attention on this fact:

“And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth

and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.

And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed.

And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth.

And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit.

“And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost.”⁵

This was also part of the message of Samuel the Lamanite to the former & current (hypocritical) members of the Church in Zarahemla. I use the paraphrasing from Hugh Nibley:

"Ye do not remember the Lord your God," said Samuel the Lamanite to the people of Zarahemla, "but ye do always remember your riches" (Helaman 13:22). (And how self-righteous they were about it!)

Now when ye talk, ye say: If our days had been in the days of our fathers of old, we would not have slain the prophets. . . . Behold ye are worse than they; for . . . if a prophet . . . testifieth of your sins, . . . ye are angry with him; . . . yea, you will say that he is a false prophet, and that he is a sinner, and of the devil, because he testifieth that your deeds are evil. But behold, if a man . . . saith that all is well, then ye will not find fault with him. [On the contrary,] ye will clothe him with costly apparel . . . because . . . he saith that all is well (Helaman 13:25-28).

These people did not want to hear what was wrong with Zarahemla, only what was right with Zarahemla. Anyone who wanted their vote had only to avoid any mention of repentance and tell them that they had done no wrong, that Zarahemla was great because Zarahemla was good.”⁶

This is another important part of the principle to understand. As this oft repeated scenario shows...the true humble followers of Christ begin to become even a minority in the Church. They are persecuted by the majority for being radicals, zealots, fanatics (imagine, they try to keep all of the commandments) and dare to be different than the mainstream society (the world) or Church membership. (Though upon closer examination it will be found that it is they who are still holding

⁵1 Nephi 8:24-28

⁶Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, Vol.9, Ch.2, p.47

fast to the doctrines and practices that years earlier the majority were embracing.)

At first this persecution is subtle, and then it becomes stronger and more severe, sometimes even coming to blows and murder. The division between the two groups becomes larger, more divisive and more apparent. It is then around this time that the few righteous are warned to flee or are cast out by their once family, friends, co-workers and fellow church members.⁷

Again, what would make us think that we are any different today and that it will be just the opposite of almost every other similar experience recorded in sacred history?

Have any of the prophets indicated that things will be different for us in these last days...or have they indicated that in fact, it will be the same as before...the once righteous cities and members become wicked, a division occurs and the fewer righteous are either invited out to gather elsewhere by their priesthood leaders or are cast out by the wicked?

Again, the answer is yes.

President Benson talked very clearly about this growing division in the Church that we are experiencing. He said:

“Sometimes we hear someone refer to a division in the Church. In reality, the Church is not divided. It simply means that there are some who, for the time being at least, are members of the Church but not in harmony with it. These people have a temporary membership and influence in the Church; but unless they repent, they will be missing when the final membership records are recorded.

“It is well that our people understand this principle, so they will not be misled by those apostates within the Church who have not yet repented or been cut off. But there is a cleansing coming. The Lord says that his vengeance shall be poured out "upon the inhabitants of the earth. . . . And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord; First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me. . . ." (D&C 112:24-26.) I look forward to that cleansing; its need within the Church is becoming increasingly apparent.

“The Lord strengthened the faith of the early apostles by pointing out Judas as a traitor, even before this apostle had completed his iniquitous work. So also in our day

⁷ There has only been one exception to this sequence that I can find in the scriptures and that is the story of the Nephites just before the appearance of the Savior to them. In this Nephite experience, all of the sequence happened as outlined, but the part of the righteous being cast out or gathered out is not mentioned. It does mention though, that there were very few righteous among so many wicked, (3 Nephi 7:7) the government was overthrown and the Church seemed to become almost non-existent as an organization.

the Lord has told us of the tares within the wheat that will eventually be hewn down when they are fully ripe. But until they are hewn down, they will be with us, amongst us. The hymn entitled "Though in the Outward Church Below" contains this thought:

"Though in the outward Church below
Both wheat and tares together grow,
Ere long will Jesus weed the crop
And pluck the tares in anger up. . . .
We seem alike when here we meet;
Strangers may think we are all wheat;
But to the Lord's all-searching eyes,
Each heart appears without disguise.
The tares are spared for various ends,
Some for the sake of praying friends,
Others the Lord against their will,
Employs, his counsels to fulfill.
But though they grow so tall and strong,
His plan will not require them long;
In harvest, when he saves his own,
The tares shall into hell be thrown."
(Hymns, No. 102.)

"Tares among the wheat"

"Yes, within the Church today there are tares among the wheat and wolves within the flock. **As President Clark stated, "The ravening wolves are amongst us, from our own membership, and they, more than any others, are clothed in sheep's clothing because they wear the habiliments of the priesthood. . . . We should be careful of them. . . ."** (Era, May 1949, p. 268. See also, Conference Report, April 1949, p. 163.)

"The wolves amongst our flock are more numerous and devious today than when President Clark made this statement.

"President McKay has said that "the Church is little, if at all, injured by persecution and calumnies from ignorant, misinformed or malicious enemies. **A greater hindrance to its progress comes from faultfinders, shirkers, commandment-breakers, and apostate cliques within its own ecclesiastical and quorum groups.**" (Era, December 1967, p. 35. See also, Conference Report, October 1967, p. 9.)

"Not only are there apostates within our midst, but there are also apostate doctrines that are sometimes taught in our classes and from our pulpits and that appear in our publications. And these apostate precepts of men cause our people to stumble. As the Book of Mormon, speaking of our day, states: ". . . they have all gone astray save it a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are

taught by the precepts of men." (2 Ne. 28:14.)”⁸

Remember this was over 30 years ago. If the situation was bad at that time, one must wonder its current status. A very interesting statement was made by President Benson about the need to cleanse the Church...and the possible method that would be used by the Lord. He wrote:

“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.”⁹

President Joseph F. Smith also spoke on this subject, which was included in our Priesthood and Relief Society manuals in lesson #44 (pg 393) for all of us to consider and ponder.

“I... testify, that unless the Latter-day saints will live their religion, keep their covenants with God and their brethren, honor the priesthood which they bear, and try to faithfully to bring themselves into subjection to the laws of God, they will be the first to fall beneath the judgments of the Almighty, for his judgments will begin at his own house.

