

This was written by a member of the Church in Utah. IT IS AN EXCELLENT LITTLE WRITING...WELL WORTH READING AND SHARING:

## Why the LDS must prepare.

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In our meetings at the end of 2008 we had a discussion on the second coming. I took part in a lesson in Relief Society. In that lesson we talked about many things, one of which was that we are waiting for the prophecies of Joel to be fulfilled wherein the sun would be darkened and the moon turned to blood. We discussed what that might look like when it happens. I wasn't sure, but I thought that I had learned something regarding that several years ago, so I went home and found President Hinckley's talk entitled "Living in the Fullness of Times" which said that this prophecy, along with the prophecy of Malachi, has been fulfilled. Shortly after 9/11, President Hinckley said, "The vision of Joel has been fulfilled wherein he declared, "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come..."(Joel 2:28-32)."

I wonder if the twin towers were the pillars of smoke spoken of in Joel's prophecy, or whether the Gulf War may have fulfilled these or other prophecies...I do not know. However, knowing that the signs mentioned in the Prophecies of Joel were fulfilled at least seven years ago, makes me wonder where we are in time and how much longer we will have in order to prepare for the further signs prophesied by His prophets.

Elder Eyring in conference in 1998 and again in the January 2009, Ensign said, "**Because the Lord is kind, He calls servants to warn people of danger. That call to warn is made harder and more important by the fact that the warnings of most worth are about dangers that people don't yet think are real...**Here is the charge given to each of the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: "**Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor...It's easy to say, "The time isn't right." But there is danger in procrastination.**" (D&C 88:81)

In that spirit, I would like to share with you (my neighbors) that I know that we are living in the fullness of times and that the Lord has "**lovingly commanded us to prepare every needful thing.**" (D&C 109)

Although we are told that we are in the times "when men's hearts shall fail them," I do not wish to cause fear with my remarks. I know that we can find comfort and hope for these times in the temple. Vaughn J. Featherstone said, "**Before the Savior comes the world will darken. Then will come a period of time where even the elect will lose hope if they do not come to the temples...**"

**"Our garments worn as instructed will clothe us in a manner as protective as temple walls. The covenants and ordinances will fill us with faith as a living fire. In a day of desolating sickness, scorched earth, barren wastes, sickening plagues, disease, destruction, and death, we**

as a people will rest in the shade of trees, we will drink from the cooling fountains. **We will abide in places of refuge from the storm...**"

Pres. Kimball in his book, "The Miracle of Forgiveness" wrote, *"Do we lose faith, do we lose patience, do we lose hope, do we get weary in waiting, because the day is long and the event delayed? It is difficult to be prepared for an event so long delayed. Many have found it too difficult and they slumber without due preparation. Hundreds of thousands of us today are in this position. Confidence has been dulled and patience worn thin. It is so hard to wait and be prepared always. But we cannot allow ourselves to slumber."*

"I believe that the Ten Virgins represent the people of the Church of Jesus Christ and not the rank and file of the world. All of the virgins, wise and foolish, had accepted the invitation to the wedding supper; they had knowledge of the program and had been warned of the important day to come. They were not the gentiles or the heathens or the pagans, nor were they necessarily corrupt and reprobate, but they were knowing people who were foolishly unprepared for the vital happenings that were to affect their eternal lives. They had the saving, exalting gospel, but it had not been made the center of their lives. They knew the way but gave only a small measure of loyalty and devotion. I ask you: What value is a car without an engine, a cup without water, a table without food, a lamp without oil? The foolish asked the others to share their oil, **but spiritual and temporal preparedness cannot be shared in an instant.** The wise had to go; else the bridegroom would have gone unwelcomed. They needed all their oil for themselves; they could not save the foolish. **The responsibility was each for himself. This was not selfishness or unkindness.**"

"The foolish virgins were not averse to buying oil. They knew they should have oil. **They merely procrastinated, not knowing when the bridegroom would come.** The day of the marriage feast approaches. The coming of the Lord is nigh. **And there are many among us who are not ready for the great and glorious event.**"

Recently I heard a stake president bear his testimony in his ward. He said that the most important message he was bringing back from regional conference was that we must "Get Our Houses in Order." He said that at the regional leadership conference a general authority referenced President Hinckley's talk from ten years ago regarding Pharaoh's Dream and the stormy weather ahead, and the need to have our houses in order. Then the apostle asked them how many of the leadership in attendance now wished that they had hearkened to his message? Our various leaders are increasingly referencing this talk regarding Pharaoh's Dream, I believe because it may be prophetic for our day.

