

America—World Leader

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I'm very grateful indeed, my brothers and sisters, for the privilege of being here. I am thrilled with this great audience, thrilled with the glorious music that you have sung, and deeply impressed with the reading of the scriptures and excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

These scriptures are the voice of God to America, they are the voice of God to you and to me here tonight, and they announce that this land is indeed the choicest land in the world, making no exceptions, but those who live in this land and inherit it must serve the God of the land. If we refuse to do this, we must expect to be swept off as the previous civilizations have been.

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were inspired documents, just as were the scriptures that you have heard.

Destiny of the United States of America

As I speak to you here tonight, I would like for you to have in mind that there was only one reason why the United States came into being—only one reason. It is a different reason from anything that we know in any other nation. There is a United States only because God planned to restore the gospel in the last

days and he had to have a free country in which to do it, with freedom of worship, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly.

He declared that he would make this the greatest nation in the world, and this he has done. Ours is, indeed, the greatest nation on earth, and it was made so by the Almighty himself. It was made so to fulfill the divine destiny given to us by the Lord. That is why the Book of Mormon prophets declared that this land is choice above all other lands in the earth.

It is the destiny of America which makes her the greatest nation on earth. No other nation was ever conceived and set up as was ours. No other nation has been given a destiny such as ours.

What is that destiny? You will be surprised when I say this, but it is nevertheless true. The destiny of the United States of America is to play an important part in helping to prepare for the second coming of Christ. It is that important. That is the reason the United States was set up.

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The preparation for the second coming of Christ depended largely on the restoration of the gospel. There could not be a restoration of the gospel without freedom. God provided this country as the base of his operations in these, the last days, a place where there would be freedom, where he could restore his gospel. Therefore, the United States was given and is yet to be given a great mission in respect to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has made the United States the base of operations for his work in these modern times, just as he used Palestine as his center of operations in ancient times. We should always keep this clearly in mind. As Palestine was the center of the Lord's operations in ancient times, just so in the same manner is the United States the center of his operations in these days.

For centuries he preserved this land from colonization by unwanted groups. Then he set up this nation by his own power and for his own purpose. That purpose was to provide the free conditions under which he could restore his gospel in the last days. Here he gave us an inspired Constitution so that his church could move forward with full guarantee of freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of assembly, and freedom of press—all of which were essential to his work.

Dictatorship is the opposite of free agency. Free agency is part and parcel of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, free agency was required here in America so that God's work could move forward; and so it must, for the day of the Lord draweth nigh and the ultimate destiny of the United States is rapidly emerging.

Here in the USA the Lord's latter-day Zion has been established already. Here in the USA his latter-day New Jerusalem will yet be established. Here in the USA the Lord will preside during the Millennium. From here will go forth the law and the word of the Lord to all the nations of the earth.

The restored gospel is already going from this land to all other free nations. It does so

under the protection of the United States, and we who travel do so on American passports. Eventually America will be the center of the final gathering of God's people as the Millennium approaches, and our flag will fly right on into that blessed time.

Prophecies About America

Brigham Young said:

When the day comes in which the Kingdom of God will bear rule, the flag of the United States will proudly flutter unsullied on the flag staff of liberty and equal rights, without a spot to sully its fair surface; the glorious flag our fathers have bequeathed to us will then be unfurled to the breeze by those who have power to hoist it aloft and defend its sanctity. [Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 360]

So America will not fall. It will have to go through a cleansing, however, so that wickedness may be abolished. But the nation as such will not fall.

Said President Harold B. Lee:

The Constitution will stand even if it must be saved by the elders of this Church. This nation, founded on the principles laid down by men whom God raised up, will never fail. I have faith in America, and you and I must have faith in America if we understand the teachings of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. [Deseret News, 27 October 1973]

Then President Joseph F. Smith, one of the great, inspired prophets of latter-days, said this about the United States:

This great American nation the Almighty raised up by the power of his omnipotent hand, that it might be possible in the latter days for the kingdom of God to be established in the earth. . . . His hand has been over this nation, and it is his purpose and design to enlarge it—make it glorious above all others, and to give it dominion, and power over the earth, to the end that those who are kept in bondage

and serfdom may be brought to the enjoyment of the fullest freedom and liberty of conscience possible for intelligent men to exercise in the earth. [Gospel Doctrine, p. 409]

Speaking of the church and the kingdom of God established here in the United States by the Almighty, President John Taylor said this:

It has been asked whether this kingdom will fail. I tell you in the name of Israel's God it will not fail. I tell you in the name of Israel's God it will roll forth and that the things spoken of by the holy prophets in relation to it will receive their fulfillment. [Gospel Kingdom, p. 137]

Let us have this clearly in mind: Since the United States was created by act of God to provide a suitable place in which the gospel could be restored and then be sent abroad to the nations of the earth, the Almighty will preserve our country for that purpose. But he will *not* preserve it in wickedness. Evil must be swept away, and he gives us ample warning to repent. He told the brother of Jared that this land had been “preserved for a righteous people” and declared that “whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off” (Ether 2:7, 8).

Then he said, “This cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles [that means us who live here today], that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done” (Ether 2:11).

So out of his love for America, and out of his desire to have the United States fulfill his divine destiny, God asks us to repent and keep his commandments and thus save our heritage here. Others may sin and go down to destruction, but we who hold his priesthood, we to whom he has committed the stewardship of

his latter-day work, we must never fail. We must never bow down to sin.

We are the vessels of the Lord, and the vessels of the Lord must be kept pure. We must always realize that freedom, which we call free agency, is a gift of God. Gifts of God come only through obedience. Do you remember how we sing, “Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven”?

The roots of this nation are deeply imbedded in divine religious principle because our destiny is religious, our destiny is divine. Therefore, that principle must be preserved as the only means of preserving our nation. Without the gospel America cannot and will not stand. And yet, its destiny *is* to stand. The gospel is our bulwark; it is our mighty bastion against the devil.

Attempts to Destroy the United States

But the devil has declared war against the Saints, (see D&C 76:29), and he has declared war against the United States of America and would destroy it if he could. The scripture says that he will attempt to encompass us round about and seek to destroy us. He would weaken our allegiance to God by luring us into sin, and he would weaken our great nation as a means of destroying the work of God because this nation is essential to the promulgation of the gospel on a worldwide basis.

Since the devil has declared war against us as a church, and also against this nation which protects the Church, let us see what he has done:

Organized crime now costs America \$37 billion a year. Alcoholism costs America \$10 billion a year. Crimes against property and business cost \$22 billion a year. Other miscellaneous crimes cost an additional \$9 billion a year. Law enforcement alone costs \$20 billion a year. So our annual crime bill in America is now \$98 billion a year.

Crime is increasing in this country twice as fast among juveniles under eighteen years of age as among people over eighteen. From

1960 to 1974 drug arrests of persons under eighteen years of age increased 4,673 percent and 774 percent for those over eighteen. Violent crime in America is increasing sixteen times faster than the population growth. Seventy-six percent of all employees in America reportedly steal from their employers. Seventy percent of all inventory losses are due to employee thefts. Considering our judicial system, you will be appalled to learn there is only one conviction for every fifty serious crimes committed.

Here on the Wasatch Front, shoplifting alone costs \$20 million a year. It is incredible, isn't it? Also on the Wasatch Front, forty-eight thousand major crimes were committed last year, an 18 percent increase over the year prior. Do you see how the devil is weakening America by weakening her national character?

Dishonesty destroys character. The Lord has no place for dishonesty in his kingdom. Dishonest persons who pose as religious people are hypocrites, and no one has received the condemnation of the Lord in quite the degree in which he heaps it upon the hypocrites of his day. If we are to preserve America, we must restore good character and wipe out dishonesty in all its forms. Dishonesty is weakness, crime is weakness, immorality is weakness, but America must be strong.

Health Problems from Ignoring the Word of Wisdom

There are other ways also in which the devil is weakening America. They relate to our physical health. Cancer is the number-two cause of death in America, but cigarettes are the number-one cause of lung cancer. Doctor Brian MacMahon of Harvard University School of Public Health has said that completely banning cigarettes would be the most effective way of reducing the death rate from that disease. A recent report from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, published by Dr. Theodore

Cooper, brands both tobacco and alcohol as major causes, not only of cancer, but also of heart disease and respiratory troubles.

A recent edition of *Reader's Digest* reports that there has been a dramatic increase in deaths from cancer and heart trouble among women who are now smokers. Worse than that, it reports that smoking women are bringing into the world more and more babies with severe birth defects and that because of smoking the infant death rate has now shown a marked increase.

A British report which I picked up a few days ago in one of the British newspapers confirms the American problem, saying that in Britain there has been a recent increase of 50 percent in the number of babies of smoking mothers being born unusually small or dying soon after birth. It is likewise so in Sweden, where reports show that stillbirths and deaths of children under one year old are now 60 percent higher among smokers than among non-smokers.

Three death-dealing substances are transmitted to unborn babies by smoking mothers: one, carbon monoxide instead of oxygen; two, nicotine, which greatly increases the speed of the heartbeat of the unborn child and causes it to have high blood pressure; three, cancer-causing agents which enter the bloodstream of the unborn child each time the pregnant mother smokes a cigarette. Ninety percent of the pollution caused by smoking remains in the lungs.

Here is one statistic on beauty: The figures now show that smoking women have more wrinkles than nonsmoking women who are twenty years older.

Now let us see what alcohol is doing to us. The University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle has recently concluded studies showing that babies born to female alcoholics have a high incidence of birth defects. Some of these infants have small heads; others, stunted bodies; still others, abnormal faces; and a frightening number

suffer from low mentalities. Babies born to alcoholic mothers have a mortality rate five times higher than the national average. Of those who do survive almost half are severe mental cases. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported recently that a woman with a drinking problem has a 30 to 50 percent chance of giving birth to an abnormal child. The *U.S. News and World Report* recently indicated that drinking by mothers (this astonished me) is now the third leading cause of mental deficiency among babies. Isn't that frightening?

Four in every ten motor vehicle deaths are alcohol related. Alcohol is also reported in 64 percent of the murders in the United States, 41 percent of all assaults, 34 percent of all forcible rapes, and 29 percent of all other sex crimes. Alcohol is blamed for at least 41 percent of divorces and broken homes.

Then there is coffee, the great American drink. A study conducted by the University of Illinois among eight hundred pregnant women in Utah and Idaho showed that heavy coffee drinking in the first three months of pregnancy can severely harm or even kill an unborn child. Six cups of coffee a day consumed by a pregnant mother during the first three months of pregnancy could bring serious and possibly fatal results to the child. But the study also showed that thirteen out of every fourteen women who drank more than seven cups of coffee a day had pregnancies which ended in miscarriage or stillbirth.

Then there is another plague in America that brings both physical and character degeneracy. I speak of the widespread lowering of moral standards. Sex promiscuity has become so great in America that health officials say venereal disease has now reached epidemic proportions. Venereal disease kills a thousand Americans every month. Fifteen hundred youngsters between fifteen and twenty catch VD every day, and thirteen hundred adults catch VD every day. Most of these cases are not

treated medically, and of these cases one in fifteen develops heart trouble, one in twenty-five is crippled, one in fifty goes insane, one in two hundred goes blind. Tie this in with the curse of abortions, and then let us ask what we're doing to the character and physical health of our country.

America's Need for Faith and Righteous Living

Then there is the weakness that comes from the encroachment of atheism in our schools. Masquerading under the cloak of anthropology with great emphasis upon evolution, atheism is weakening the religious faith of the nation, and thus it also becomes an ally of the adversary. Is it any wonder that Lincoln, almost prophetically, looked into our future and foretold the perils that would confront us? Speaking to the young men's lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, on the subject of the perpetuity of American institutions, Lincoln said this:

America need not fear danger from without. All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined with a Bonaparte as a commander could not by force take a drink from the Ohio River or make a track on the Blue Ridge Mountains in a trial of a thousand years. If danger ever threatens the United States, it will come from within. As a nation of free men we must live through all time or die by suicide. [Emil Ludwig, Lincoln, p. 65]

With prophetic vision Lincoln then spoke of the dangers inherent in mob violence and disregard for law and order, which he said could destroy our country. Then he said this:

How shall we fortify against it? The answer is simple. Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher of his posterity swear by the blood of the revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of '76 did to support the Declaration of Independence, so to

support the Constitution and laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor. [Emil Ludwig, *Lincoln*, p. 65] Lincoln was prophetic. We dare not ignore his warnings.

Neither may we ignore Daniel Webster in what he said as he addressed the New York Historical Society in 1852. Said he:

If we and our posterity shall be true to the Christian religion, if we and they shall live always in the fear of God and shall respect his commandments, if we and they shall maintain just moral sentiments and such conscientious convictions of liberty as shall control the heart and life, we may have the highest hopes of the future of our country, and we may be sure of one thing—our country will go on prospering. But if we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and wrecklessly destroy the political Constitution which holds us together, no one can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury all our memory in profound obscurity.

Is it not a striking coincidence that our national leaders as well as our scriptures both speak of the same thing, that we must obey the God of the land or be swept off? If we fail and take freedom down into the destruction with us the free world will also fall, for we are the greatest protection freedom has among all the nations.

The United States to Promote World Freedom

Do you realize that only one-fifth of the world population lives in free countries? Four-fifths of all the people on the earth are held down by dictatorships of one kind or another. All the free nations look to us as the true bastion of liberty. They expect American leadership in the preservation of their own freedom, and they will be severely disappointed if they do not receive it. In the 5 July 1976 issue of the *U.S.*

News and World Report, which is their Bicentennial issue, there is a section on this very subject. The headline says, “World statesmen look to United States leadership in the times ahead.” Then they quote James Callaghan, prime minister of Great Britain, who says that America must take the leadership. The president of France, likewise. Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada says, “I do not see any substitute for American leadership.” Likewise, Prime Minister Miki of Japan; Helmut Schmidt, the chancellor of West Germany; and Kurt Waldheim, the secretary general of the United Nations. They all look to the United States for leadership in preserving freedom. The only way we can preserve that freedom is to live righteously and serve the God of the land. He calls upon us to repent and do that very thing.

In this same issue of the *U.S. News and World Report* Mike Mansfield, the Senate majority leader, is quoted along the same line. He says that great will be America’s future. Then he says, “In my judgment the final years of this century are crucial. In their unfolding the United States will be the major factor in shaping life on this planet. What this nation does or does not do will have great relevance to political economy and cultural trends in all parts of the globe.”

Then Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce is quoted in this magazine. You know that she was a former congresswoman, an ambassador for the United States, and is one of the most important of all the leaders in the publication field. She recognizes that there has been a great decline in the power of family and education, particularly in preserving morals and righteousness in America. She says, “Under the impact of science, religion has lost its social authority. Under the impact of technology, family life has disintegrated. The three institutions on which our society up to now has depended to teach observance of law and of traditional moral codes are religion, the family, and education.” She calls for renewed emphasis on all three.

Then what must we do? As American citizens, we must reestablish true loyalty to our country and to the divine principles that made it great. As members of the Church, we must rededicate ourselves to the principles of the gospel and the great cause for which the Lord in the first place created the United States.

I have in my hand here the oath that the new citizens of the United States take. Quite a number of these immigrants became citizens of the United States today. Special ceremonies were held for them since this was the Fourth of July, but of course thousands of them take this oath continually. The oath says this:

I hereby declare on oath that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or of which I heretofore have been a subject or citizen, that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies.

As I read this over each time, I wonder why we expect more of immigrants coming into America than we expect of ourselves? If we are going to require them to take an oath of allegiance to the United States that they will sustain the Constitution and that they will defend it against all enemies of every description why do we not take that same oath to ourselves? We must resist all forms of evil, even as we expect them to, inasmuch as Lincoln said what I certainly believe: that no outside power by force could take over our land. If decay comes, it will come from within. It is sin and crime, corruption, and allegiance to such things as Communism which will eat out our very vitals and weaken us to the point where, if we allow it to continue, this nation could fall.

Thomas Jefferson in his second inaugural address asked Americans to seek after the Lord as a means of safeguarding our country. He knew that God had given America its birth and he, like Washington and others of that day,

knew that the perpetuity rested upon its righteousness and its obedience to the God of the land. Therefore, in his inaugural address he said:

[We] shall need the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers as Israel of old from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life, who has covered our national infancy with providence and our riper years with his wisdom and power and to whose goodness I ask you to join in supplication with me that he will enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures that whatsoever they do shall result in good and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations.

So now we must take upon ourselves our spiritual armor and with the shield of good character fight valiantly against the powers of evil that threaten us. We must fight the good fight. We must finish our course. We must keep the faith. We must never shrink from this great responsibility. The enemy is all about us. If we can only sense the dangers that confront us, without hesitation we will pledge to this great purpose our lives, our property, and our sacred honor. "So conquer we must, when our cause it is just, and this be our motto: 'In God is our trust!'" When we win this conflict, we may then justly sing: "Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!"

I close with this humble and simple prayer:

*Our fathers' God to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light.
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King!*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.