“Therefore, those who have made a covenant with the Lord by baptism, and have broken that covenant, who profess to be saints and are not, but are sinners, and covenant-breakers, and partakers of the sins of Babylon, most assuredly will “receive of her plagues,” for it is written that the righteous will barely escape.”¹⁰

Modern scripture also talks about the coming division/judgement starting first with the members of the Church. Interestingly enough President Hinckley, in his now famous October General Conference (2001) address of Sunday morning, referenced the first part of this scripture in his talk. He said:

“I am familiar, as you are, with the declarations of modern revelation that the time will come when the earth will be cleansed and there will be indescribable distress, with weeping and mourning and lamentation.” (See D&C 112:24)

The referenced scripture, along with the scriptures that precede it and follows it, is as follows:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the

⁸Ezra Taft Benson, Conference Report, April 1969, p.10-12

⁹God, Family, Country, p. 383

¹⁰ Conference report, April 1880, p 96

minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.

“Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.

“And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord;

“First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.”¹¹

Orson Pratt also elaborated on this scripture:

“I will make a few remarks upon these passages as I read them. It seems that this is a dispensation peculiar in its nature, differing from former dispensations. It is a dispensation of mercy and of judgment--of mercy to those who receive the message of mercy, but of judgment to those who reject that message. In other words it is a dispensation in which the Gospel has been revealed from heaven, the servants of God called to labor in the vineyard for the last time, and in which the Lord intends to pour out great and terrible judgments upon the nations of the wicked after they have been warned by the sound of the everlasting Gospel. We are told in the revelation I have just read, that vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth; that it is a day of wrath, burning, desolation, weeping, mourning and lamentation, and that as a whirlwind these things shall come upon the inhabitants of all the earth.

“Where shall these great and severe judgments begin? Upon what people does the Lord intend to commence this great work of vengeance? Upon the people who profess to know his name and still blaspheme it in the midst of his house. They are the ones designated for some of the most terrible judgments of the latter days. This should be a warning to the Latter-day Saints; and not only those who are parents, but those who are children should diligently consider whether they are numbered among those who are mentioned in the 10th paragraph, which I have read. Upon my house, saith the Lord, shall it begin, first upon those among you who have professed my name and have not known me and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house.”¹²

There are several other comments on this scripture and its interpretation, too numerous to include, but they all say the same thing. The members of the Church in the last days will indeed follow the pattern that has shown itself in times past, in that there will come a division in righteousness among

¹¹ D&C 112:23-26

¹² Journal of Discourses, Vol.15, p.330, Orson Pratt, January 26, 1873

the members of the Church.

Since it has been well established that the above mentions apostasy is in progress in the Church today, which is the first part of the sequence, is there any reason to doubt the second half of the historical examples will not take place as well? (That is, the righteous will be either gathered out from among their more wicked brethren and or forcefully cast out or jailed/murdered.)

Unfortunately, there are not any published, verified, first hand prophecies, dreams or visions by Church authorities, (at least that I can find) that specifically describe this part happening in the last days.

However, there is a statement by President Harold B. Lee counseling the general Church membership to look forward to such future instructions by the leaders of the Church to gather from the cities to places of refuge in the last days. He said:

“Thus, clearly, the Lord has placed the responsibility for directing the work of gathering in the hands of the leaders of the Church to whom he will reveal his will where and when such gatherings would take place in the future. It would be well--before the frightening events concerning the fulfilment of all God's promises and predictions are upon us, that the Saints in every land prepare themselves and look forward to the instruction that shall come to them from the First Presidency of this Church as to where they shall be gathered and not be disturbed in their feelings until such instruction is given to them as it is revealed by the Lord to the proper authority.”¹³

CONCLUSION

There is not only much historical precedence for the righteous saints to flee because of the wickedness of the society they live in, most often using tents as temporary housing, but prophecies by ancient and modern prophets indicate that such apostasy is going to happen again in the last days. Indeed, modern prophets indicate the process that eventually produces this need to flee has already begun and is in full swing. Also the Church membership has been instructed to look forward and heed instructions from the Church leadership concerning gathering to such places of refuge in the future.

¹³Harold B. Lee, Conference Report, April 1948, p.55

CHAPTER 2

ANOTHER PRINCIPLE AT WORK.... ONE THAT IS MISUSED AND NOT UNDERSTOOD

THE GREAT FALSE ASSUMPTION #2

Most members of the Church also work under a second false assumption. This is because they are confused about two separate principles of the gospel and how to correctly apply them. These principles are the principles of justice and mercy.

They confuse the mandate/commandment of sharing and taking care of the poor and needy with sharing their food with the rebellious. This false assumption is held not only by the rebellious (who often use it to justify their rebellious ways and minimize the outlined consequences) but by many of the obedient as well. There is a big difference between the two concepts of taking care of the truly poor and needy and taking care of the rebellious.

The First Principle, the one concerning taking care of the poor and needy which everyone remembers, is exemplified by the following scripture:

“For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

“Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.”¹⁴

The second principle, the one that everyone often forgets to apply, (especially when its application produces negative consequences) is outlined here:

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated--

“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.”¹⁵

The reverse of this law is the point that the wicked do not like. Those who are disobedient to the law receive the consequences of their disobedient or rebellious actions as well...because this is right

¹⁴D&C 104:17-18

¹⁵D&C 130:20-21

and just. The Lord mentions some of the consequences for those who are disobedient and rebellious:

“Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.

“And the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away, and shall not inherit the land.

“For, verily I say that the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim, wherefore they shall be plucked out.”¹⁶

A few other verses help us to recognize this principle even further:

“Hearken, O ye people who profess my name, saith the Lord your God; for behold, mine anger is kindled against the rebellious, and they shall know mine arm and mine indignation, in the day of visitation and of wrath upon the nations.

“And he that will not take up his cross and follow me, and keep my commandments, the same shall not be saved.

“Behold, I, the Lord, command; and he that will not obey shall be cut off in mine own due time, after I have commanded and the commandment is broken.”¹⁷

It is important to recognize the difference between the wicked and the rebellious. The two groups are mentioned :

“Wherefore I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good; and all this to be answered upon the heads of the rebellious, saith the Lord.

“Wherefore, verily I say, let the wicked take heed, and let the rebellious fear and tremble; and let the unbelieving hold their lips, for the day of wrath shall come upon them as a whirlwind, and all flesh shall know that I am God.”¹⁸

President Joseph Fielding Smith hit the proverbial nail on the head when he wrote:

“One of the great failings of mankind is to ignore warnings of punishment for sin.”¹⁹

For good or for bad....It is actually all part of the law of consequences.