The first time President Hinckley mentioned Pharaoh's dream was in 1998 when he said, "I wish to speak to you about temporal matters. As a backdrop for what I wish to say, I read to you a few verses from the 41st chapter of Genesis where Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, dreamed dreams which greatly troubled him... 'And I saw in my dream... seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them.' Then Joseph's interpretation, 'Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine. . . And God will shortly bring it to pass.' (Gen. 41:20, 26, 30, 32). 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 of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed... That's all I have to say about it, but I wish to say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable." A portent means something of prophetic or ominous significance. President Hinckley also spoke of the fragile economy, how people are living off of their borrowings instead of earnings and how paying interest is financial bondage. He said that he hoped that there wouldn't be a depression... twice, but then said he is concerned about all the debt our members are carrying. He talked about how Elder Faust paid off his mortgage quickly, and how happy that has made him.

President Hinckley again referenced Pharaoh's dream just weeks after the 9/11 terrorist attack in his talk, "The Times In Which We Live." Pres. Hinckley said, "**The economy is particularly vulnerable. We have been counseled again and again concerning self-reliance, concerning debt, concerning thrift. So many of our people are heavily in debt for things that are not entirely necessary.**" Then he talked about getting a modest home and paying it off as quickly as possible. He said, "**We cannot provide against every contingency. But we can provide against many contingencies.** Let the present situation 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...**" He then referenced Pharaoh's dream when he said, "I do not know what the future holds. I do not wish to sound negative, but I wish to remind you of the warnings of scripture and the teachings of the prophets which we have had constantly before us. I cannot forget the great lesson of Pharaoh's dream of the fat and 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 24th chapter of Matthew. I am familiar, as are you, with the declarations of modern revelation that the time will come when the earth will be cleansed and there will be indescribable distress, with weeping and mourning and lamentation** (see D&C 112:24). Now, I do not wish to be an alarmist. I do not wish to be a prophet of doom."

Said President Hinckley in October Conference in 2005, "What (calamities) we have experienced in the past was all foretold, and the end is not yet. Just as there have been calamities in the past, we expect more in the future. What do we do? Someone has said it was not raining when Noah built the ark. But he built it, and the rains came... We can heed warnings... We are told by seismologists that the Salt Lake Valley is a potential earthquake zone... 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. In words of revelation the Lord has said, "**Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing**" (D&C 109:8 ). **Our people for three-quarters of a century have been counseled and encouraged to make such preparation as will assure survival should a calamity come.** We can set aside some water, basic food, medicine, and clothing to keep us warm. We ought to have a little money laid aside in case of a rainy day..." This talk was given exactly seven years from the date that President Hinckley first gave (as I call it) his "seven years of plenty talk." In it he again mentioned the dream of Pharaoh when he said, "**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.**"

In last June's Ensign, President Eyring said, "In our own time we have been warned with counsel on where to find safety... One of the keys to recognizing those warnings is that they are repeated." President Hinckley has mentioned Pharaoh's dream three times in the past ten years.

If we started counting from 1998 and likened our day to what happened in Joseph's time, we would find ourselves in the fourth of the lean years. It is interesting to note what was happening in Egypt during that time. In Genesis 47:15 it says, “**And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth.**” As their money failed they then gave the government their remaining assets including their valuables, homes and lands in exchange for food and shelter. Around the end of the fourth year the people were gathered into cities and became slaves to the government.

We can see that financially we are in lean years and most agree that it will take years to come out of this recession...but could we experience an actual famine of food? I cannot say, although famines are prophesied for the last days and indeed they are currently happening all over the world, i.e. recently there have been record breaking droughts in California, Texas, Argentina and Australia, flooding in Indonesia, China, the Midwest and Myanmar, fires all over the Western United States, locusts in Kazakhstan, Australia and India, grain fungus in Africa and the Gulf Countries, declining bees and increasing rats all over the world, bird flu, pig flu, cow diseases, volcanic ash that has made some rich areas of the world sterile, salmonella and other disease outbreaks in our produce and other problems which effect our food supply such as food transportation, increased prices for animal feed, fertilizers and seed, etc. China, the Gulf countries and other wealthy countries are buying up prime farm land all over the world. With high prices for fertilizer and seed and current low prices for their farm produce, dwindling crop insurance availability, as well as tightening credit by banks, many farmers may be struggling to come up with the money to put in their crops come spring.

