



PROPHETIC
COUNSEL
for
AMERICA

Daily Sermons *&* Inspired Thoughts

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We Shall Build the Zion of the Lord

We shall build the Zion of the Lord in peace until the servants of that Lord shall begin to lay the foundation of a great and high watchtower, and then shall they begin to say within themselves what need hath my Lord of this tower seeing this is a time of peace.

Then the enemy shall come as a thief in the night and scatter the servants abroad. When the seed of these twelve olive trees are scattered abroad, they will wake up the nations of the whole earth. Even this nation will be on the very verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground, and when the Constitution is upon the brink of ruin, this people will be the staff up[on] which the nation shall lean and they shall bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction.

Then shall the Lord say, "Go tell all my servants who are the strength of mine house my young men and middle aged. Come to the land of my vineyard and fight the battle of the Lord. Then the kings and queens shall come. Then the rulers of the earth shall come. Then shall all Saints come; yea, the foreign Saints shall come to fight for the land of my vineyard, for in this thing shall be their safety and they will have no power to choose but will come as a man fleeth from a sudden destruction. . . . You say among yourselves as did them of old time, is it I, and is it I? But I know these things by the visions of the Almighty.¹

—Joseph Smith, Jr.

THIS DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY (1863)

Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation.

¹ Discourse, circa 19 July 1840, as Reported by Martha Jane Knowlton Coray–A[a],13[a], The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-circa-19-july-1840-as-reported-by-martha-jane-knowlton-coray>).

The Present Hostility in Public Dialogues Is Alarming

Anger never persuades. Hostility builds no one. Contention never leads to inspired solutions. True charity towards all men is the hallmark of peacemakers! It is imperative that we have charity in our discourse, both public and private. I thank those of you who took my previous counsel to heart. But we can still do better.

The present hostility in public dialogue and on social media is alarming. Hateful words are deadly weapons. Contention prevents the Holy Ghost from being our constant companion.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we should lead the way as peacemakers. As charity becomes part of our nature, we will lose the impulse to demean others. We will stop judging others. We will have charity for those from all walks of life. Charity towards all men is essential to our progress. Charity is the foundation of a godly character.

Let us plead with our Heavenly Father to fill our hearts with greater charity—especially for those who are difficult to love—for charity is a gift from our Heavenly Father for true followers of Jesus Christ. The Savior is the Prince of Peace. We are to be His instruments for peace.¹

—*Russell M. Nelson*

THIS DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY (1788)

Georgia ratifies U.S. Constitution 26–0 and receives statehood
as the 4th state.

¹ Neal A. Maxwell, “Our Need for True Patriotism,” Provo Freedom Festival Fireside, July 4, 1993, BYU Speeches, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/neal-a-maxwell/our-need-for-true-patriotism/>.

Obedience to the Unenforceable

So it is that whenever we talk about patriotism, the risks are that we will define it too narrowly. It is not that any particular dimension of patriotism is unworthy. Rather, no one portion of patriotism comprises the whole of patriotism. For instance, we would all quickly agree that patriotism is more than paying taxes. It is likewise more than voting. Yet it includes these along with all the other unglamorous chores of citizenship. Patriotism requires public perspiration as well as an educated public who truly can see beyond the years.

Besides, the perspective of patriotism is vital because democracy and memory are not automatic partners. Tocqueville observed of America, “Not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants and separates his contemporaries from him. It throws him back forever upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart.” Such loneliness, ladies and gentlemen, increases selfishness. . . .

How are we doing with those years wherein we are set? As we sing the words “Confirm thy soul in self-control,” what of our society’s increasing lack of impulse control? So many people act out their impulses in so many inappropriate and destructive ways, including the neglect of families and children.

More than we realize, our whole society really rests on the capacity of its citizens to give what is called obedience to the unenforceable. We do this by complying willingly with the law and behaving voluntarily according to time-tested standards. Such citizenship expresses a high form of volunteerism.¹

—Neal A. Maxwell

THIS DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY (1861)
Delaware legislature rejects proposal to join the Confederacy.

¹ Russell M. Nelson, “Confidence in the Presence of God,” Liahona, May 2025.

This Church's Great Efforts to Promote Religious Freedom

Most are aware of this Church's great efforts to promote religious freedom. These efforts are in furtherance of our Heavenly Father's plan. We seek to help *all* of His children—not just our own members—enjoy the precious freedom to choose.

