

# PREPAREDNESS

Talk given in Sacramento Meeting Highland 4<sup>th</sup> Ward  
by Heidi Rock, January 15, 2006

## USE OF EMERGENCY SUPPLIES - EXAMPLES

**From:** Roald Peterson - January 14, 2006

Dear Heidi,

We've used emergency supplies several times. I keep a sleeping bag in the car and food at work. I've used them both when I had to stay overnight because of weather. We've used food storage on various occasions when we didn't have money for food and when we couldn't get what we needed at the store.

There is a parable in section 101, verses 43 to 69, which might be applicable. A nobleman commanded his servants to plant a vineyard and build a tower in it for protection. The servants planted the trees and built a hedge, but stopped short of building the tower because they had only known peace and there was no need for a tower in a time of peace. Enemies came in the night, tore down the hedge, and took over the vineyard because there were no watchmen on a tower.

This is much like the preparation of many [people] today. The Lord has said through his prophets that the saints are to have a year's supply of food and other essentials. They are to get out of debt, and they are to set aside money for a rainy day. Instead they follow the counsel of men and make 72-hour kits, thinking that is sufficient. When the enemies of hunger, catastrophe, and war come in the night, they will find their preparations woefully inadequate and will pay a dear price for their disobedience.

We lived on the coast of Mississippi when Hurricane Frederick came through. Although we had batteries, we went to the store to get a few more, just in case. There was a line over a hundred feet long just to get into the store. When I looked through the window to see what it was like inside, I wondered why the people were in line, for all the shelves I could see were empty.

We went home and pushed all our furniture and goods into a tall pile into the living room, taped our windows, put towels by all the doors. We then took our 72-hour kit, along with sleeping bags and blankets to the designated shelter, a large building on the Keesler Air Force Base. We were in a classroom and laid out our sleeping bags along side many other peoples'. We had food, water, lights, radio, and some books and games. As I looked around at what other people had, I realized that few had all the things we did. I walked through the hallways several times through the night. There were

children crying in many of the rooms. It was not easy to sleep, but I did sleep some.

On one of my walks I witnessed a scene I'll never forget. There were six or seven men standing around a vending machine in the hallway. It had its lights on but was empty. The men just stood with their hands in their pockets, staring at the vending machine, saying nothing.

About midnight I walked the halls again. The power was still on but several radio stations had gone off the air. I walked to the front doors and looked out. The wind howled and the parking lot lights showed the rain blowing sideways. I went back to my little family pad and tried to sleep with other people's kids crying. Somehow I slept a little. When I woke up the hallway lights were off – the power was out. Part of the roof had blown off the building and people had come down from the second story to move into the rooms on the first floor. Water came down the wall in our room and soaked the sleeping bags of the people next to the wall. We gave them our blankets. It was a long, long night.

When morning came we walked out into a bright sunny day and marveled at the changes that had taken place. At least half the trees were down. Many buildings were damaged. Some cars were damaged by debris but ours was undamaged. We drove home and found that except for some water under the door, everything was just as we had left it. We put our things back in place and got out our camping gear. There was no power or water. Most radio stations were off. For the next few days we camped in our house. We had food and were able to help some others who didn't. We had flashlights and a lantern. We had a camp stove and fuel. It was actually a fun experience. We were on the base commander's power circuit and were the first to get our power back – after three days. We had plenty of water for the toilet but it was contaminated. We used water from our storage to drink and cook with – it was three days before we got potable water again. We were lucky – most didn't get power and water for well over a week, and some for more than a month. Many people were without food and they flew food into the area and set up cafeterias. People with freezers couldn't get ice so they hosted barbecues with the meat from their freezers. Stores didn't open for several days. Because we were prepared, the changes for us were novel and seemed like a vacation.

The next major event happened about three years later in Omaha. One night it rained and the temperature dropped to around 40 below zero. When morning came there were two inches of clear ice on everything. It was beautiful and deadly. The whole world had turned to crystal and glass. But cars' parking brakes were frozen, which was just as well, because they couldn't stay on the road anyway. Everything stopped. People couldn't get to work or the store. People couldn't get home. The police and fire trucks were stopped. By the second day people were hungry. Many people buy their food day by day. They resorted to crackers and Ketchup. You couldn't walk to your neighbor. If you went at all, you had to crawl. Many lost power and heat. Pipes froze and water lines broke. Phone lines broke. It stayed that way for three days. We were ready with blankets, camping stove, lantern, and food and water. As it was we only had to rely on our food and water. For us there was no change except that work and church were cancelled. Again, many others went through an ordeal.