¹⁶D&C 64:34-36

¹⁷D&C 56:1-3

¹⁸D&C 56:4, 63:6

¹⁹ Joseph Fielding Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation 1:195

And now the heart of the question.... “Is it right and just for the obedient who have sacrificed their means to be obedient and laid up in store for their families...to give to those who had the same opportunity...but who refused to obey the commandment and laid up nothing?” Wouldn't that be rewarding the rebellious for their rebelliousness? How are the disobedient going to suffer the consequences of their actions or inactions? How will the obedient gain from being obedient... if they have given all their food away during a time of famine?

It is one thing to share with those who either did not know the commandment or were prevented from complying (the truly needy and poor)...and something completely different to share with those who willfully rebelled against the commandment and were disobedient.

How many times have you heard the phrase (or something like it)....oh, I don't have any food storage...I will just share with my neighbor who has food storage. (Unfortunately, most of the neighborhood thinks the same...and so if it was allowed to come to pass, the family who had sacrificed and gathered the one year food storage would have nothing left after a few days.)

And yet... because of the nature of the true disciple...they would share with the disobedient, because they would share with any and all. What is the answer to this dilemma? Luckily, the Lord takes the problem and the decision away from us. Again, we go to the scriptures to see what the Lord has done in a similar type situation.

A Key Message For Us In The Parable of the Ten Virgins

First let us look at the parable of the Ten Virgins, a parable given by the Savior himself, that we have been told specifically refers to events in the last days. President Kimball indicated that the parable is specifically about and directed towards the members of the Lord's Church. There are several important lessons presented in this short parable but the key one is concerning the preparedness issue. In the parable, the preparedness issue is presented concerning physical preparedness. However, President Kimball indicated that it can be applied to spiritual preparedness as well.

Two groups of Church members are waiting for the coming of the Savior. Both are dressed in white, meaning that in all outward appearances they are the Lord's true disciples, but there is one difference between the two groups. What is it? Both groups appear the same. They both are standing or waiting in the proper place and are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Both groups have received the same instructions. **The only difference between the two groups is that concerning the preparedness issue...and in the parable, it makes all the difference in the world. In fact it is the one single difference between the one group being welcomed in by the Savior and the other group being rejected.** One group has fully prepared and the other group has only partially prepared. In other words, one group has taken the Lord's commandments and directions to heart and have followed them explicitly and completely...while the other group, though righteous in every appearance, has only followed those same instructions partially.

When the Savior does come and the importance of the issue of preparedness becomes critical, what do the ones who have prepared fully do? **They don't share with the unprepared!!!** The unprepared are left to suffer the consequences of their own inactions, and the consequences are extremely severe. Wow!! What a hard, difficult and brutal lesson/message is presented here. The justice of the consequences are apparent...but where is the mercy? Justice, ie receiving the consequences of ones actions, is an eternal principle and it is often hard. Mercy is an eternal principle as well. However, it must be remembered that in the eternal law of mercy...mercy is only extended to those who accept and abide by the conditions attached to it...ie. by doing fully what the Lord has commanded them to do.

Is there any past experience where this hard lesson concerning preparation has been applied? The answer is yes....Noah and the Ark.

NOAH AND THE ARK, A TYPE AND A SHADOW OF OUR DILEMMA

Here we have the quintessential application of the principal of preparedness as taught by the Savior in the parable of the Ten Virgins. We do not need to belabor the story of Noah and the Ark. Those who listened to the counsel of the prophet, which had been given for several hundred years, to prepare by boarding the ark were saved. Those who didn't listen to the counsel of the living prophet and didn't board the ark...died. The lesson is very brutal and hard. There are, however a few interesting points to be presented.

Noah was a just and a perfect man in his generation and he, along with his three sons, walked with God. Noah's daughters, who had married wicked husbands, did not heed their father's counsel and died along with the other wicked. How hard it must have been for Noah and his wife and sons to not extend mercy to their family members, especially when it started to rain. The question might be asked...why didn't they open the doors of the ark and let them in, or perhaps others in? The answer is because the Lord wouldn't let them. The Lord had foreseen the problem and had taken care of it by taking it out of the hands of Noah. We read that the Lord shut the door or shut Noah and his family into the ark.

“And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.”²⁰

I am sure that when the rain started and the floods started coming up that there were a lot of people who were suddenly very repentant and asked to be let into the ark. Could you imagine what it sounded like for those inside the ark to hear the screams, pleas and pounding of those, including children, outside of the ark? And yet the Lord in his wisdom did not give Noah the difficult choice of whether to show mercy and open the door and save them also or not. The Lord took Noah out of the decision making process on the issue. Instead we find that the Lord suffered them to receive

²⁰Genesis 7:16

the just consequences (death by drowning) of their non-action to heed the counsel of preparedness.

Of course the important lesson of Noah's Ark is applied to us specifically by a prophet of God concerning following the prophets counsel regarding food storage.

“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.”²¹

So how might the Lord take such difficult decision making away from those in the last days who have kept the commandment to have food storage...and not share with those who have not stored anything?

The answer is to remove the faithful people (the wise virgins) from among the foolish. This allows the faithful to reap the benefits of their obedience...while at the same time allowing the foolish to suffer the consequences of their disobedience. In other words...gather/invite out the faithful/obedient to places of relative safety...which is usually to live in tents. Examples of this abound in the scriptures and have been mentioned previously. Again, it would make sense that the Lord would so do again in the last days. In fact, Joseph Smith said it was the only way in the last days to be saved temporally:

“In addition to all temporal blessings, there is no other way for the Saints to be saved in these last days, than by gathering...”²²

An invitation to gather out from among the wicked, including away from those Church members who have not prepared (but who should have) to a separate place...will do so many things. Such a gathering would only include those with true faith in a living prophet. It automatically separates the wheat from the chaff...and gathers the wheat (who have prepared themselves for this time by collecting food storage) into places of relative safety. It takes away from them the problem of having to make the decision to sacrifice the fruits of their obedience with those who were disobedient and rebellious. It then allows the Lord to deal with those same disobedient and wicked people in a manner that will not harm the righteous...because they are not there.

As Lot and his family were gathered out from Sodom and Gomorah so that they would not suffer with the Sodomites their just consequences of their choices...so likewise ,those who follow the counsel of the Prophet and Church leaders to flee from Babylon... will avoid the prophesied catastrophes.

²¹Ezra Taft Benson, Ensign, Nov 1987 p. 49

²²DHC 4:272

CHAPTER 3

QUESTIONS CONCERNING TENT CITIES

In our exploration into the topic of tent cities there have arisen a number of questions. I would like to address some of them at this time.