Similarly, we are sometimes asked why we send missionaries to so many nations, even among Christian populations. We are also asked why we give enormous humanitarian aid to persons who are not members of our Church without linking this to our missionary efforts. We do this because the Lord has taught us to esteem all of His children as our brothers and sisters, and we want to share our spiritual and temporal abundance with everyone.

Eternal doctrine also provides a distinctive perspective on children. Through this perspective we see the bearing and nurturing of children as part of the divine plan. It is a joyful and sacred duty of those given the power to participate in it. Therefore, we are commanded to teach and contend for principles and practices that provide the best conditions for the development and happiness of children under God's plan.¹

—Dallin H. Oaks

THIS DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY (1777)

Utah receives statehood as the 45th state.

¹ Dallin H. Oaks, "Divine Love in the Father's Plan," *Liahona*, May 2022, 102.

We Need the Constitution and Its Guarantees in Freedom

The first Congress of the United States, when it began to consider the operations of the government under the Constitution, became impressed that there was not in that document, as originally drawn, any so-called Bill of Rights; there were in the document no provisions which should keep the people free, which should protect them in their daily lives, nor guarantee to them the great liberties which the Declaration of Independence declared were the heritage of men. Accordingly, this Congress proposed to the original states the first ten amendments to the Constitution, and it is significant, I am sure, of the influence which the Lord was at that time bringing to bear upon the minds of men, that the very first clause of the very first amendment declared:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

Thus, the very first thing which our fathers sought to secure for themselves and for their posterity was freedom to worship as they wished. I do not need to call to your minds the trials and persecution which this people have suffered in the past, in order to bring home to you the conviction that nothing else in the great document, the Constitution, is so important to this people as is this guarantee of religious freedom, because underneath and behind all that lies in our lives, all that we do in our lives, is our religion, our worship, our belief and faith in God. We need the Constitution and its guarantees of liberty and freedom more than any other people in the world, for, few and weak as we are, we stand naked and helpless except when clothed with its benign provisions.¹

—*J. Reuben Clark Jr.*

THIS DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY (1788)

The Connecticut Constitution Ratifying Convention begins.

¹ J. Reuben Clark, Jr. “Religion and the Constitution,” *Conference Report*, April 1935, 94.

God Raised Up America, with a Definite Purpose in Mind

As Latter-day Saints in America we are both citizens of the kingdom of God and of the nation which He founded.

God raised up America, with a definite purpose in mind. And He raised up the Founding Fathers to write an inspired document which has served us well as our national Constitution. He has seen us through war after war when our liberties have been challenged. He literally both “made and preserved us a nation.”

Many of our great leaders of the past have told us that our nation will never be conquered from without, but they have warned that it might easily disintegrate from within. They have said further that such disintegration would begin, if ever it should come, with our failure to recognize the Almighty as our Founder, and to serve Him and uphold His precepts.

If America is to save itself, this is one of the points on which she must act, and now. America cannot survive in immorality. It must return to the chastity taught in the scriptures.

And neither can America survive in the “new freedom” which would promote anarchy and a breakdown of law and order. There can be no immunity from the law for anyone. Political expediency cannot justify it. Constitutional law was established “for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles,” the Lord declared.¹

—Mark E. Peterson

THIS DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY (1959)

Alaska receives statehood as the 49th state.

¹ Mark E. Peterson, *The Way to Peace* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 62.

The Constitution of the United States Was Inspired by God

Every faithful Latter-day Saint believes that the Constitution of the United States was inspired of God, and that this choice land and this nation have been preserved until now in the principles of liberty under the protection of God. . . .

These principles are fundamental to our belief, fundamental to our protection. And in the providences of the Lord, the safeguards which have been incorporated into the basic structure of this nation are, if we preserve them, the guarantee of all men who dwell here against abuses, tyrannies, and usurpations. From my childhood days I have understood that we believe absolutely that the Constitution of our country is an inspired instrument, and that God directed those who created it and those who defended the independence of this nation. . . .

And such the Constitution of the United States must be to every faithful Latter-day Saint who lives under its protection. That the Lord may help him to think straight, and to pursue a straight course regardless of personal advantage, factional interest, or political persuasion, should be the daily prayer of every Latter-day Saint. I counsel you, I urge you, I plead with you, never, so far as you have voice or influence, permit any departure from the principles of government on which this nation was founded, or any disregard of the freedoms which, by the inspiration of God our Father, were written into the Constitution of the United States.¹

—Heber J. Grant

THIS DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY (1953)

President Harry Truman announces the American development of the hydrogen bomb.

¹ Heber J. Grant, in *Latter-day Prophets and the United States Constitution*, ed. Donald Q. Cannon (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1991), 99.

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