Earlier this week we lost our water supply without warning. I walked downstairs, brought up a 5-gallon container with a spigot, and put it on the counter. Less than 3 minutes and life was back to normal. I was ready to fill buckets from other supplies to flush toilets, but we got our water back before that was necessary.

Last winter, power went off for almost two days. I went downstairs and lit a fire in the wood stove. I brought in a camp stove to cook on. We used a lantern, flashlights, and electric power from deep cycle batteries and an inverter. We watched a couple of movies on TV. I was ready to bring in a kerosene heater by the end of the second day but our power came back. There was very little impact to our lives because we were prepared.

In the future we can expect water and power outages. We can expect an earthquake if Pres. Hinckley is to be believed. We can expect shortages and transportation failures. We can expect war. We can expect personal catastrophes and calamities. If we have backup supplies and equipment to maintain our own infrastructure, suffering is minimized or eliminated. It becomes a time for teaching and reflection, even a time of greater peace. If we are not prepared, it is a time of worry, struggle, and privation. It is a time of weeping and wailing.

Hope this helps. Love, Toad

### **FROM PREPARATION TO TRIBULATION**

The Lord and his prophets over many generations have focused considerable attention on the events leading up to the Millennium. They have described in detail the great turmoil and tribulation that will occur during that time. Realizing that only a prepared people will be able to safely survive the events that will unfold, we

have been given instructions, preparatory experiences, opportunity and – with some sacrifice – the financial means necessary to become a prepared people. (Prophetic Statements on Food Storage for Latter-day Saints,, p. 41).

In the following prophetic quotes, please take note of the progression from preparing for something in the future to now being in the days foretold. Notice the years and what was said.

#### **J. Reuben Clark, Jr. (1941):**

**“We are approaching troublesome times...We shall have a period – how long I know not – of what we shall call prosperity; and then there will be something else.** I have felt from the time [the welfare plan] was put into operation that what we were really doing here was not alone caring for our people at this time, where there were so many other avenues open for them to get their help, but we were building for future times when we might need all of our experience, all of our training and skill, all of our intelligence to preserve ourselves and those who might be less fortunate among us than we ourselves may personally be.” (*The Deseret News*, Feb. 8, 1941).

#### **Ezra Taft Benson (1973):**

**“When will all these calamities strike? We do not know the exact time, but it appears it may be in the not-too-distant future. Those who are prepared now have the continuing blessings of early obedience, and they are ready.** Noah built his ark before the flood came, and he and his family survived. Those who waited to act until after the flood began were too late.

“Let us not be dissuaded from preparing because of a seeming prosperity today, or a so-called peace.” (CR, *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 68)

#### **Bruce R. McConkie (1979):**

**“For the moment we live in a day of peace and prosperity but it shall not ever be thus. Great trials lie ahead.** All of the sorrows and perils of the past are but a foretaste of what is yet to be. And we must prepare ourselves temporally and spiritually.” (*Ensign*, May 1979, 92)

#### **Boyd K. Packer (1980):**

“We **now** move cautiously into the darkening mists of the future. We hear the ominous rumbling of the gathering storm. The narrow places of the past have been a preliminary and a preparatory testing.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 109)

(Do you see the change in tone – we’re now no longer looking for trials in the future – we are approaching the difficult times.)

**M. Russell Ballard (1992):**

“**These are difficult times**, when the forces of nature seem to be unleashing a flood of “famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes, in divers places.”

“Although the prophecies tell us that these things are to take place, more and more people are expressing great alarm at what appears to be an acceleration of worldwide calamity... These are difficult times, when the forces of nature seem to be unleashing a flood of “famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places.”

**James E. Faust (1999):**

“It is my testimony that we are facing difficult times. We must be courageously obedient. My witness is that we will be called upon to prove our spiritual stamina, for the days ahead will be filled with affliction and difficulty...” (Ensign, Jan. 1999, 5).

**Boyd K. Packer (Feb. 2004):**

“The world is spiraling downward at an ever-quickening pace. I am sorry to tell you that it will not get better. I know of nothing in the history of the Church or in the history of the world to compare with our present circumstances. Nothing happened in Sodom and Gomorrah which exceeds the wickedness and depravity which surrounds us now... We are now exactly where the prophets warned we would be.” (BYU J. Reuben Clark Law Society Devotional, 28 Feb. 2004).

**Henry B. Eyring (Jan. 2005):**

“The giant earthquake and the tsunamis it sent crashing into the coasts around the Indian Ocean, is just the beginning and a part of what is to come, terrible as it was.” (“Raise the Bar”, BYUI Devotional, Jan. 25, 2005)

**FOLLOW THE PROPHET**

The Lord warns us ahead of time to give us the chance to prepare. For many years we have been told to be prepared. We have been living in a time of relative peace and prosperity, but the momentum is picking up as you can tell by the intensity of disasters and world events and the intensity of warnings from the prophets and apostles.

