



# *Our Peril When We Ignore the Prophets*

by  
**Elder Monte J. Brough**  
**First Quorum of the Seventy**

**M**y name is Elder Brough, spelled B R O U G H. My first companion on my first mission was Elder Cluff, spelled C L U F F. We used to argue a lot on just how you really should spell that. One day we were knocking on doors. It was my turn and a woman came to the door. I said, "My name is Elder Brough and this is my companion Elder Cluff," and she said, "Well, my name is Mrs. Hough." And at the same time we both said, "How do you spell that." She said, "H O U G H." I've felt vindicated ever since.

I give a little tribute to President (Stephen K.) Woodhouse. He and I were systems engineers at IBM for a number of years. We both found other, more exciting things to do, but we've keep track of each other over the years and I've valued that friendship.

How many of you have heard me speak in the last 60 days. Good, then I can tell the same stories. It has to do with the fact that America is different today than it was 90 days ago. The world is different than it was 90 days ago. We're all shocked at the carnage at the World Trade Center as we watch repeat after repeat on the news channels of that terrible, terrible event. Almost mind-boggling wasn't it. When you saw those pictures and considered what was happening, it almost didn't seem possible. And yet it was, and we're now changed. I'd like to tell you a few other things as background.

My boys and I have had the hobby of climbing mountains. We've climbed the Andes in South America, the Two Goths in Alaska, Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa. We've climbed the Altus in Mongolia; we've climbed the Caucus, which is part of the mountain range that occupies most of the northern part of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Caucus Mountains are enormous mountains. When you think about the mountains we have here, we're at about 4,000 feet and these largest ones go to about 9,000 feet, or a differential of about 5,000 feet. They seem to be pretty big to people who come from New York or Georgia. But those mountains in Afghanistan go from sea level to 29,000 feet, or in other

words, about six times the seeming differential of where we are to the top of our mountains. They are enormous. There were times climbing those mountains when I honestly wondered whether we'd make it back. I said to myself, "Brough, you idiot. How did you get in a situation like this?" They were so enormous.

Most of the transportation in that part of the world is on little horses or camels. You know the two-humped camel comes from that part of the world. As we were going up into the mountains we had a little 500-pound Asian horse that they put a pack on of about 150 pounds or something like that. I come from Randolph, Utah, and I know a little bit about horses. I know a little bit about putting weight on them. As we put this 150 pound pack on this little horse, I thought, boy that's a might big pack. Then they said to me, "Get on." I got on, my feet almost dragging on the ground, sitting on this pack. Then they said to my son, "Get on." So we climbed up this mountain on this little, tiny horse. There were places where the trail wasn't any wider than this pulpit. We would look off down the edge and it was a long way down there. This little horse was only 500 pounds and he was probably carrying that much. And they don't even pant, don't even get tired. It would kill our quarter horses over here. Our horses would never make it. So I've been in those mountains. Let me tell you this, those mountains are tough, and I don't know what we're going to do entirely with this environment that's over there now.

What we're facing, brothers and sisters, is not a new situation. I don't know how you've felt as you read the Book of Mormon, but for me the language and literature of Alma has always been my favorite. But I decided after September 11 that I wanted to go back into Helaman. So I've made a study over the last 60 days of the Book of Helaman and can here assert that the events we have before us in 2001 are not new. This has happened before. You don't need to write down these scriptures, just remember the book of Helaman. Go home and study it. Particularly start out at about Chapter

11 and read through the rest of the book and see if, in fact, we don't have a very close tie to what's happening in this world in the year 2001.

Let me start reading to you:

"And it came to pass in the eightieth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, there were a certain number of the dissenters from the people of Nephi who had some years before gone over unto the Lamanites, and taken upon themselves the name of Lamanites, and also a certain number who were real descendants of the Lamanites, being stirred up to anger by them, or by those dissenters, therefore they commenced a war with their brethren.

"And they did commit murder and plunder; and then would retreat back into the mountains and into the wilderness and secret places, hiding themselves that they could not be discovered,"-by the way, I'm not reading from the pages of *The Salt Lake Tribune*. I'm reading from the book of Helaman. "And they could not be discovered, receiving daily an addition to their numbers." This morning as I rode in my car listening to the news, they spoke of efforts to find the leaders of the Taliban and el-Quida and, of course, Osama bin-Laden. They think now that they're going to melt back into the mountains and that we may not be able to find them.

Listen: "And thus in the space of time, yea, even in the space of not many years, they became an exceedingly great band of robbers; and they did search out all the secret plans of Gadianton." I'm going to assert that those secret plans of Gadianton are still available to wicked people. "And thus they became robbers of Gadianton. And behold, these robbers did make great havoc, yea, even great destruction among the people of Nephi, and also among the people of the Lamanites."

They didn't care who they were killing. They didn't care anything at all about the value of life. They were just killing everybody. And that's again what's happening today in the year 2001. When they flew those plans into those buildings they didn't care who they were killing. They didn't care if it were men, women, or children; whether they were Muslim, Jew, or Christian. They didn't care anything about that. It was just slaughter people and cause this great havoc. So we have to have a president of the United States stand before the people.

Let me read his speech:

"And it came to pass that it was expedient that there should be a stop put to this work of destruction; therefore they sent an army of strong men into the wilderness."

Now, what do we have? We have an army of strong men over their now, as we speak. There are some ground forces and we know they went into Kabul yesterday. We don't have many but enough to say there's an army of strong men. I guess in Helaman's day they didn't use B-52s, smart missiles, or those kinds of weapons, but still they went in to put a stop to this work of destruction. So they sent this army out into the wilderness "and upon the mountains to search out this band of robbers, and to destroy them." Seems ringingly familiar, doesn't it?

"But behold, it came to pass that in that same year they were driven back." In other words, they weren't successful. Now, I don't know what's going to happen today. I'm pretty sure that Helaman did not intend this to be prophetic. He's just telling us the story of events as they occurred during that time. But to me, I am struck with how similar those events were to the events as they are today.

"They were driven back even into their own lands. And thus ended the eightieth year.... And it came to pass in the commencement of the eighty and first year they did go forth again against this band of robbers, and did destroy many; and they were also visited with much destruction." Now that destruction may not be just American lives. Many Afghans have died in the last few months and weeks who have been innocent. There's been a terrible death toll.

"And they were obliged again to return out of the wilderness and out of the mountains unto their own lands," and so on. They went back and forth for four years. Finally, Helaman decides to change the subject a little bit. He says, in effect: Now back at the home front. "And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him."

So what do we have now? Suddenly it's all right to have a prayer at a baseball game and to sing God Bless America. It's suddenly all right to fly a flag; it's suddenly okay to have a moment of silence. It's okay to talk about God, suddenly in the last 90 days. There's been enormous change in attitude toward this. I wonder why?

"Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind, and art."

And so we have this wonderful, affluent lifestyle. But let me tell you, my friends. There was a time when I was sent on assignment over the Pakistan, to Sri Lanka, to India, to Bangladesh, and to some of those countries. I remember getting back one night very late-my wife and my children

already in bed-so I prepared myself and knelt down by the side of my bed to say my evening prayers. All of a sudden I found I could not pray. I couldn't think of words that were adequate. Everything I thought seemed selfish, and narrow, and inadequate, and all those kinds of adjective that made my prayers seem almost hopeless to me. How could I ask for more blessings on my children after what I had seen? How could I express gratitude properly in a way that would help me somehow fit this need I had to express myself to my Heavenly Father after what I had seen in some of those countries. I struggled for about an hour and then got up and went to bed without my prayer. Now, it's not a good thing for a General Authority not to know how to pray. The next day I had the same trouble, feeling like a hypocrite, like the world's worst self-centered person in the way I was trying to say my prayer. So I made a study of prayer.