1. Are All Members in the Church Going to Be Invited to Tent Cities?

The answer appears to be NO. There are very many who in their dreams and visions have been *personally* instructed to set up a place of refuge for their family and to set aside materials, food, and other resources for those they feel the Lord will direct to them at a later time. Most of these families have been blessed with the opportunity and funds to accomplish the task that they feel they have been assigned by the Lord. There is some commonality of these mini places of refuge.

A. They all know that these mini-places of refuge will be for a short period of time, usually about a year, and then they will be instructed or guided to abandon them and go somewhere else. They all instinctively feel the next place will be somewhere in the Rocky Mountain area but have no ideas as to specifically where or when.

B. They all feel or have been instructed in their dreams/visions that they are not to invite people to gather to their places of refuge. They feel that the Lord will direct people to them or that the Church leaders will be directed to use their facilities when it is needed.

C. All of the places are away from cities and towns with most being hidden so that if you were 100 yards away you would not be able to see that there are people there.

D. All of the places have water naturally (lakes, streams or springs) or wells that they control. Most have installed alternative means of energy, (mostly solar power) to supply needs to well pumps, etc.

E. Interestingly, almost all of these places are debt free and completely owned by families who currently live on them or have been working on developing them.

F. Most of these people have been working on these temporary mini places of refuge for many years. Often they had these dreams or impressions several years ago wherein they were told that in the future they would be blessed with the means to accomplish these tasks. Over the years, they were then lead to certain areas and blessed with opportunity and means to purchase these properties (often 30-100+ acres) and then develop them.

G. They almost universally feel that even though it is their property currently, when

people gather to their mini places of refuge it will be under the authority and direction of the Church leadership and they will not be in charge. In other words at the appropriate time they will turn their property over to the Church or at least place it under the direction of Church leaders.

The big question, (that I do not have an answer for as of yet), is how are these people going to be “not invited” to the tent cities that a majority of at least the North American Church membership will be invited to? These are the very people who are prepared spiritually, physically, mentally, and actually somewhat eager to follow the prophet in gathering with like minded saints to places of safety such as tent cities. While the answer to this question is unknown as of yet, (at least to us) there are two possible answers that might resolve this question.

** Is it possible that these mini places of refuge might not happen at the same time as the tent cities? Is there perhaps a period of time before the call to gather to the tent cities that these mini-places of refuge will be needed, perhaps a year or so? Perhaps after providing a place of safety and of “preliminary gathering” they are then directed to gather to the Church sponsored gathering places?

** Are the invitations to gather to the tent cities going to be extended to everyone in the Church, or perhaps they are only extended to certain regions or cities?

Again, the answers are not known at this time.

2. What is going to happen to the Church membership outside of the United States? Will they be invited to gather to tent cities as well?

The answer to this is simply that we don’t know for sure, but there are some dreams and other evidences that a similar call to prepared places of refuge in their respective areas will happen. It appears that the forthcoming destruction which will come as a whirlwind and is particularly devastating to North America. Joseph Smith indicated that these plagues would go forth in particular to sweep the wicked inhabitants of North America away for the building up of the city of New Jerusalem and the return of the Lost Ten Tribes to it.

After the city of New Jerusalem is begun, the scriptures indicate that the call will go forth to all of the world for the righteous to gather to it. The Lamanites will be among the first to come forth and will take over the main task of building New Jerusalem and subsequent cities of Zion that will stretch between it and a city of Zion that will be newly established in the Salt Lake/Rocky Mountain area after the area has been cleansed.

With this in mind, it is possible that there won’t be such as great a need for protection for the Saints outside of North America. HOWEVER, the test of these Saints is the same as the Saints in North America, which will be to respond to the instructions of their priesthood

leadership quickly. This will include travel to America after it is cleansed and the 13 month war is over and the city of Zion is established.

3. What about the temples and temple attendance while in the tent cities?

The scriptures are very clear that an essential part of escaping a lot of the destruction and the deception that will occur is to attend temples often. “*Stand Ye In Holy Places*” is the command of the Lord. How is this to be done if the majority of those who are worthy to attend the temple and greatly desire its spiritual blessings and strength are gathered into tent cities away from the temples?

There are also indications in many of the dreams of the last days that indicate that the temples are closed and that the Church can no longer meet in groups. (Perhaps meetings of any kind are outlawed, which happens frequently under martial law.) How then can the saints stand in the holiest places on the earth as they have been commanded?

The answer appears that there will be instructions and authority given to build temporary temples next to the tent cities. In the dream of Sarah-13 she mentions that the people in the tent city had been instructed to build a temple near a cliff near the tent city. Further questions revealed that all she knew was that they had been commanded by President Hinckley to do so.

“President Hinkley told us to build a temple up on the mountain.”

After some questions her father wrote, “She remembers that the temple was to be built near the edge of a high cliff in the mountains. She said she woke up before she knew if it was built and used. She doesn’t know about using other temples already built.”

The following two Emails from a five year old child (submitted by her mother) and an adult gives us further insight:

FIVE YEAR OLD DREAM OF TENT CITY TEMPLE

“OK, maybe the tent cities thing is a touchy subject these days. I'm of the opinion that it is a possibility. I feel sure that we will find ourselves "on the move"---- whether it happens as many have discussed here, well, it just remains to be seen. After seeing some of the rude posts concerning the tent cities possibility, I've debated all week long whether or not to share this.

“Last Saturday, I was travelling with my two youngest children. I mentioned that we were fairly close to the temple.

My 5 year old said to me "FINALLY---I get to see the temple."

I was shocked at my negligence, not having taken my youngest by

the temple, so I said, "You really haven't seen the temple before?" She replied, "Well, I did see it once before...actually I dreamed about it." Naturally I thought, "ok, the primary theme is the temple....she's had it on her mind lately"

“Just out of curiosity, I asked her what the temple looked like in her dream, to see if it was the Atlanta temple. She said, "Well, there was this tent, and there was somebody in it"

“The hair stood up on the back of my neck! I've never mentioned the tent cities to my family members---only read about it, or "talked" about it online. Where was she going with this?!

“I wanted to know what the proximity was of the tent to the temple--as you may know, the Atlanta temple is up on a big hill. So I asked her about it, the location and such, was the tent on the hill in front of the temple, or down below it... or what.