Even though we had an abundant harvest last year in the US, over the past few years the world has eaten more food than it has produced. The world food reserve became very low and the United States' food reserve was completely gone for a time. According to the USDA global food projections for 2008 there was only a 2.6 percent margin between production and consumption of food last year. This means that the world food supply is very vulnerable going forward. Also, in 2008 the last of the US government owned grain was sold. The United States Government no longer has a supply of food in case of emergency.

Fortunately, that doesn't matter to us in the church because the church has grains enough and to spare...at least that is what most of us are banking on. That is not what our leaders say however, from President Faust we hear: "**Every father and mother are the family's storekeepers. They should store whatever their own family would like to have in the case of an emergency...[and] God will sustain us through our trials.**"

A friend in Northern Utah told me that he was recently called as the ward employment specialist in his ward. When he was called there were two chronically unemployed men in his ward, two weeks later there were 11 families without work. When I went visiting teaching a month or two ago a brother shared that he had just been let go that day, his neighbor said that his small construction company was letting go 11 workers the next day. They also talked about the dwindling state of their 401K funds and how it would no longer sustain them for long.

Can the church feed us all? During the 1980 recession Bishop Victor L. Brown told us, “Within the

last twelve months, the distribution of fast offerings and commodities by the bishops has been alarming. At the present rate of demand, the Church resources will be almost expended in a short time...**It would appear that in altogether too many cases the teachings about preparedness have been either misunderstood or knowingly rejected.** Many of our members appear to feel that when difficulty comes, the Church will come to their aid, even when they could have prepared themselves had their priorities been appropriate...**the welfare program rests on the basic principle of personal and family preparedness, not on Church preparedness.** We are concerned that because the Church program includes production projects, canneries, bishops' storehouses, Deseret Industries, and other visible activities, **our people are mistakenly led to believe these things replace the need for them to provide for themselves. This simply is not so...** It is the opinion of many that more difficult times lie ahead. We are deeply concerned about the welfare of our people and recognize the potential privation and suffering that will exist if each person and family does not accept the word of the Lord when he says, "Prepare every needful thing" (D&C 88:119) and "It must needs be done in mine own way" (D&C 104:16)." It is silly to believe that the church can provide for all of us...in order to feed the population of Utah survival rations for a year it could take close to a billion pounds of grains/beans.

Calamities can happen to us all...even the saintliest of Latter Day Saints. President Ezra Taft Benson told of his experiences with the righteous saints in war torn Europe, "I shall never forget the Saints of Hamburg who appeared on the verge of collapse from starvation, or their small children whom I invited to come to the stand as we emptied our pockets of edibles. Most had never seen these items before because of the wartime conditions... We saw the terrible physical and social side effects of hunger and malnutrition... I cannot forget the French Saints who, unable to obtain bread, used potato peelings for the emblems of the sacrament..."

**"Too often we bask in our comfortable complacency and rationalize that the ravages of war, economic disaster, famine, and earthquake cannot happen here. Those who believe this are either not acquainted with the revelations of the Lord, or they do not believe them. Those who smugly think these calamities will not happen, that they somehow will be set aside because of the righteousness of the Saints, are deceived and will rue the day they harbored such a delusion."**

The First Presidency told us in, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World", "By divine design, **fathers are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families.**" Over the years we have been told repeatedly that personal and family preparedness is the responsibility of the members, not the church.

So what is expected of us? First is to gather a three-month supply of foods that we normally eat. Then we should gather a longer-term supply. What is meant by "longer-term" is left between us and the Lord. Brigham Young encouraged the saints in his time to store seven years worth of provisions, then it progressively declined over the decades to just one year of provisions. This counsel stayed the same for over 70 years. I have read that some Christian denominations plan on storing food to last the whole of the seven years of tribulation. Most in our church would agree that that is "overkill" but we need to be close enough to the spirit to discern how much long-term storage the Lord would have us store for our families and others.