Well, they keep having this wonderful affluence, the Lord "sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and it fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One-yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity."

Somehow in this wonderful ease and prosperity that we have we're actually found trampling on the Savior, the Holy One of Israel. I wonder how that could happen? The Lord, through Helaman, decided to teach us about that. I continue reading, not from the *Salt Lake Tribune* or *Deseret News*:

"And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him."

He goes on to talk about the great city of Zarahemla and how there's a residue of righteous there, but mostly it's a hard city. As he describes Zarahemla, he describes New York for me.

I've had a lot of business in New York. I've spent much time in New York. I hope I'm not offending anyone when I tell you it is a hard city. And it is not a righteous city. I remember a time when I flew back there with President Harold B. Lee on a business trip. He was then on the Board of Directors of Union Pacific. I said to him as we were flying in, "President, I have a car waiting for us to take us downtown. Can I offer you a ride?" He said he'd appreciate that so I gave him a ride down to a hotel on 5th Avenue in lower Manhattan. As we parked the car, I jumped out of my side to run around to open the door for President Lee. As he got out, there were two prostitutes standing there trying to solicit the president of the Church. I about died. I was so offended with the ignorance of those girls and so offended

that they wouldn't know what they were doing. I was angry as all get out. Of course, he just brushed it off and went into the hotel. New York is tough. The scriptural account goes on to say that there is a residue of righteous that will save the world, and I assert that residue of righteous are some of those in New York. We've had wonderful examples of people who are willing to give all to help others and to save others. There is a residue of righteous and good people, but by and large this nation, because of our ease, and our comfort, and our affluence, has largely hardened our hearts. I'm not speaking about Latter-day Saints; I'm speaking about Americans. We have largely hardened our hearts about our feelings about the Savior, and because of this we ignore the message of the Holy One of Israel. There's even this curse that was placed on Zarahemla that might exist today:

"And I will curse your riches," if you keep this up, "I will curse your riches that they will become slippery unto you that ye cannot hold onto them."

What happened the week after September 11? The stock market collapsed 1,500 points in just a few days: a tremendous loss of riches, slippery riches. And there is still a great jeopardy for the economy to go one way or another. President Hinckley said there are portends of things we may not want to be.

A little later in the book of Helaman, we've got the war going on in the mountains with the Gadianton and an army of strong men trying to find these people who are causing this great havoc. And then we've got the folks back home in their comfort and their ease. And because they're going about as selfish things, they're not listening to the Lord. They're actually trampling on Him because of their comfort and their ease. Samuel is speaking to them. Remember they rejected him, they tried to kill him, so he got up on the wall and spoke, the people still trying to kill him. He's a little sarcastic to some of them. Let me read this:

"And now when ye talk, ye say: If our days had been in the days of our fathers of old, we would not have slain the prophets; we would not have stoned them, and cast them out. Behold ye are worse than they; for as the Lord liveth, if a prophet come among you and declareth unto the word of the Lord, which testifieth of your sins and iniquities, ye are angry with him, and cast him out and seek all manner of ways to destroy him; yea, you will say that he is a false prophet."

Let's talk about that scenario. We live in days of prophets. We wouldn't cast them out, would we? We wouldn't have ignored them. Let me just mention a couple of things that we might use as an indicator of how we might apply this to ourselves. Three years ago, President Hinckley talked about debt. He talked about the debt that families go into with plastic money, and some of you in this room are spending more than you should. What has the prophet said about it?

