



FACING THE FUTURE WITH HOPE

BY ELDER LOWELL M. SNOW

Of the Seventy



My witness is that the Lord promises you what He promised Joseph Smith—that every peril you pass through in this life will give you experience and be for your good.

The effects of gravity can be frightening. As a younger man I loved flying a small airplane, but I sometimes dreaded the required practice flights with an instructor. To test my instrument skills and give me experience, my instructor would put a hood over my head to block from my view everything but the instruments while he turned the airplane every way but upside down.

At some point he would turn the wheel over to me and calmly request that I bring the airplane under control before we found ourselves in the middle of the nearest wheat field. As the instruments spun wildly, I fully expected the plane to stall and then literally fall from the sky before I could gain control. The falling always left me feeling helpless and certain that the effects of gravity could not be denied. But as I gained control and righted the airplane, aerodynamic *lift* would cause us to ascend into the heavens.

When we left our premortal home to come to earth, I suspect that our greatest fear was falling. Although we were glorious beings in heavenly surroundings, our Father desired more for us. He wanted us to gain a physical body, the experiences that go with it, and the opportunity to progress toward eternal perfection. When the great plan of the eternal God (see Alma 34:9) presented us with an opportunity to obtain a body and test our spirits under new and extreme conditions, we no doubt looked forward to our possibilities on earth (see Job 38:7). But I suspect we may have had some uncertainty about the consequences of the required fall. Our new life would be as fallen people on a fallen earth. As fallen men and women, there was the possibility we could become enemies to God if we used our agency unwisely (see Mosiah 3:19).

But our loving Father has reassured us that His “great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8) was



founded on faith, not on fear of failure. It is a plan of mercy, a plan of redemption, a plan of restoration, a plan of salvation, and a plan of *deliverance* (see Alma 41:2; 42:5, 13–15). The central figure in this plan, the true Deliverer, is the Lord Jesus Christ. The deliverance offered was not to be limited by time. God’s deliverance would span all eternity, always safeguarding the agency so essential to our falling and then rising “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

God’s deliverance would be sure and infinite, comprehending every trial or crisis in our fallen world—conquering evil, sin, and death through resurrection and reconciliation. His premortal assurances of deliverance gave us cause to shout for joy (see Job 38:7), and most of the Father’s spirit children elected to come to earth. Nephi later echoed the Father’s parental promises,



The “great plan of happiness” is a plan of mercy, a plan of redemption, a plan of restoration, a plan of salvation, and a plan of deliverance. The central figure in this plan, the true Deliverer, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

saying he would “show unto [us] that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance” (1 Nephi 1:20).

Under divine direction the earth was organized, man was appointed a central role, and in time the Great Deliverer was sent to partake of the bitter cup and finish his “preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:19). But our memory of those primal promises has been intentionally dimmed, and we cannot now recall what we learned in those glorious courts on high. Instead of simply remembering, we are required to learn of and develop faith in God’s promised deliverance.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught us by personal example how deliverance

from the power of a fallen and darkened world can come. In those sacred precincts of Palmyra, Joseph was seized by a power that entirely overcame him and had such an astonishing influence over him that he felt doomed to destruction. After he exerted all his powers to call for help, the light of God descended and delivered him from the enemy that held him bound. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:15–17.) In like manner, our deliverance from this fallen world requires us to cast the dark veil of unbelief from our minds and allow the light of the glory of God—the marvelous light of his goodness, the light of everlasting life—to fill our souls with hope (see Alma 19:6).

Images of a fallen world appear daily in our modern media, and they are not very flattering. A charitable description of mankind’s condition today might be: “We have fallen, and we can’t get up.” Much of the world seems to be headed in the wrong direction. Satan’s influence has become pervasive and is also picking up speed, while prophetic warnings of the fate awaiting the wicked have not yet penetrated enough hearts or minds. Even the righteous occasionally worry about whether they will be able to stay out of the crossfire in that terrible day. But the righteous need not fear, for when the Deliverer returns, He will be as the bridegroom at the wedding feast. The righteous will “be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7). To find deliverance in a day when “men’s hearts [are] failing them for fear” (Luke 21:26), we must watch for that great “day of gladness”¹ and make ourselves ready.