According to the food calculator on provident living an LDS family of 6 needs 300 pounds of grains and 60 pounds of beans and other legumes per person to stay alive for one year...that means they would need 2,160 lbs. of food.

The church also recommends that, "You...add other items to your longer-term storage such as sugar, nonfat dry milk, salt, baking soda, and cooking oil...(and) foods containing Vitamin C and other essential nutrients."

A year's supply of food at the cannery costs \$284 (for 12 "starter kits"...The starter kit is a one month supply of food for one person. Each box contains: 2 cans wheat, 2 cans rice, 1 can oatmeal and 1 can of beans.) For a family of six this year supply would have 72 cases and would cost \$1,706 dollars.

A lot of people think if the government and church can't feed their family they can turn to their neighbors for food. This scenario is unlikely because even if your neighbor has a year supply of food on hand, a meal's ration of food is less than a cup per meal. (2/5 C Beans, 2 cups grains per day.) Since in many wards there are only a few families with such supplies it is unlikely that they will be able to feed their extended family members and their children...let alone their friends, ward members, neighbors, work associates and all of the many other people that say to them, "**We know where to come when things get bad.**" In other words, **if your neighbor feeding you and your children is your plan, you need another plan!**

Many believe that it is pointless to store food since it would be gone so quickly...to them it seems better to continue on and use their money to "eat, drink and be merry" as much as they can, while they can. The reason I would give for why we should prepare is probably different than what most others would say. I believe we should prepare because the Lord has lovingly commanded us to do so. Being obedient to the Lord may be more important than we think. This commandment to prepare may be one of those irrevocable laws upon which our future blessings are predicated. A few years ago, Elder McMullin told us to, "**Be faithful. Unencumber your life. Lay up in store...As we do our very best (he said), we can be confident that "the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail."** We shall enjoy greater wisdom, security, peace of mind, and personal well-being. **We shall be prepared, and because we are prepared, we "shall not fear."**" Those are blessings worth preparing for!

Some people buy fire, flood, theft, disaster, electronic, appliance, home warranty and car insurance every year. Food or as some people call it "famine insurance" may be an important insurance to add to your list. "Famine insurance" or food may not always be easily available. There is a saying that goes something like this, "**I would rather prepare five years too early, than five minutes too late.**" **It only takes hours to clean out grocery store's shelves when disasters are imminent.** Most of us do not live near areas of many orchards, commercial gardens, milk farms, ranches with many thousands of cattle or food crops. Many must travel miles to get to the nearest grocery store. As communities we are very vulnerable if for any reason our food supply was stopped for more than a few days. If you are ready to start preparing it is important to make your cannery appointments now, since at times last year it was very difficult to get an appointment at most LDS canneries and in many areas at times there was little cannery food available to can.

Our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson has said, "**Many more people could ride out the**

storm-tossed waves in their economic lives if they had their year's supply of food...and were debt-free. Today we find that many have followed this counsel in reverse: **they have at least a year's supply of debt and are food-free.**"

Heber C. Kimball in 1856 talking to the people of the mountain west said, "Yes, we think we are secure here in the chambers of these everlasting hills ... but I want to say to you, my brethren, the time is coming when we will be mixed up in these now peaceful valleys to that extent that it will be difficult to tell the face of a Saint from the face of an enemy against the people of God. Then is the time to look out for the great sieve, for there will be a great sifting time, and many will fall. For I say unto you there is a test, a test, a TEST coming."

In April 2004, Elder Dallin H. Oaks said, "Four matters are indisputable to Latter-day Saints:

(1) The Savior will return to the earth in power and great glory to reign personally during a millennium of righteousness and peace.

(2) At the time of His coming there will be a destruction of the wicked and a resurrection of the righteous.

(3) No one knows the time of His coming, but

(4) the faithful are taught to study the signs of it and to be prepared for it." He goes on to say, "We are living in the prophesied time when peace shall be taken from the earth (D&C 1:35), when all things shall be in commotion and men's hearts shall fail them (D&C 88:91)."