“She copped that little attitude of hers, and **said, "MOM... the tent WAS the temple!"**

“She couldn't remember any more than that...but I was fascinated. How much more goes on in their little heads or in their dreams that they don't even think to mention to us?

TENT CITIES TEMPLE IMPRESSION

Roger,

Following are a few of my thoughts concerning our conversation the other day. Let me give you a little background. I manage an LDS Bookstore and have been reading your books for years. A little over a year ago I started have VERY STRONG impressions that our time to prepare was running out and I needed to finish getting my family's preparations done.

About May of last year, I started monitoring your web sight regularly. We have had several Family Home Evenings concerning our preparations both temporal and spiritual. Needless to say as we started to really focus on these things all HECK broke loose. We have one son 17 who is having some serious struggles. In addition, my father-in-law (not a member) was diagnosed with lung cancer which threw our family into a whirlwind. He passed away last November.

In....., we changed Wards to get better help for our son. Over the last year, I have had

several conversation with my current Bishop who I've known for a long time about preparedness. Within a month of switching to this new Ward I was called as the Family Preparedness Specialist with the assignment to organize our ward, help them prepare with 72 hour kits then their basic food storage, create a Ward Disaster Plan, all during this coming year.

My Stake President (also in my new ward) wants to use our ward as a model for the Stake and roll it out into the other wards. I do have a committee of good people so I'm not doing this alone--but the weight of this calling is very heavy still as you well understand. **There are a lot who are responding to the Preparedness call, but A LOT who are not and cause some flack.**

Anyway, in January at our Ward Conference, our Stake President was pushing regular consistent Temple Worship (not just attendance) as he has been doing for the year he has been our Stake President. In that conference, he promised us that if we would consistently and regularly worship in the Temple that our families would be healed. With the concerns of my son weighing heavily on my mind, I felt prompted that I needed to go to the Temple WEEKLY--which I have been doing. What I am finding in myself (and I have seen it before when I would go to the Temple regularly) is that I also WANT and DO study the scriptures more regularly, pray more often and the result of all these things is that my attitude seems to be elevated and the little nitty gritty things of everyday life which had previous annoyed me no longer bother me. They just aren't important. I'm less contentious, slower to anger--basically I'm able to control the "Natural Man" better.

Anyway, **when your newsletter came out in February, and I was reading about the Tent cities, I was very interested to know how we would continue our Temple Worship. Would the tent cities be close to some of the Temples so that we could attend or would we have to wait until the conflict in the outer world settled down and not have the benefit of the Temple through this experience? I began to make those questions a focus of my pondering and prayer over the last month. I can't tell you when this impression or picture came into my mind, I just know that about 2 or 3 days before your March newsletter, my mind kept focusing on a "Temple Tent" that would be available for us. Then when I read "Sara-13"'s dream and she mentioned that President Hinckley told us to build a temple, I couldn't get that picture of the Temple Tent out of my mind. I had to know where it was coming from. I thought that maybe you had mentioned something like that in one of your books which hadn't made much of an impression on me at the time, but since my renewed focus on the Temple lately it had come to the forefront. That was why I had to call you to see if that was the case.**

That's it, though. No detailed dreams of going to tent cities or life in the tent cities--Just 1 image of a Temple Tent against the backdrop of a Mountain Cliff, with a knee-high type fence structure around it--not so much to keep people out as to mark off the sacred ground. I have had the impression that it was guarded so that not just anyone could

enter--not with guns but like Recommend Desk Attendants.

As I have continued to ponder on this a few other thoughts have come to me--(1) In the scriptures the Lord has used Mountains and Tents as a Temple when necessary and he could do it again just like the Children of Israel in the wilderness. (2) In my stake we have many experienced, qualified Temple Workers that could administer these ordinances under the direction of the Prophet. (3) These tent cities will be a place for us to sanctify ourselves and prepare to meet the Savior. And along with the physical trials we will be experiencing, it will need to be balanced and our progression enhanced by our Temple Worship.

I don't know that this impression is anything more than my wishful thinking or just the Lord's way of giving me some peace on this issue--that however it plays out the Lord will take care of it and I need not worry. I can't imagine going through this refining experience without the Temple. To be able to keep myself elevated so that the little things don't bother me or others, to help eliminate or minimize murmuring, so that we function on a more LOVING level of existence, I feel, will be critical to the success of our experience.

Anyway, sorry so drawn out but I wanted you to understand the background behind this and why I had been so focused on the Temple. I will keep pondering on this as I continue to attend the Temple weekly and if anything further comes to me, I'll let you know. Thanks for all you do. I really appreciate it. Your board is great. It so nice to know we aren't alone in this endeavor. There are so many great people I feel like I know because of the board. I only wish we could all be in the same tent city so we could continue our association face to face.

4. How many people would gather to the tent cities initially?

At first thought it would be next to impossible for all of the Church members to gather to tent cities. In North America, that would be over 5 million people. But all of the dreams indicate that only a few go, perhaps less than 10%. That would mean only 500,000 people. But if one of the main criteria for being invited to such a refuge is to have a years supply of food, the latest surveys indicate that in North America the average membership with a years supply of food is around 3%. That would drop the numbers down to around 150,000 people in North America. Also, several of the dreams indicate that not everyone with food storage go, since it involves a great leap of faith to drop everything and follow the Prophets invitation.

5. Is there any official pronouncements, published information or other evidence that would help confirm the concept concerning tent cities in the future.

The answer is no and yes. As far as I can find, (and the search is ongoing), there have been no official published pronouncements by the Church leadership. But there are several secondary sources of evidences that the Church has indeed planned and prepared for such

tent cities in the future. This secondary evidence is growing weekly. The largest evidence is the tremendous rush building of girls & family camps by the Church, primarily in the Rocky Mountain area. I am personally aware of several camps that are in the process of being built that already have exceeded greatly the entire number of girls who attend such camps during the summer in their respective areas. Perhaps, the Church is just planning on a future explosion of growth in Church membership, and subsequently the need for such girls camps.

CHAPTER 4

OPPOSING QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

There are many who would say that the idea of Church members being called out to tent cities, perhaps in the near future, is absolutely absurd. Since they haven't heard about it, many commonly dismiss the idea out-of-hand and then put forth several reasons to support their hasty conclusions. I wish to address several of their "complaints."

1. Dreams and visions are not viable today. Ordinary members do not receive such dreams and visions...especially concerning Church wide events.