It is not just the tyranny of evil that threatens to destroy our hope for the future. At times we may feel that our personal lives are unraveling from the natural consequences of living in a fallen world. The agency of man allows the

introduction of chaos into lives that long for order, and nothing can seem more hopeless than the tattered lives of those we love. Can they, or we, ever be rescued? Is there any hope for them, or us? In moments of such despair, the priceless promise of God’s deliverance brings hope to troubled hearts.

Prophets have not only warned the wicked of the calamities that await them, but they have also borne witness that the righteous will be delivered. No prophet has framed it more simply than did President Gordon B. Hinckley in the program for Sister Marjorie Hinckley’s funeral: “It isn’t as bad as you sometimes think it is. It all works out. Don’t worry. I say that to myself every morning. It will all work out. Put your trust in God, and move forward with faith and confidence in the future. The Lord will not forsake us. He will not forsake us. If we will put our trust in Him, if we will pray to Him, if we will live worthy of His blessings, He will hear our prayers.”² President Hinckley’s optimism for the future is rooted in his firm knowledge that the Lord’s promises of deliverance are sure.

New Testament prophets and apostles also gave resounding testimony of the Savior’s power and purpose as a deliverer. John saw the Saints “coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

“And [he] heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. . . .



After Joseph exerted all his powers to call for help, the light of God descended and delivered him from the enemy that held him bound.



“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Revelation 21:2–5, 7).

Book of Mormon writers recorded their own witnesses of deliverance. Nephi prophesied in detail how Israel would be gathered and saved when the wicked burn as stubble, the kingdom of the devil is destroyed, and Satan is bound (see 1 Nephi 22:13–28). Alma reassured his son Shiblon: “I would that ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

“Now, my son, I would not that ye should think that I know these things of myself, but it is the Spirit of God which is in me which maketh these things known unto me; for if I had not been born of God I should not have known these things” (Alma 38:5–6).

In fact, Alma knew from firsthand experience the reality of deliverance, for as a young man his soul had been racked with inexpressible horror as a result of his iniquity and rebellion against God. After he remembered the prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ to atone for the sins of the world and cried out in faith for deliverance, he could remember his pains no more but was filled with joy and marvelous light (see Alma 36:12–20). He experienced divine deliverance because he had, as he said, been born of God (see Alma 36:5).

The resurrected Christ explained how such a rebirth leads to deliverance: “My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; . . . that I might draw all men unto me, that . . . even so should men be lifted up by the Father” (3 Nephi 27:14). The tender mercies of a loving Father and His Only Begotten feel after us, seeking to lift us out of this fallen world back into the heavens. The gospel of Christ draws us *to* Him so we can be perfected *in* Him. We are *born* again in order to be *borne up* again.



God proclaimed a deliverance that would overcome death, bind up the brokenhearted, liberate the captive, open the doors of the prison, and comfort all who mourn.

As John confirmed, “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

In our own day the Savior bore witness of His will and power to deliver us from this fallen world: “Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, and you are of them that my Father hath given me” (D&C 50:41). His promises are sure, but for our hope to be sure we must *believe* Him, not just believe *in* Him.

My witness is that even though we live in a fallen world, we also live in the greatest dispensation this world has ever known. We are a favored people God has chosen just for this day. His promise of deliverance, extended before this world began and echoed throughout the ages, is sure. He proclaimed a deliverance that would overcome death, bind up the brokenhearted, liberate the captive, open the doors of the prison to those who are bound, and comfort all who mourn, while delivering “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (see Isaiah 61:1–3). No unhallowed hand can stop His work in our behalf; and when wickedness, terror, disease, disaster, and death rage among the children of men, breaking our hearts and attempting to break our spirits, we must “fear . . . not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord” (Exodus 14:13).

My witness is that the Lord promises you what He promised Joseph Smith—that every peril you pass through in this life will give you experience and be for your good (see D&C 122:7), that “thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever” (D&C 122:9). ■

NOTES

1. “I’m Trying to Be like Jesus,” *Children’s Songbook*, 78.
2. “Put Your Trust in God,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2006, 63.