Elder Eyring spoke in 2005 and said, "**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...and all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people. (D&C 88: 88-91) As the challenges around us increase, we must commit to do more to qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost.**"

Said Elder Boyd K. Packer in 2005, "**If 9/11 was a wake-up call, then the earthquake and tsunami in Southeast Asia, was a kick out of bed. We need to pay attention to the signs of the times.**"

In the June 2008 Ensign, President Eyring told us, "**Another fallacy is to believe that the choice to accept or not accept the counsel of prophets is no more than deciding whether to accept good advice and gain its benefits or to stay where we are. But the choice not to take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. That ground becomes more dangerous. The failure to take prophetic counsel lessens our power to take inspired counsel in the future.** The best time to have decided to help Noah build the ark was the first time he asked. Each time he asked after that, each failure to respond would have lessened sensitivity to the Spirit. And so each time his request would have seemed more foolish, until the rain came. And then it was too late."

How foolish do people who have stored a three-month supply of food and a longer-term supply for their families and others seem to you? Pres. Benson said "**The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah.**"

Every prophet (until President Monson) over the last 70 years has talked about having the Church

members get a bare minimum of at least one year's supply of basic food items. It is interesting that this has recently changed...the church now has put particular emphasis on gaining a three-month supply of foods your family normally eats. This is interesting to me because twelve weeks is generally the accepted amount of time experts say most families will need to "shelter-in-place" in case of pandemic in their area. At the government pandemic flu site it says, "In an affected community, at least two pandemic disease waves (about 6-8 weeks each) are likely over several months." Experts agree that it is only a matter of time before the next pandemic hits.

The 1918 flu took one week to spread across the country. With today's travel it will be a matter of hours. It would be well if we were prepared enough to be able to go directly home when the next pandemic hits. Quarantine conditions will quickly prevent further distribution of food to communities and stores for perhaps months at a time. My grandparents were children when the 1918 pandemic hit. During that pandemic many children including some of my ancestors were sent to live with their grandparents in the country.

This major change in what we should store occurred last year when a new pamphlet entitled, "All Is Safely Gathered In" was distributed. This pamphlet was first talked about by the Presiding Bishopric, then was handed out in February 2007 to the bishop's to distribute to all the families in their wards, and later was included in the August 2007 Ensign. It would seem that they wanted all of us to read it.

The following letter is from this pamphlet...

Message from the First Presidency

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Our Heavenly Father created this beautiful earth, with all its abundance, for our benefit and use. His purpose is to provide for our needs as we walk in faith and obedience. He has lovingly commanded us to "prepare every needful thing" (see D&C 109) so that, should adversity come, we may care for ourselves and our neighbors and support bishops as they care for others.

**We encourage Church members worldwide to prepare for adversity in life by having a basic supply of food and water and some money in savings.**

We ask that you be wise as you store food and water and build your savings. Do not go to extremes; it is not prudent, for example, to go into debt to establish your food storage all at once. With careful planning, you can, over time, establish a home storage supply and a financial reserve.

We realize that some of you may not have financial resources or space for such storage. Some of you may be prohibited by law from storing large amounts of food. We encourage you to store as much as circumstances allow.

May the Lord bless you in your home storage efforts.

Brother and Sisters, the Lord sent us down in this difficult dispensation for a purpose. President Benson told us, “For nearly 6,000 years, God has held you, most of you, in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the second coming of the Lord.” He also said, “Make no mistake about it, you are a marked generation. . . There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time than there is of us.” “Never before on the face of this earth have the forces of evil and the forces of good been so well organized” . . . **“The final outcome is certain—the forces of righteousness will finally win. But what remains to be seen is where each of us personally, now and in the future, will stand in this battle—and how tall will we stand?”** . . .” While our generation will be comparable in wickedness to the days of Noah, when the Lord cleansed the earth by flood, there is a major difference this time: God has saved for the final inning some of His stronger and most valiant children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly. . . . **You are the generation that must be prepared to meet your God** . . .

I would like to read Bishop McMullin’s promises one last time, **“As we do our very best, we can be confident that “the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail.” We shall enjoy greater wisdom, security, peace of mind, and personal well-being. We shall be prepared, and because we are prepared, we “shall not fear.”**

The Lord has lovingly commanded us to prepare every needful thing. May the Lord watch over us, direct us, guide us and bless us with His miracles as we do our very best to do so . . .