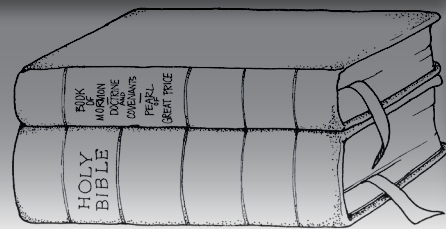


GOSPEL DOCTRINE

THE OLD TESTAMENT



Lesson 16

“I Cannot Go Beyond the Word of the Lord”

May 9, 2010

STORY OF A LARK

by

President Spencer W. Kimball

(The Miracle of Forgiveness, pp. 214-215)

“Sitting in the high branches of a tree safe from harm, he saw a traveler walking through the forest carrying a mysterious little black box. The lark flew down and perched on the traveler’s shoulder.

“What do you have in the little black box?’ he asked.

“Worms,’ the traveler replied.

“Are they for sale?’

“Yes, and very cheaply, too. The price is only one feather for a worm.’

“The lark thought for a moment, ‘I must have a million feathers. Surely, I’ll never miss one of them. Here is an opportunity to get a good dinner for no work at all,’ So he told the man he would buy one. He searched carefully under his wing for a tiny feather. He winced a bit as he pulled it out, but the size and quality of the worm made him quickly forget the pain. High up in the tree again he began to sing as beautifully as before.

“The next day he saw the same man and once again he exchanged a feather for a worm. What a wonderful, effortless way to get dinner!

“Each day thereafter the lark surrendered a feather, and each loss seemed to hurt less and less. In the beginning he had many feathers, but as the days passed he found it more difficult to fly. Finally, after the loss of one of his primary feathers, he could no longer reach the top of the tree, let alone fly up into the sky. In fact he could do no more than flutter a few feet in the air, and was forced to seek his food with the quarrelsome, bickering sparrows.

“The man with the worms came no more, for there were no feathers to pay for the meals. The lark no longer sang because he was so ashamed of his fallen state.

“This is how unworthy habits possess us first painfully, then more easily, until at last we find ourselves stripped of all that lets us sing and soar. This is how freedom is lost. This is how we become enmeshed in sin.”

Happy Mother’s Day

“Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind. It places her who honors its holy calling and service next to the angels.”

-Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 7, 11-12

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Numbers	22-24	Gen.	22:3
Numbers	31:1-16	1 Nephi	3:7
Rev.	2:14	2 Nephi	28:8
Jude	1:11	Alma	57:21
2 Peter	2:15-16	D&C	3
Luke	1:38	D&C	84:33-39
Luke	22:41-42	D&C	95:1
Matthew	6:33	D&C	121:33-46

Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“What a story this is! Here is a prophet of God who is firmly committed to declare only what the Lord of heaven directs. There does not seem to be the slightest doubt in his mind about the course he should pursue. He represents the Lord, and neither a house full of gold and silver nor high honors offered by the king can sway him from his determined course, which has been charted for him by that God whom he serves.”

“But greed for wealth and lust for honor beckon him. How marvelous it would be to be rich and powerful-as well as having the prophetic powers that already are his.”

“Perhaps the Lord would let him compromise his standards and have some worldly prosperity and power as well as a testimony of the gospel. Of course he knew the gospel was true, as it were, but why should he be denied the things his political file leader could confer?”

“I wonder how often some of us get our direction from the Church and then, Balaam-like, plead for some worldly rewards and finally receive an answer which says, in effect, if you are determined to be a millionaire or to gain this or that worldly honor, go ahead, with the understanding that you will continue to serve the Lord. Then we wonder why things don’t work out for us as well as they would have done if we had put first in our lives the things of God’s kingdom...”

“Balaam, the prophet, inspired and mighty as he once was, lost his soul in the end because he set his heart on the things of this world rather than the riches of eternity.” (“The Story of a Prophet’s Madness,” New Era, Apr. 1972).

The Tugs and Pulls of the World

(abridged - Oct. 2000 General Conference)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

For true believers, the tugs and pulls of the world—including its pleasures, power, praise, money, and preeminence—have always been there. Now, however, many once-helpful support systems are bent or broken. Furthermore, the harmful things of the world are marketed by pervasive technology and hyped by a media barrage, potentially reaching almost every home and hamlet. All this when many are already tuned out of spiritual things, saying, “I am rich, . . . increased with goods, and have need of nothing.”

It also helps in resisting the tugs and pulls of the world if we, though imperfect, know that currently the course of our life is generally acceptable to the Lord. With sufficient dedication, those quiet assurances can come!

The validation of our worth really comes from knowing who we are, not solely from what we do. Jesus’ searching words remain: “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am.”

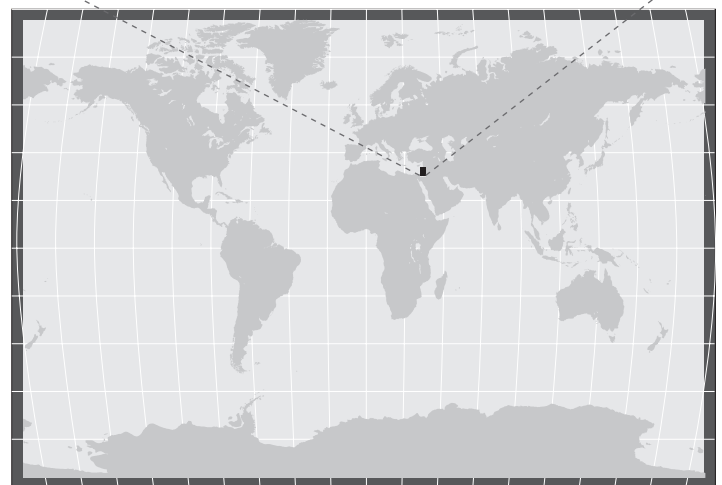
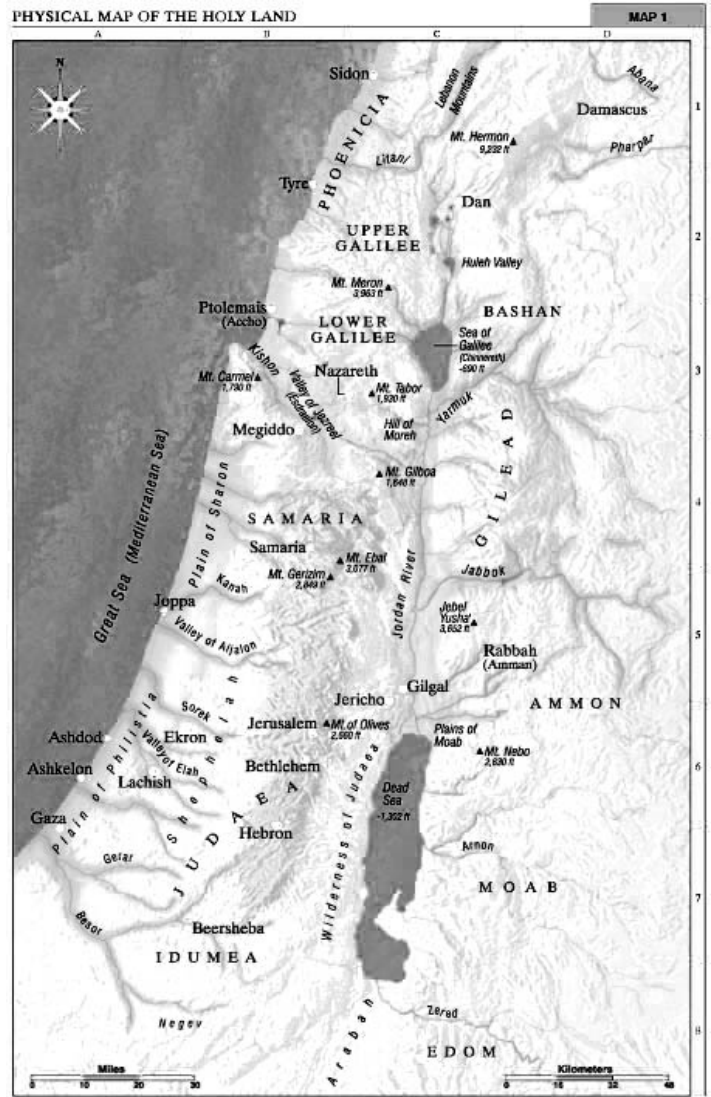
God is infinitely more interested in our having a place in His kingdom than with our spot on a mortal organizational chart. We may brood over our personal span of control, but He is concerned with our capacity for self-control. Father wants us to come home, bringing our real résumés, ourselves!

Even so, our mortal jealousies still occur regularly over money, turf, a slight, or the “robes” and the “fatted calf” given to others. True belonging occurs when we know who we are and to whom we really belong!

Yes, we are free to choose the mortal perks with their short shelf life. However, ahead lies that great moment when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ! Then the galleries and the mortal thrones will be empty. Even the great and spacious building will fall—and resoundingly! Then, too, those who have lived without God in the world will confess that God is God! Meanwhile, His character and attributes should evoke adoration and emulation from us.

Isn’t it marvelous, brothers and sisters, that God, who knows everything, still spends time listening to our prayers? Compared to that cosmic fact, what does the world really have to offer us? One round of applause, one fleeting moment of adulation, or an approving glance from a phantom Caesar?

May God bless us to see things as they really are and as they really will be, and may we give the glory and honor and praise unto God.



President Spencer W. Kimball:

“It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the devil to enter a door that is closed. He seems to have no keys for locked doors. But if a door is slightly ajar, he gets his toe in, and soon this is followed by his foot, then by his leg and his body and his head, and finally he is in all the way.”

(Miracle of Forgiveness, p215)