

Prophets of God

Chapter 9

Prophets Are God’s Representatives on the Earth

- What powers and gifts does a prophet have?

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

Many people live in darkness, unsure of God’s will. They believe that the heavens are closed and that people must face the world’s perils alone. How fortunate are the Latter-day Saints! We know that God communicates to the Church through His prophet. With grateful hearts, Saints the world over sing the hymn, “We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days” (*Hymns*, no. 19).

A prophet is a man called by God to be His representative on earth. When a prophet speaks for God, it is as if God were speaking (see D&C 1:38). A prophet is also a special witness for Christ, testifying of His divinity and teaching His gospel. A prophet teaches truth and interprets the word of God. He calls the unrighteous to repentance. He receives revelations and directions from the Lord for our benefit. He may see into the future and foretell coming events so that the world may be warned.

A prophet may come from various stations in life. He may be young or old, highly educated or unschooled. He may be a farmer, a lawyer, or a teacher. Ancient prophets wore tunics and carried staffs. Modern prophets wear suits and carry briefcases. What, then, identifies a true prophet? A true prophet is always chosen by God and called through proper priesthood authority (see Articles of Faith 1:5).

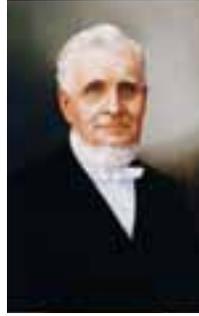
Latter-day Saints sustain the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets. However, when we speak of “the prophet of the Church,” we mean the President of the Church, who is President of the high priesthood.



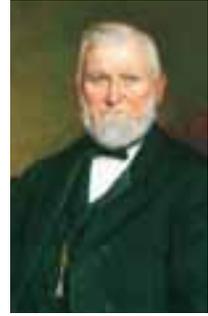
Joseph Smith



Brigham Young



John Taylor



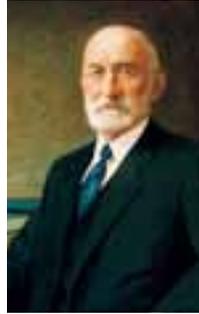
Wilford Woodruff



Lorenzo Snow



Joseph F. Smith



Heber J. Grant



George Albert Smith



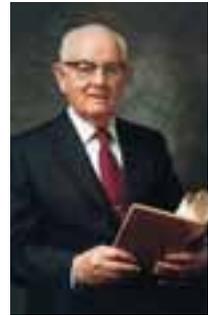
David O. McKay



Joseph Fielding Smith



Harold B. Lee



Spencer W. Kimball



Ezra Taft Benson



Howard W. Hunter



Gordon B. Hinckley



Thomas S. Monson

Through the Ages God Has Called Prophets to Lead Mankind

- In what ways have prophets guided God's children in the past?

There have been prophets on the earth since the days of Adam. Experiences of these great men excite and inspire us. Moses, an Old Testament prophet, led thousands of his people out of Egypt and slavery to the promised land. He wrote the first five books of the Old Testament and recorded the Ten Commandments. Nephi, a Book of Mormon prophet, journeyed from Jerusalem to the Americas 600 years before the birth of Christ. This great leader and colonizer gave us many important writings in the Book of Mormon. John the Baptist was chosen to prepare the world for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Joseph Smith, a latter-day prophet, the Lord restored the Church. Joseph Smith also translated the Book of Mormon while a young man.

- What have you learned from the lives and teachings of prophets?

We Have a Living Prophet on the Earth Today

- Why do we need a living prophet today?

We have a prophet living on the earth today. This prophet is the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has the right to revelation for the entire Church. He holds "the keys of the kingdom," meaning that he has the authority to direct the entire Church and kingdom of God on earth, including the administration of priesthood ordinances (see Matthew 16:19). No person except the chosen prophet and President can receive God's will for the entire membership of the Church. The Lord said, "There is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred" (D&C 132:7). The President of the Church is assisted by his counselors in the First Presidency and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve, who are also prophets, seers, and revelators.

We should do those things the prophets tell us to do. President Wilford Woodruff said that a prophet will never be allowed to lead the Church astray:

“The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 199).

- In what ways has the living prophet influenced the Church?

We Should Sustain the Lord’s Prophet

- What can we do to follow and sustain the prophet?

Many people find it easy to believe in the prophets of the past. But it is much greater to believe in and follow the living prophet. We raise our hands to sustain the President of the Church as prophet, seer, and revelator.

How can we sustain the prophet? We should pray for him. His burdens are heavy, and he needs to be strengthened by the prayers of the Saints.

We should study his words. We can listen to his conference addresses. We can also subscribe to the *Ensign* or *Liahona* so we can read his conference addresses and other messages he gives.

We should follow his inspired teachings completely. We should not choose to follow part of his inspired counsel and discard that which is unpleasant or difficult. The Lord commanded us to follow the inspired teachings of His prophet:

“Thou shalt give heed unto all his [the prophet’s] words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

“For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith” (D&C 21:4–5).

The Lord will never allow the President of the Church to lead us astray.

- What has the President of the Church taught or emphasized recently?

Great Blessings Follow Obedience to the Prophet

If we obey, the Lord promises, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory” (D&C 21:6). When we do as our prophet directs, blessings pour down from heaven.

In order to stand, the true Church must be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). We are blessed in this insecure world to have a prophet through whom the Lord reveals His will.

- What experiences have you had when you have obeyed the counsel of the prophet?

Additional Scriptures

- Numbers 12:6 (God speaks through prophets)
- 1 Samuel 9:9 (prophet called a seer)
- Amos 3:7 (God reveals His secrets to the prophets)
- Mosiah 8:16–18 (a seer can know of things past and things to come)
- Luke 1:70 (God speaks through prophets)
- D&C 45:10, 15 (God speaks today as in days of old)
- 1 Nephi 22:2 (by the Spirit things are made known to prophets)
- D&C 68:3–5 (when the Lord’s servants speak as moved by the Holy Ghost, it is the mind, will, and voice of the Lord)
- D&C 107:65–67, 91–92 (duties of the President of the Church)
- D&C 43:1–7 (only the prophet is authorized to receive revelations for the Church)

For teachers: Sharing experiences and bearing testimony invite the Spirit. As you conclude this lesson, consider sharing an experience you have had when you have followed the counsel of the President of the Church. Share your testimony of the living prophet.