I have heard this complaint many, many times. Essentially, it is that we, as ordinary members of the Church, have no right to any dream or vision, that such dreams and visions are immediately suspect, (as well as the people who have them), and this is especially so for events that pertain to others beyond your immediate family. It alludes to the fact that only Church authorities, (ie General Authorities) can have or report any such experiences.

Joseph Smith said that dreams and visions were a special prerogative and even a right of all the Saints, especially in the last days:

"We believe that we have a right to revelations, visions, and dreams from God, our Heavenly Father; and light and intelligence, through the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the name of Jesus Christ, on all subjects pertaining to our spiritual welfare, if it so be that we keep his commandments, so as to render ourselves worthy in his sight. (The Prophet Joseph Smith, Times and Seasons, Feb. 1840, p.54)

Recently in Oct 2001 General Conference President Hinckley referred to the gifts of dreams and visions and of prophecy that would poured out upon men, women and even children in the last days:

“The era in which we live is the fulness of times spoken of in the scriptures, when God has brought together all of the elements of previous dispensations. From the day that He and His Beloved Son manifested themselves to the boy Joseph, there has been a tremendous cascade of enlightenment poured out upon the world. The hearts of men have turned to their fathers in fulfillment of the words of Malachi. The vision of Joel has been fulfilled wherein he declared:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." (Joel 2:28—32)."

I am also reminded of an experience recorded in the New Testament of the Antioch Branch of the Church(Acts 11:28-30), that it was not Peter (the head of the Church), nor Paul (an Apostle), nor the local Church leadership who prophesied of a near future famine that would happen, not only to the Saints in Antioch, but to all of the world, and which would be especially hard on the members of the Church in Jerusalem. This Agabus forewarned the saints in Antioch, which forewarning allowed them to prepare and send invaluable aid to those in Jerusalem via the hand of Paul and Barnabus. (visiting Church authorities.) Apparently, Agabus was called a prophet, not because of a Church calling (as a Prophet or an Apostle), but because he had the gift of prophesy. (Later on Agabus also exercised his prophetic gift concerning the imprisonment and death of Paul). That Agabus was known and well respected by the Church leadership is apparent, for he was not rebuked but believed and sustained by them. Notice that President McKay wrote that this Church member could see things by the spirit that other members of the Church could not see.

“While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, there came "prophets from Jerusalem," one of whom was named Agabus. He is thought to have been one of the Seventy chosen by the Savior; but **just what priesthood and what position in the Church he held we do not know for certain. But he must have been a righteous man, and filled with the Holy Ghost, for he could foretell, through the inspiration of the Spirit, things that other people, by their own intelligence, could not see.** At the time of which we are speaking he prophesied that "there should be a great dearth throughout all the world," meaning that there would be a famine in the land, and that people would go hungry.

“The disciples had faith in Agabus and believed to be true what he said. They knew of some of the Saints in Judea who could not stand a famine; in fact, many of them had given all they had to the Church; so "every man according to his ability determined to send relief unto the brethren who dwelt in Judea." Paul and Barnabas were chosen as the messengers of relief.

“It was well they did so, for the famine came just as Agabus had said it would. Luke tells us that it happened in the days of Claudius Caesar (44 A. D.), and profane historians inform us that it was so severe that even the emperor himself was insulted

in the market place by those who were starving.”²³

The gifts of dreams and visions and of prophecy are not gifts that all members of the Church have or exercise. Additionally, such spiritual experiences do not occur often, though there are some who have been blessed with this unique gift which allows them to have many such experiences, such as Agabus. Elder Oaks reminded us of this fact in General Conference not too long ago and that most of the communication from the spirit is conducted by the still small voice and feelings in our hearts.

"Visions do happen. Voices are heard from beyond the veil. I know this. But these experiences are exceptional... Most of the revelation that comes to leaders and members of the Church comes by the still, small voice or by a feeling rather than by a vision or a voice that speaks specific words we can hear."

(Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Ensign, Mar. 1997, p.14.)

If I personally am not blessed with the gift of dreams or visions, should I then deny and immediately suspect those that might be? If I do not conceive the warning voice in my heart first, then again it must be not true. This attitude of jealousy, misunderstanding, and shortsightedness only offends the spirit...insuring such a person of even less such instruction. Such an attitude in the days of 44 AD would have hurt only those who did not give serious consideration to Agabus' warnings. I imagine that there were probably some who didn't and therefore suffered more than they needed.

Are such attitudes prevalent in the Church, even today in our enlightened age? Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Of course the proof of this is there are even those members of the Church who do not even heed the warnings and counsels given directly from the Prophets and Apostles themselves, never mind other 'ordinary' members of the Church. Take the example of food storage, which again has been strongly encouraged personally by the prophet in General Conference, repeated again in a letter from the First Presidency in January to all of the Church leadership and members, and set as a topic for discussion in the Saturday night Stake Conference training sessions for the first half of this year by President Packer in a letter to all of the Church leadership. (Also note the changes made to the Church canneries to support this effort.)

And yet we are finding that not only are a large majority of the membership in the Church ignoring such warnings and counsel, that even many irresponsible Bishops and Stake Presidents are withholding the information from their respective membership.

What about the question concerning telling or publishing personal dreams and visions to others? Aren't they only for those individuals, or their immediate families benefit and consumption?

²³David O. McKay, Ancient Apostles, p.150

In the old days, telling such special experiences to others was actually somewhat a common practice. In fact, often we find the Church leadership publishing such personal experiences for the whole Church membership to read. (See the three dreams/visions that are mentioned in "Behold the Fig Tree" that were received by two members of the Church (not General Authorities) and one non-member. The two dreams of the members were submitted to the First Presidency, which then directed them to be published for the Church membership in the Church magazine.)

It becomes obvious as one researches dreams and visions in the Church, that often members of the Church receive dreams and visions concerning events that affect others besides themselves and their immediate family. **Upon hearing of such an experience, it would behoove us to ponder it in our minds on how the experience or prophecy might affect ourselves or our family...and then ask the Lord for confirmation and how to respond to it.**

Another point that needs to be mentioned is this: **If dreams and visions are usually rare, and then we see a sudden surge of such spiritual experiences happen among a larger portion of the Church than normal...Wouldn't that be of special note or interest? And further, what if a large majority of those dreams and visions are all concerning the same things...wouldn't that be something to consider and ponder even more seriously?** Could it be the spirit of the Lord trying to warn us and prepare us for something that is coming, that will affect not only those having the dreams, but all of us? Again, we refer back to the experience of Agabus and say *"Take heed, and hearken, O Israel;"* and also *"And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not...Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive"*

Why aren't the brethren teaching about tent cities. I cannot speak for them, but may I suggest the point that the key to favorably responding to a call to a tent city, perhaps when there is no other reason than faith and obedience, will not happen unless the Church members are obeying the basics, referred to as the milk of the gospel.

Without obeying the basic commandments...Church attendance, tithing, scripture study, prayer, temple attendance, etc. the call to places of refuge such as tent cities would go unheeded and any teaching of such an event, or any other higher principles of the gospel (often referred to as the meat) would be useless. It would be like trying to put the roof on a house when the foundation isn't firm and the supporting walls are weak. The result is total disaster.

While researching this topic, I came across an excellent article that addresses the problems between teaching milk and meat, and uses the early Saints experiences with the prophet Joseph Smith as a background.

*"In March 1830, Martin Harris was instructed to "preach naught but repentance," and not to divulge to the "world" things he had recently learned until it was wisdom in God to do so. The reason given was that **"they cannot bear meat now, but milk they must receive; wherefore, they must not know these things, lest they perish"***

(D&C 19:21-22).

“The milk/meat metaphor, often employed in the scriptures, communicates the principle effectively because of our common experience in feeding children. **Children thrive on milk, but would choke on meat.** But children also grow up, and their diet changes to suit the growing needs as their bodies mature. And so it is intended in the realm of spiritual things. When we are first introduced to the gospel, we are as children needing doctrinal milk. **As we mature in learning and living the gospel, however, it is expected that gradually our spiritual digestive system will be able to handle more meaty doctrines.** This process has both individual and institutional implications. Some individuals mature much faster than others. **Unfortunately, some never become weaned from the bottle, coughing and choking, as it were, when any solid food is introduced into their diet. This reality presents an interesting challenge to the Lord and his prophets. What is to be taught to the Church as a whole? And what is to be done about those who long for and can digest more solid food than is currently appropriate for the body of the Church? Should they be deprived because some still need only milk?** And what is to eventually happen to those who simply do not want and cannot handle much beyond milk? I submit the answer is tied to the two-edged sword analogy—doctrinal truths act as a sharp sword, exposing hearts, dividing loyalties, separating sheep from goats. **This process leaves behind, if you will, those who will not or cannot abide the higher doctrines and covenants of the gospel** and, at the same time, proves, strengthens, prepares, and purifies those who hunger for the fulness of the gospel.

“Interestingly, there is real pain involved for those at both ends of the spectrum. **Those left behind often become frustrated and bitter. Some of these, with a mean-spirited obsession, lash out against the institution, its leaders, or its members, causing pain and sadness to themselves and to those who remain faithful. Even more painful, however, for the stalwart Saints, is the pain that must be endured in being proven in all things.** We earlier quoted from D&C 98 indicating that the Lord will "try" and will "prove" the faithful "in all things...even unto death" (vv 12-14). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that before one could have his calling and election made sure he must be "thoroughly proved"; he must demonstrate that he is "determined to serve [God] at all hazards" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith 150; hereafter TPJS). John Taylor said the Prophet also taught the following to the Twelve in Nauvoo:

“You will have all kinds of trials to pass through. And it is quite as necessary for you to be tried as it was for Abraham and other men of God...God will feel after you, and He will take hold of you and wrench your very heart strings, and if you cannot stand it you will not be fit for an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God. (Journal of Discourses 24:197; hereafter JD)

Examples from the Nauvoo Years

“The Nauvoo period in Church history is a showcase that vividly illustrates the principles discussed above. Time will allow mentioning but a few examples. First, we will cite some statements of the Prophet Joseph Smith lamenting the fact that he was not able to teach the Saints all that the Lord had revealed to him. Obviously, he wanted desperately to share what he knew, but the Saints generally were unprepared and unwilling to accept some of those truths. We will then focus upon William Law and his associates as examples of those who were cut asunder by the two-edged sword of doctrine. Finally, as representative of those who were tried in the fire and proved to be pure gold, we will review a tender account of a heart-wrenching test of Heber C. and Vilate Kimball.

Joseph Smith's Lament

“The following quotations from Joseph Smith are all from the Nauvoo period. Both the message and the Prophet's depth of feeling are clear.

“At a meeting of the Twelve in the Prophet's home on 19 December 1841, Joseph Smith said the following:

“Some people say I am a fallen Prophet, because I do not bring forth more of the word of the Lord. Why do I not do it? Are we able to receive it? No! not one in this room.... The reason we do not have the secrets of the Lord revealed unto us, is because we do not keep them but reveal them; we do not keep our own secrets, but reveal our difficulties to the world, even to our enemies, then how would we keep the secrets of the Lord? I can keep a secret till Doomsday. (HC 4:478-79)

In April 1842 he added:

“The Lord makes manifest to me many things, which it is not wisdom for me to make public, until others can witness the proof of them. (HC 4:608)

A year later, April 1843, the Prophet encouraged and comforted the Saints at the death of Lorenzo D. Barnes, with these words:

“It is my meditation all the day, and more than my meat and drink, to know how I shall make the Saints of God comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge before my mind.

“Oh! how I would delight to bring before you things which you never thought of! But poverty and the cares of the world prevent. But I am glad I have the privilege of communicating to you some things which, if grasped closely, will be a help to you when earthquakes bellow, the clouds gather, the lightnings flash, and the storms are ready to burst upon you like peals of thunder. Lay hold of these things and let not your knees or joints tremble, nor your hearts fail; and then what can earthquakes, wars and tornadoes do? Nothing. All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it. (HC 5:362)

“The following month, 21 May 1843, Joseph Smith preached a sermon in the Nauvoo Temple. His text was the first chapter of 2 Peter, focusing on making one's calling and election sure. It seems his purpose was to stretch the Saints' understanding and their commitment to move forward in spiritual things. Among other things he said the following:

“I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.

“The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it. The inhabitants of the earth are asleep; they know not the day of their visitation. (HC 5:402)

“In July 1843, the same month that Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants concerning eternal and plural marriage was recorded, the Prophet Joseph spoke about a man's foes being those of his own household. A report of those remarks states:

“The same spirit that crucified Jesus is in the breast of some who profess to be Saints in Nauvoo. [I have secret enemies in the city intermingling with the Saints...slightly touched upon the subject of the everlasting covenant, showing that a man and his wife must enter into that covenant in the world, or he will have no claim on her in the next world.] But on account of the unbelief of the people, I cannot reveal the fullness of these things at present. (HC 5:510)

“Six months later, 21 January 1844, the Prophet preached to several thousand people at the southeast corner of the temple. Again he spoke of the difficulty in getting people generally, as well as the Saints, to learn the things of God:

“There has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corndodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand.

“I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. (HC 6:184-85)

“On 7 March 1844, just three months before he died, in a speech in the temple, **Joseph said simply, "I know much that I do not tell"** (HC 6:244).

“Heber C. Kimball testified of another occasion where the Prophet said, "Would to God, brethren, I could tell you who I am! Would to God I could tell you what I know! But you would call it blasphemy, and there are men upon this stand who would want to take my life" (Quoted in Orson F. Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945], 322).

“Wilford Woodruff testified of Joseph Smith: "His mind was opened by the visions of the almighty, and the Lord taught him many things by vision and revelation that were never taught publicly in his days; for the people could not

bear the flood of intelligence which God poured into his mind" (JD 5:83-84).

“Truly, the Prophet Joseph Smith suffered a kind of spiritual loneliness, having so much to give and so few of his followers being willing to receive it. It is no wonder that he delighted in those who were willing to receive the truths of heaven, and who could be trusted—his brother Hyrum, Brigham Young, and Heber C. Kimball among the brethren, and several sisters of equal spiritual sensitivity and commitment.

“As indicated above, the Prophet said there were those upon the stand from which he spoke who would want to take his life. Evidently, one of such a mind was William Law.¹ William Law, four years younger than Joseph Smith, joined the Church in Canada in 1836, received the Melchizedek Priesthood in 1837, and came to Nauvoo in November 1841. Perhaps it is significant that he missed the Kirtland and Missouri periods of Church history—important schooling and testing times for the Saints. In Nauvoo William and his brother Wilson Law became successful in business. They involved themselves in real estate, a store, and a steammill. William was active in Church matters, and defended Joseph Smith against the accusations of John C. Bennett in 1842. He served two missions and was one of the nine persons who first received the temple endowment rites in this dispensation in May 1842. He was called as a counselor in the First Presidency early in 1841 (D&C 124:91). William rejected the revelation on plural marriage in the summer of 1843. **Gradually he became more and more disgruntled. He was released from the First Presidency in January 1844 and excommunicated in April, three months later. He became bitter. He claimed his excommunication violated the established order of the Church. He also claimed the introduction of new doctrines had corrupted the Church. The doctrines cited include plural marriage, plurality of Gods, ecclesiastical control over civil and business affairs, and the unconditional sealing up of persons unto eternal life.**”²⁴

I find it of interest that I have heard the very same comments concerning President Hinckley as was said about Joseph Smith...that they were not prophets because they didn't bring forth as much revelation or prophecy as some people believed they should, or they acted or said something that was contrary to what others believed was right or not. The same spirit of the adversary is working its way among the hearts of the rebellious as was in the days of Joseph, and unfortunately many members of the Church then and now have partaken of it.

Is it any wonder then that very little “meat” is spoken from the public pulpit and the brethren are constantly counseled to preach almost exclusively “milk”?

Now I wish to address those who feel that preparing for the opportunity to be called into a tent city refuge by a living prophet and Quorum of the Twelve is an evil and wicked sin.

²⁴ Regional Studies, Illinois, Dahl—Teachings in Nauvoo, p.129-133

1. What does it hurt? So we prepare to camp for a year. Maybe we are called to go and maybe we aren't...but by preparing we:

- A. follow the counsel of the prophets (past and present) to get a years supply of food storage.
- B. We follow the secondary counsel to prepare ourselves beyond the basic food storage level.
- C. Those who so prepare are ready in case they are forced to leave their houses for whatever reason. Disaster, etc.

In other words...it never hurts to be overly prepared beyond the bare basics, as we have been counseled. In fact logically, in this time of tumult and natural disasters, it makes great sense to prepare for such a prospect. To argue against being prepared to leave our houses for a season is the more stupid and illogical aspect.

2. If we do walk to Zion...what are we going to live in as we walk back? And what are we going to live in while we build the city...especially since many of the prophecies by Prophets indicate that it will be completely swept clean when we get there?

3. What if all of the witnesses and testimonies are right concerning a call by the prophet to gather to places of refuge where the majority live in tents? Then those who have so prepared can then make the decision to follow the prophet or not. Those who have not so prepared, have no choice and will have to suffer the consequences of their non-preparation.

Remember the scripture: *“if ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”*

In conclusion let me remind you of a story I am sure many of you have heard many times.

THE FARM HAND WHO COULD SLEEP THROUGH ANYTHING

There once was a farmer looking for a your man to help out at the farm. There were several young men who interviewed for the job and as far as the farmer could tell they were about equally well qualified. He then went and asked them each one final question...Tell me, he would say, Why should I hire you above the others?"

Of all of the applicants and their replies, there was one that was really different. One young man said..."because I can sleep through anything." At first the farmer thought it was just strange, then the more he thought the more he was intrigued and mystified by the response. So he figured, well I will give this young man a chance and he hired him.

Weeks went by and the farmer was pretty happy with the young mans work. He still wondered sometimes what the young man had meant by his strange reply, but he never got around to it. Then one night he was awakened in the middle of night got a phone call from neighbor. There's a big

storm suddenly coming in with lots of wind, maybe a tornado. Better get ready for it,” was the quick message.

Indeed as the farmer went and looked out the door he found that the wind was strong and rising and rain had started. He quickly ran and tried to wake the young man up to start getting everything ready for the blow...but try as he might, the young man couldn't be stirred. Muttering to himself about what a stupid thing he had done in hiring a lazy boy who wouldn't wake up when he really needed him...the farmer went out to the farm

He went out to tie down the hay...but discovered that the hay was already tied down securely. Next he went to the barn and the corrals...and every time he looked, everything had already been prepared. After a while of just wandering around the farm, of discovering that there was nothing that needed to be done at the last minute...because it had all been done before, the farmer returned to the house, but instead of muttering, he actually found himself singing the praises of this young man. He had realized, to his great joy, that the reason that the young man could sleep through anything was because before he went to bed each and every night he had already prepared for the very worst. And so the farmer followed the example of the young man, since everything was already prepared, he undressed and was soon fast asleep, with a huge smile of peace on his face.

Moral of the story....it is better to be overly prepared than under prepared, you get more sleep that way.

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated--

“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.” D&C 130:20-21

“For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.” D&C 58:26