In our time, we have been warned with counsel of where to find safety. One of the keys to recognizing those warnings is that they are repeated.

**Henry B. Eyring**

“When the words of prophets seem repetitive, that should rivet our attention...” (Ensign, May 1997, p. 25).

**Ezra Taft Benson:**

“Here then is the key – look to the prophets for the words of God, that will show us how to prepare for the calamities which are to come... For the righteous the gospel provides a warning before a calamity, a program for the crises, a refuge for each disaster... The Lord has warned us of famines, but the righteous will have listened to prophets and stored at least a year’s supply of survival food.” (Ensign, Jan. 1974, 68)

Our living prophet, **Gordon B. Hinckley**, in the past 7 years has given one message three times. If the prophet thought it important enough to mention Pharaoh’s dream and Joseph’s interpretation in 1998, 2001, and 2005, it’s probably important to read and remember it.

**1998**

“I wish to speak to you about temporal matters.” Then he read the story from Genesis 41 about the Pharaoh of Egypt who had a dream that Joseph interpreted. He read the passage from the Bible about the dream of seven fat kine and seven lean kine, seven full ears of corn and seven withered ears of corn.

“Now, brethren, I want to make it very clear that I am not prophesying, that I am not predicting years of famine in the future. But I am suggesting that the time has come to get our houses in order...”

“There is a portent [an indication of something important, calamitous, or evil about to occur: omen] of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed.” (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 51).

**2001**

“We cannot provide against every contingency. But we can provide against many contingencies. Let the present situation [Sept. 11 - WTC collapse] remind us that this we should do.

“As we have been continuously counseled for more than 60 years, let us have some food set aside that would sustain us for a time in case of need. But let us not panic nor go to extremes. Let us be prudent in every respect.”

Then Pres. Hinckley said, "I cannot forget the lesson of Pharaoh's dream of the fat & lean kine and of the full and withered stalks of corn"

"I cannot dismiss from my mind the grim warnings of the Lord as set forth in the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew." (*Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 72).

**2005**

"Let us never lose sight of the dream of Pharaoh concerning the fat cattle and the lean, the full ears of corn, and the blasted ears; the meaning of which was interpreted by Joseph to indicate years of plenty and years of scarcity." (*Ensign*, Nov. 2005)

**L. Tom Perry (1995):**

"We have been instructed for years to follow at least four requirements in preparing for that which is to come.

"First, gain an adequate education...

"Second, live strictly within your income and save something for a rainy day...

"Third, avoid excessive debt.

"Fourth, acquire and store a reserve of food and supplies that will sustain life... As long as I can remember, we have been taught to prepare for the future and to obtain a year's supply of necessities. I would guess that the years of plenty have almost universally caused us to set aside this counsel. I believe the time to disregard this counsel is over. With events in the world today, it must be considered with all seriousness..." (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 35).

### **OBEDIENCE**

One characteristic that distinguishes a terrestrial people from a celestial people is their greater desire for obedience.

**President Boyd K. Packer** said:

"[Obedience] can be very tough, but it's the most protecting word, the most revealing word – you obey and you cannot go wrong, and you will be provided for."

### **PROPHETIC QUOTES**

In order to survive this pre-millennial period we should maintain our lives in a constant state of readiness before the Lord. We should continually seek to hear his word, learn his word, and actively live it on a daily basis – which includes keeping the counsel of his prophets in both spiritual and temporal matters.

In times of crisis the Church will not be able to help everyone.

**Ezra Taft Benson:**

Our bishops' storehouses are not intended to stock enough commodities to care for all the members of the Church. Storehouses are only established to care for the poor and needy. For this reason, members of the Church have been instructed to personally store a year's supply of food, clothing, and where possible, fuel. By following this counsel, most members will be prepared and able to care for themselves and their family members, and be able to share with others as may be needed." (*Ensign*, May 1977, 82).

**Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley (Oct. 2005):**

We have built grain storage and storehouses and stocked them with the necessities of life in the event of a disaster. But the best storehouse is the family storeroom." (Oct. CR, 2005)

### **SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS**

The most important part of Emergency Preparedness is 'spiritual preparedness'. In **Dallin Oaks** conference talk April 2004, he talks about the parable of the Ten Virgins and how five were not prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. Then he says:

"The arithmetic of this parable is chilling. The ten virgins obviously represent members of Christ's Church, for all were invited to the wedding feast and all knew what was required to be admitted when the bridegroom came. But only half were ready when he came.

