

“Behold I Am the Light Which Ye Shall Hold Up”

By Elder Ronald A. Rasband
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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To the many testimonies at this conference, I add my apostolic witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Lord and Savior, the Redeemer of all of our Father's children. By His Atonement, Jesus Christ made it possible for us, if we are worthy, to return to the presence of our Father in Heaven and be with our families for eternity.

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The Savior is not absent from our mortal journeys. For the past two days we have heard Him speak through His chosen leaders that we might draw closer to Him. Time and again, with His pure love and mercy, He sustains us as we face the drama of life. Nephi describes: “My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions. ... He hath filled me with his love.”

That love is evident when we sustain one another in His work.

We sustain our living prophet at general conference, and the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, General Authorities, and Officers of the Church. To sustain means to hold up another person, to give them our attention, to be faithful to their trust, to act upon their words. They speak by inspiration of the Lord; they understand the current issues, the moral decline of society, and the adversary's increasing efforts to thwart the Father's plan. In holding up our hands, we are committing our support, not just for that moment but in our daily lives.

Sustaining includes holding up our stake presidents and bishops, quorum and organization leaders, teachers, and even camp directors

in our wards and stakes. Closer to home, we hold up our wives and our husbands, children, parents, extended family, and neighbors. When we hold up one another we are saying, “I am here for you, not just to hold up your arms and hands when they ‘hang down’ but to be a comfort and strength at your side.”

The concept to hold up is rooted in scripture. At the Waters of Mormon, the newly baptized Church members committed “to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; ... [to] comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places.”

To the Nephites, Jesus said: “Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up.” We hold up the Lord’s light when we hold fast to our covenants and when we support our living prophet as he speaks the words of God.

President Russell M. Nelson said, when serving in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Our sustaining of prophets is a personal commitment that we will do our utmost to uphold their prophetic priorities.”

To hold up the prophet is a sacred work. We do not sit quietly by but actively defend him, follow his counsel, teach his words, and pray for him.

King Benjamin, in the Book of Mormon, said to the people, “I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind; yet I have been chosen ... and was suffered by the hand of the Lord ... and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power, to serve you with all the might, mind and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me.”

Likewise, at age 100, President Nelson has been kept and preserved by the Lord. President Harold B. Lee, at the time a member of the First Presidency, cited the example of Moses standing atop the hill at Rephidim. “The hands of [the President of the Church] may grow weary,” he said. “They may tend to droop at times because of his heavy responsibilities; but as we uphold his hands, and as we lead under his direction, by his side, the gates of hell will not prevail against you and against Israel. Your safety and ours depends upon whether or not we follow the ones whom the Lord has placed to preside over his church. He knows whom he wants to preside over this church, and he will make no mistake.”

President Nelson draws upon years of serving the Lord. His maturity, wide-ranging experience, wisdom, and consistent receipt of revelation is specifically suited for our day. He has said: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is preparing the world for the day when ‘the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord’ (Isaiah 11:9). ... This work is empowered by a divine announcement made 200 years ago. It consisted of only seven words: ‘This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!’ (see Joseph Smith—History 1:17).”

President Nelson has also said: “There has never been a time in the history of the world when knowledge of our Savior is more personally vital and relevant to every human soul. Imagine how quickly the devastating conflicts throughout the world—and those in our individual lives—would be resolved if we all chose to follow Jesus Christ and heed His teachings.”

Brothers and sisters, we need to do more lifting and less murmuring, more upholding the word of the Lord, His ways, and His prophet, who has said: “One of our greatest challenges today is distinguishing between the truths of God and the counterfeits of Satan. That is why the Lord warned us to ‘pray always, ... that [we] may conquer Satan, and ... escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold [the adversary’s] work’ [Doctrine and Covenants 10:5; emphasis added].”

Last April, Sister Rasband and I had the honor of joining our beloved prophet and Sister Nelson for the rededication of the Manti Utah Temple.

President Nelson surprised everyone when he entered the room. Only a very few of us knew he was coming. In his presence, I immediately felt the light and prophetic mantle he carries. The look of joy on the faces of the people personally seeing the prophet will stay with me forever.

In the prayer of rededication, President Nelson petitioned the Lord that His holy house would essentially hold up all who entered the temple, “that they may receive sacred blessings and remain worthy and faithful to their covenants ... that this may be a house of peace, a house of comfort, and a house of personal revelation for all who enter these doors worthily.”

We all need to be lifted up by the Lord with peace, with comfort, and most of all with personal revelation to counter the fear, darkness, and contention encompassing the world.

Before the service, we stood outside in the sun with President and Sister Nelson to view the beautiful setting. President Nelson's ancestral ties to the area run deep. His eight great-grandparents settled in the valleys surrounding the temple, as did some of mine. My great-grandfather Andrew Anderson served on the construction crew of early pioneers who labored 11 years to complete the Manti Temple, the third in the Rocky Mountains.

As we stood with President Nelson, we had the opportunity to hold up and support the prophet of God in celebration of the rededication of the Lord's holy house. It was a day I will never forget.

"We build temples to honor the Lord," President Nelson said that sacred day. "They are built for worship and not for show. We make sacred covenants of eternal significance inside these sacred walls." We are gathering Israel.

President Nelson and the prophets before him have cradled the holy temples in their arms. Today, around the world, we have 350 sacred houses of the Lord that are operating, announced, or under construction. As prophet, since 2018, President Nelson has announced 168 temples.

"In our time," he has said, "a whole, complete, and perfect union of all dispensations, keys, and powers are to be welded together (see Doctrine and Covenants 128:18). For these sacred purposes, holy temples now dot the earth. I emphasize again that construction of these temples may not change your life, but your service in the temple surely will."

"The Savior and His doctrine are the very heart of the temple," the President says. "Everything taught in the temple, through instruction and through the Spirit, increases our understanding of Jesus Christ. His essential ordinances bind us to Him through sacred priesthood covenants. Then, as we keep our covenants, He endows us with His healing, strengthening power."

"All who worship in the temple," President Nelson has said, "will have the power of God and angels having 'charge over them' [Doctrine and Covenants 109:22]. How much does it increase your confidence to know that, as an endowed woman or man [or temple-attending youth] armed with the power of God, you do not have to face life alone? What courage does it give you to know that angels really will help you?"

Angels reaching out to hold us up is described in the scriptures when Jesus Christ knelt humbly in the Garden of Gethsemane. By His suffering He provided an infinite Atonement. “There,” President Nelson states, “the greatest single act of love of all recorded history took place. ... There at Gethsemane, the Lord ‘suffered the pain of all men, that all ... might repent and come unto him’ [Doctrine and Covenants 18:11].”

“Remove this cup from me,” Jesus Christ asked, “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.”

We have angels round about us today. President Nelson has said, “[In the temple,] you will learn how to part the veil between heaven and earth, how to ask for God’s angels to attend you.”

Angels bring light. God’s light. To His Nephrate Apostles, Jesus said, “Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up.” As we sustain our prophet, we testify he is called of our Savior, who is “the light ... of the world.”

Dear President Nelson, on behalf of the members and friends of the Lord’s Church throughout the world, we feel blessed to hold up your teachings, to hold up your example of Christ-like living, and to hold up your fervent testimony of our Lord and Savior, the Redeemer of us all.

I bear my apostolic witness that Jesus Christ is “the light ... of the world.” May we all, as His disciples, “hold up” His light. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.