



# FINDING FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

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When the Savior was born, an angel of the Lord appeared to humble shepherds, announcing, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11).

But there is more to the Christmas story than the transcendent miracles of a new star in the sky and the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem. These marvelous occurrences were the culmination of centuries of prophecy and testimony from prophets of God. Without these prophecies, many may feel justified in not believing these miraculous events. But we have been given many witnesses of the birth, life, and mission of the Savior from prophets in every dispensation. Sacred records give us the prophecies of thousands of years—not only of the first coming of our Savior, but also of the *Second Coming*—a glorious day that will certainly, most assuredly, come.

Believing in the Savior and His mission is so essential that the first principle of the gospel is faith in Jesus Christ (see Articles of

Faith 1:4). What is faith? The Apostle Paul taught that faith “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). How do we gain evidence of our Savior, whom we have not seen? The scriptures teach us, “To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to *know* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world. To others it is given to *believe* on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful” (D&C 46:13–14; emphasis added).

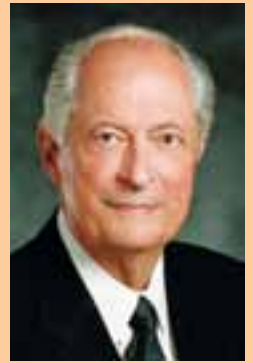
## Believing the Prophets

From the beginning of time, prophets have *known* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, of His mortal mission, and of His Atonement for all mankind.

If we had lived in the days of these prophets, would we have believed on their words? Would we have had faith in the coming of our Savior?

In ancient America, Samuel the Lamanite prophesied that on the night of the Savior’s birth “there [would] be great lights in heaven, . . . insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day” (Helaman 14:3).

Many believed Samuel and confessed their sins, repented, and were baptized. But,



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for the most part, the Nephites were blind to the “signs and wonders”; instead of heeding them, the Nephites “depend[ed] upon . . . their own wisdom, saying: Some things [the believers] may have guessed right, . . . but . . . it is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come” (Helaman 16:15–18).

In those days and ours, some naysayers, called anti-Christ, convinced others that there was no need for a Savior and His Atonement. When Samuel’s prophecy was finally fulfilled and there was a “day and a night and a day, as if it were one day” (Helaman 14:4), what joy must have filled the hearts of those who had believed the prophets! “It had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets” (3 Nephi 1:20). A new star appeared, according to the prophetic promise. Those who believed on the words of the prophets recognized the Savior and were blessed to follow Him.

The prophecies of Christ’s *first* coming were fulfilled “every whit.” As a result, many throughout the world believe that the Savior did come and did live in the meridian of time. But there are still many, many prophecies yet to be fulfilled! We hear living prophets prophesy and testify of Christ’s *Second* Coming. They also witness of the signs and wonders all about us, telling us that Christ will surely come again. Are we choosing to believe on their words? Or, despite their witnesses and warnings, are we “walking in darkness at noon-day” (D&C 95:6), refusing to see by the light of modern prophecy and denying that the Light of the World will return to rule and reign among us?

### **Finding Faith**

Throughout the course of my life, I have known many good and generous people who adhere to Christian values. However, some lack faith that He lives, that He is the Savior of the world, and that His Church has been restored. Because they do not believe in the words of the prophets, they miss the joy of the gospel and its saving ordinances in their lives.

I have a dear friend who, one day in a moment of brotherly tenderness, asked, “Elder Hales, I want to

believe, I’ve always wanted to believe, but how do I do it?”

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The very fact that you are reading this message, during the Christmas season or any other time of the year, means that you are hearing God’s word. The first step to finding faith in Jesus Christ is to let His word—spoken by the mouth of His servants, the prophets—touch your heart. But it is not enough merely to let those words wash over you, as if they alone could transform you. You must do your part. Hearing requires an active effort—taking seriously what is taught, considering it carefully, studying it out in our minds. As the prophet Enos learned, it means letting others’ testimonies of the gospel “[sink] deep into [our] heart[s]” (Enos 1:3). Let us review Enos’s profound, faith-building experience:

First, Enos heard the gospel truths from his father. Second, he let his father’s teachings about “eternal life, and the joy of the saints” sink deep into his heart (Enos 1:3). Third, he was filled with a desire to know for himself whether these teachings were true and where he, himself, stood before his Maker. To use Enos’s words, “my soul hungered” (Enos 1:4). By having this intense spiritual appetite, Enos qualified himself to receive the Savior’s promise: “Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 12:6). Fourth, Enos records, “I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens” (Enos 1:4). It wasn’t easy. Faith did not come quickly. In fact, Enos characterized his experience in prayer as a “wrestle which [he] had before God” (Enos 1:2). But faith did come. By the power of the Holy Ghost he did receive a witness for himself.

We cannot find Enos-like faith without our own wrestle before God in prayer. I testify that the reward is worth the effort. If you do these things sincerely and unceasingly, the words Christ spoke to His disciples will be fulfilled in your





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life: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

### **Gaining Strength through Faith**

Once we find the beginnings of our faith in Jesus, our Heavenly Father allows for our faith to be strengthened. This occurs in many ways, including through the experience of adversity. Our faith is acquired through prayer, with a sincere desire to draw close to God and trust in Him to bear our burdens and give us answers to life’s unexplained mysteries of the purpose of life: Where did we come from? Why are we here on earth in mortality? And where are we going after our mortal sojourn on earth?

When the challenges of mortality come, and they come for all of us, it may seem hard

to keep believing. At these times, only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement can bring us peace, hope, and understanding. Only faith that He suffered for our sakes will give us the strength to endure to the end. When we gain this faith, we experience a mighty change of heart, and, like Enos, we become stronger and begin to feel a desire for the welfare of our brothers and sisters. We pray for them, that they too will be strengthened through faith on the Atonement of our Savior.

Let us consider a few of these prophetic witnesses of the effects of the Atonement in our lives. As we do, I invite you to let them sink deep into your heart and fill whatever hunger may be in your soul.

“And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father

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and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, . . . that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed” (Moses 5:9).

Ammon witnessed, “Behold, I have seen my Redeemer, and he shall come forth, and be born of a woman, and he shall redeem all mankind who believe on his name” (Alma 19:13).

And finally, Joseph Smith—as a 14-year-old boy—exercised unwavering faith and followed James’s direction to “ask of God” (James 1:5). God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to him and gave him instructions. How glorious was this First Vision to the first prophet of this last dispensation! Sixteen years later in the Kirtland Temple, he was visited by the Savior again and testified, “We saw the Lord . . . and his

voice was the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying: I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:2–4).

To all those whose souls are hungering for faith, I invite you “to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written” (Ether 12:41). Let their witness that the Savior gave His life for you sink deep into your heart. Seek a witness of this truth through the Holy Ghost in prayer, and then see your faith strengthened as you joyfully meet the challenges of this mortal life and prepare for life eternal.

Jesus Christ did come. He did live. And He will come again. That is a wonderful truth to carry in our hearts at Christmas and all year long. **NE**



DETAIL FROM THE DESIRES OF MY HEART, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART; JESUS CHRIST APPEARS TO THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH AND OLIVER COWDERY, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART