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# Stand in Holy Places

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D&C 63:37, 48

“In these infant days of the Church, there was a great anxiety to obtain the word of the Lord upon every subject that in any way concerned our salvation,” wrote the Prophet Joseph Smith (D&C 63: Introduction). Of much concern in 1831 were prophecies about the forthcoming judgments of God. The Lord decreed that “desolation shall come upon the wicked, ... [but] He that is faithful and endureth shall overcome the world” (vv. 37, 48).

“We read that war, pestilence, plagues, famine, etc., will be visited upon the inhabitants of the earth,” Brigham Young said. To avoid such judgments in their personal lives, Brigham advised his people,

If distress through the judgments of God comes upon this people, it will be because the majority have turned away from the Lord. Let the majority of the people turn away from the Holy Commandments which the Lord has delivered to us, and cease to hold the balance of power in the Church, and we may expect the judgments of God to come upon us.<sup>1</sup>

Knowing that judgments of God will come, holy prophets through the generations have advised Latter-day Saints to stand in holy places. President Dallin H. Oaks said, “What was needed then and now is to stand in holy places with the companionship of the Holy Ghost: We cannot have the companionship of the Holy Ghost—the medium of individual revelation—if we are in transgression or if we are angry or if we are in rebellion against God’s chosen authorities.”<sup>2</sup> President Russell M. Nelson said, “In coming days, it will not

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<sup>1</sup> Brigham Young, “Love for the Things of God, etc.,” *Journal of Discourses*, 10:335.

<sup>2</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, “Teaching and Learning by the Spirit,” *Ensign*, March 1997.

be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>3</sup>

Elder Richard J. Maynes in his general conference address in October 2015 illustrated the importance of standing in holy places by telling a story from the life of Taiichi Aoba:

Elder Taiichi Aoba of the Seventy, who resides in a small mountain village in Shikoku, Japan, was asked to teach a class at a youth conference. “Stand Ye in Holy Places” was selected as the theme of the conference. After considering the theme and what to teach, Elder Aoba decided to use his vocation as a teaching tool. His work is making pottery.

Elder Aoba relates that his classroom of youth really sprang to life when they saw how he was able to almost magically transform the shape of the clay in his hands to plates, bowls, and cups. After his demonstration, he asked them if any of them would like to give it a try. They all raised their hands.

Elder Aoba had several of the youth come forward to try out their new interest. They assumed, after watching him, that this would be quite simple. However, none of them were successful in their attempts to make even a simple bowl.

They proclaimed: “I can’t do this!” “Why is this so hard?” “This is so difficult.” These comments took place as the clay flew all around the room.

He asked the youth why they were having such difficulty making pottery. They responded with various answers: “I don’t have any experience,” “I have never been trained,” or “I have no talent.” Based on the result, what they said was all true; however, the most important reason for their failure was due to the clay not being centered on the wheel. The youth thought that they had placed the clay in the center, but from a professional’s perspective, it wasn’t in the exact center. He then told them, “Let’s try this one more time.”

This time, Elder Aoba placed the clay in the exact center of the wheel and then started to turn the wheel, making a hole in the middle of the clay. Several of the youth tried again. This time everyone started clapping when they said: “Wow, it’s not shaking,” “I can do this,” or “I

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<sup>3</sup> Russell M, Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018.

did it!" Of course, the shapes weren't perfect, but the outcome was totally different from the first attempt. The reason for their success was because the clay was perfectly centered on the wheel.

Elder Maynes concluded his remarks by saying,

The world in which we live is similar to the potter's spinning wheel, and the speed of that wheel is increasing. Like the clay on the potter's wheel, we must be centered as well. Our core, the center of our lives, must be Jesus Christ and His gospel. Living a Christ-centered life means we learn about Jesus Christ and His gospel and then we follow His example and keep His commandments with exactness.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Richard J. Maynes, "The Joy of Living a Christ-Centered Life," *Ensign*, November 2015.