"We need to make both temporal and spiritual preparation for the events prophesied at the time of the Second Coming. And the preparation most likely to be neglected is the one less visible and more difficult –the spiritual. A 72-hour kit of temporal supplies may prove valuable for earthly challenges, but as the foolish virgins learned to their sorrow, a 24-hour kit of spiritual preparation is of greater and more enduring value.

"We are living in the prophesied time 'when peace shall be taken from the earth', when 'all things shall be in commotion' and 'men's hearts shall fail them'. (*Ensign*, May 2004)

Brothers and sisters, in order for us to be spiritually prepared we have to be worthy to have the Holy Ghost as our constant companion. There is no other way as evidenced by **Elder Packer's** remarks when at the BYU-Hawaii commencement exercises last month he said:

"These are sobering times. You are going out into a different world than I experienced when I

was 19... You won't survive spiritually, unless you know how to receive revelation..."

And again in the same talk he reemphasized:

"I don't know if you know how to receive revelation, but you're not going to survive without it."

He then pointed out that Elijah the Prophet in Old Testament times did not find the Lord in the lightnings and thunderings "but in the still, small voice He spoke to him, and revealed to him, and answered his prayer."

"It's a noisy world, and you're going to have to learn first...that revelation comes in the quiet times. It will come when the Lord can speak to our feelings."

"Go quietly into the world. Go quietly about your affairs and learn that in the still, small hours of the morning the Lord will speak to you. He will never fail to answer your prayers." (BYUH News Article by Mike Foley, Dec. 19, 2005)

Nearly a year ago **Elder Henry B. Eyring** gave a talk at BYUI in which he talked about spiritual preparation and being able to hear the Holy Ghost. He said:

"Fear shall come upon all people. But you and I know that the Lord has prepared places of safety to which He is eager to guide us... A few days ago, I heard two accounts of God leading His children to safety on the coast of Thailand when that monstrous tsunami wave struck.

"One was of people who accepted His apparently routine invitation to a Church meeting on a Sunday. The meeting was called by ordinary men who hold the priesthood of God. The meeting place was on higher ground, away from the coast. The people who gathered with the Saints were spared from physical death, while the places on the coast where they would have been were destroyed. As they were spared physical death, they were being strengthened against spiritual temptation and the wave of eternal tragedy it will bring to those who are disobedient.

The other account I heard was related to me by a Latter-day Saint who was led to safety by the Holy Ghost. He checked into a hotel on the oceanfront in Thailand the day before the wave struck. He walked out on the beach. He felt uneasy. He went back to his hotel determined to check out. The hotel staff, I think worried that he didn't like the hotel, pressed him for a reason. They only reluctantly agreed to his leaving. He moved to another hotel, away from the beach. It was on higher ground. Because of

that, he not only survived but stayed to serve the survivors.

...Most of us who are members of the restored Church have enough faith to want the Holy Ghost at times. That desire may be weak and intermittent, but it comes, usually when we are in trouble. **For us to be led upward to safety in the times ahead, it must become steady and intense.**

"...the Holy Ghost can speak to your heart and your mind. And you can train yourselves to know that voice in such a way that you might move away from the beach as that man in Thailand, or might be impressed to go to a sacrament meeting when you are on vacation, as people did in Thailand..." (*"Raise the Bar"*, *BYUI Devotional*, Jan. 25, 2005)

In closing I would like to read a few statements by **Jeffrey R. Holland** given in September 2004:

"...Because ours is the last and greatest of all dispensations, because all things will eventually culminate and be fulfilled in our era, there is therefore, one particular, very specific responsibility that falls to those of us in the Church now that did not rest quite the same way on the shoulders of Church members in an earlier time...*we have the responsibility to prepare the Church of the Lamb of God to receive the Lamb of God* – in person, in triumphant glory, *in His millennial role* as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. No other dispensation ever had that duty.

"So, setting aside fear of the future or concerns about the dimensions of a backyard bomb shelter, I am filled with awe, with an overwhelming sense of duty to prepare my life...for that long-prophesied day, for that transfer of authority, for the time when we will make a presentation of the Church to Him whose Church it is.

"I do know this: When Christ comes, the members of His Church *must* look and act like members of His Church are *supposed* to look and act if we are to be acceptable to Him. We must be doing His work and we must be living His teachings. He must recognize us quickly and easily as truly being His disciples. As President J. Reuben Clark Jr. once advised, our faith *must not* be difficult to detect." (*Terror, Triumph, and a Wedding Feast*, *BYU Devotional*, 12 Sept. 2004).