

You are a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and have been ordained to hold the priesthood of God. President Monson has said: “We have been entrusted to bear the priesthood and to act in the name of God. We are the recipients of a sacred trust. Much is expected of us” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2007, 63; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 59).

You belong to a priesthood quorum of young men, where you can feel the brotherhood and friendship of other priesthood holders. The quorum is a protection for you against worldly influences. You are able to serve one another and

participate in the ordinances of the priesthood. In your quorums you are also taught the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which help you understand who you are. Young men, honor the priesthood of God.

I testify that knowing who you are and keeping your promises and covenants with the Lord will bring you happiness in your life.

May we all be able to know and understand who we really are. May the Spirit we feel tonight bear “witness with our spirit[s], that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder John M. Madsen

President Hinckley’s experience at age 12

My beloved brethren of the priesthood, as I begin, I would like to direct my remarks to each 12-year-old deacon attending this general priesthood session. Wherever you are, I want to acknowledge your presence and to tell or remind you of the experience that President Gordon B. Hinckley had when he was, like you are, a 12-year-old deacon. From his biography we read:

“Not long after he was ordained a deacon, he attended his first stake priesthood meeting with his father. . . . He felt a little out of place as he found a seat on the back row of the Tenth Ward chapel while [his father] (who was serving in the stake presidency) took his place on the stand. To open the meeting, the three or four hundred men present stood and sang William W. Phelps’s triumphant anthem . . . ‘Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah! / Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer. / Blessed to open the last dispensation, / Kings shall extol him, and nations revere.’”

Reflecting back on that experience, President Hinckley said: “Something happened within me as I heard those men of faith sing. It touched my heart. It gave me

a feeling that was difficult to describe. I felt a great moving power, both emotional and spiritual. I had never had it previously in terms of any Church experience. There came into my heart a conviction that the man of whom they sang was really a prophet of God. I knew then, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of God.”¹

Even as that experience had by President Hinckley as a 12-year-old deacon was “one he would remember for the rest of his life,”² I pray that the experience you are having will be one you will remember for the rest of your lives.

Potential of young men

Now, I invite us all to look at this remarkable cast bronze sculpture entitled *Deacons’ Bench*. For those of you who cannot see it, *Deacons’ Bench* is the likeness of five deacons, caught in a candid moment while seated on a bench in church.

As you look at these five deacons, what do you see? Now, as I read statements by two former Presidents of the Church, I will ask the question a little differently: what *can* you see?

President Joseph Fielding Smith declared: “Our young people . . . are the nobility of heaven, a choice and chosen generation who have a divine destiny. Their spirits have been reserved to come forth in this day when the gospel is on earth, and when the Lord needs valiant servants to carry on his great latter-day work.”³

President Spencer W. Kimball declared, “We are rearing a royal generation . . . who have special things to do.”⁴

In light of these prophetic declarations, if we expand our vision beyond five deacons on a bench to include all of the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, then what can you see?

I trust and pray that we can all see their divine potential; that we can see them going forth as bearers of the holy priesthood and as missionaries preaching “the everlasting gospel”⁵ by the Spirit⁶ “to the nations of the earth”;⁷ that we can see them as faithful husbands and fathers and as valiant servants in and leaders of the Church and kingdom of God in these latter days.

A divine destiny

In order for us to more clearly envision the divine destiny of this chosen and royal generation, we need only to reflect upon the 12-year-old Jesus, who went up to Jerusalem with His parents to celebrate the Feast of the Passover.⁸

Who was this 12-year-old boy? What was His mission and destiny? And how was He able to fulfill it?

We proclaim and the scriptures confirm that He was and is Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God;⁹ that He “came into the world . . . to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness”¹⁰ “that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name”;¹¹ that as a youth He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and

man”;¹² that He “grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of his ministry to come”;¹³ and that He “was in all points tempted like as we are.”¹⁴ Indeed, He faced “temptations of every kind”¹⁵ but “gave no heed unto them.”¹⁶ And when confronted by Lucifer, “the father of all lies,”¹⁷ “the author of all sin,”¹⁸ Jesus was protected not only by His knowledge of the scriptures but also by His absolute obedience to the word and will of His Father,¹⁹ and He commanded, saying, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”²⁰

Now, as to how He was able to fulfill His mission and destiny, consider these words of Jesus, who said:

“When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

“And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”²¹

That each one of us, as sons of God,²² can fulfill our mission and destiny is made plain by these words of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith: “Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments . . . may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.”²³

I so testify, as I also bear my witness that President Thomas S. Monson is indeed a prophet of God and that he and his counselors in the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are prophets, seers, and revelators, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. In Sheri Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1996), 35–36.

2. “President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *In Memoriam: President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1910–2008* (a supplement to the *Ensign*, Mar. 2008), 3.
3. Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 6.
4. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 69; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 45.
5. Revelation 14:6; Doctrine and Covenants 68:1; see also Doctrine and Covenants 133:7–8.
6. See Matthew 10:19–20; Luke 24:32; Doctrine and Covenants 42:14; 43:15; 50:13–22; 84:85.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 134:12; see also Revelation 14:6; Doctrine and Covenants 68:8; 133:7–8.
8. See Luke 2:41–42.
9. See Matthew 16:16; 2 Nephi 25:19–20; Mosiah 3:8; 4:2; Alma 5:48; Helaman 5:9; 3 Nephi 5:13; 11:10–11; 20:31; Doctrine and Covenants 14:9; 68:6.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 76:41.
11. Mosiah 3:9; see also Mosiah 3:12; Doctrine and Covenants 18:17–19, 21–25.
12. Luke 2:52.
13. Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 3:24.
14. Hebrews 4:15.
15. Alma 7:11.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 20:22.
17. 2 Nephi 2:18; Ether 8:25; Moses 4:4.
18. Helaman 6:30; see also Mosiah 4:14.
19. See Matthew 4:1–10.
20. Matthew 4:10.
21. John 8:28–29.
22. See Psalm 82:6; Hosea 1:10; Romans 8:16–17; Hebrews 12:9; Doctrine and Covenants 11:30; 35:2; Moses 6:68.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 93:1, 19; see also John 14:6; 2 Nephi 31:7–16; 3 Nephi 12:48; 27:27; Moroni 10:32–33; Doctrine and Covenants 76:92–95.

President Monson

Thank you, brethren.

We invite the choir and congregation to sing at this time “Ye Elders of Israel.” President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will then address us, after which we shall hear from President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

The choir and congregation sang “Ye Elders of Israel.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

My dear brethren, I feel your strength and goodness as we assemble as the priesthood of God. I love you; I admire you. Thank you for your faith, your prayers, and your willingness to serve the Lord.

The call to serve as Second Counselor

It is now two months since President Thomas S. Monson called me to serve as Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church. I am sure this came as a surprise to many, and it caught me off guard as well. In fact, I would say I may have been the second most surprised person on earth, the first being my wife.

On the day the Quorum of the Twelve met in the temple to sustain President

Monson and ordain and set him apart as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I felt overjoyed to have the opportunity to raise my hand in support of my beloved friend and leader.

After President Monson was sustained, he announced his counselors.

President Eyring was no surprise. He is a man of stature and character—a wonderful choice as First Counselor. How I love and admire him.

Then President Monson announced his Second Counselor. It was a name that sounded strangely familiar. It was my name.

I looked around the room, not sure I had heard correctly. But the smiles from