Stop it. Don't get into debt. Don't spend more than you have. Save a little because you may need some savings. Our neighbor in Kaysville lost his job yesterday. He's an engineer with an MBA. Even with all that education he lost his job. He had no savings at all. They're not prepared at all the weather the storm of their father and husband being out of work. We found through our studies that three years after President Hinckley's talk, people have more debt. There is a higher level of consumer debt in Utah than there was three years ago. What has the prophet said about food storage over the years? He mentioned it briefly in this last conference. Our studies show us that less than 10 percent of active Latter-day Saints along the Wasatch Front have enough to last for 90 days. We don't stone the prophet. We don't kick him out. We just ignore him. What does he say about the dress of young people? I don't see anyone here that falls in this category, but he's asked young women not to wear a lot of earrings, to be modest in the one pair they could wear. What about body tattoos? He's asked us not to. I spoke recently to a group of younger students and one raised his hand and said, in effect, "Wasn't that silly for President Hinckley to be worried about such a thing as a tattoo?" We don't cast out the prophets, do we? We just ignore them. I actually found a group of young men who laughed at the idea he would be concerned about young men wearing earrings. Well, we don't cast out the prophet. We just ignore him.

Now that we've gotten into this mess with our affluence and our comfort and our ease and our strong men over fighting a war and trying to root these people out of the mountains and destroy them if we can, let's go look at the rest of what Samuel said. In the rest of the chapters there's one word that summarizes what has to change among the people back home in order to quit stamping under their feet the Holy One of Israel. If you could judge that one word, what would it be? One word. It's a summary of all the rest of Helaman. The word: ingratitude.

Samuel promises the people that if they will understand and live the law of gratitude they would cease to stamp the Lord under their feet. So how do we live the law of gratitude? One way is observance of the Sabbath day. I used to think the Sabbath day was a day of rest. It's not at all; it's a day of thanksgiving. It's a day of expressing gratitude. It's not a day to lie around and do nothing, and it's not necessarily a day to do studies. It's the kind of thing that we can properly use to express gratitude to our Father in Heaven.

What other ways are there? The law of tithing is an expression of gratitude. Why do we pay our tithing? In the Doctrine and Covenants it says, "for a place of thanksgiving for all saints" that we build a house unto Him for a place of instruction. In other words, tithing is an expression of gratitude so we can build temples. But if we don't go to the temple and do the work there, is that an expression of gratitude? Of course not. So temple work, family history

work is an expression of gratitude. Now you can say you're too young. But I can tell you some of the most exciting computer applications that I've ever dealt with in my years in the computer business are now available on the Internet with Family Search and family history themes. It's fun and will excite anyone who spends much time playing Nintendo or solitaire or whatever else they do with computers other than what they ought to do.

What's another expression of gratitude? I think a student can pay fast offerings. I hope you do. You've been out of your home long enough to be able to see that the comfort and affluence you had is exceedingly great compared to the rest of the world. You can pay a modest fast offering while you're still going through school, but as soon as you're out of school with a good job paying lots of money, instead of buying a Mercedes or a Rolls Royce, you might consider some fast offerings. You might also consider a few other things.

After the early Nephites had some wonderful things happen that caused them to rejoice exceedingly, Father Lehi, as a demonstration of his gratitude, read the scriptures; he searched the scriptures. Reading the scriptures is an expression of gratitude to Heavenly Father. The cost of making the scriptures available to us, the sacrifice and the lives that have been lost preserving the records, stating back, of course, with Moses and with others in the Old Testament, going on into the Book of Mormon, makes it a terrible expression of ingratitude to not read the scriptures. So I suggest that reading the scriptures is something we ought to do, not just for the knowledge we gain but also as an opportunity to express gratitude.

What about the Word of Wisdom? Can anyone violate the Word of Wisdom and still express gratitude for what we are, who we are, where we are, and the circumstances of our lives? I hope there isn't one of you in this room that doesn't understand that. It goes beyond just not doing what's prescribed. In 1972, I was interviewed by S. Dilworth Young. Only the old folks here will remember S. Dilworth Young, but he was a tough cookie. The interview took place in front of a priesthood audience about this size. He called me out of the audience, put me on a chair here in front, and started the interview. He said, "Brother Brough, how do you do with cola drinks?" I said, "Elder Young, I'm an addict. I love Coca-Cola. It's the only drink I really enjoy." He said, "You hypocrite"-In front of all these people-"You hypocrite." And I said, "Well, how's that?" And he said, "Why would you justify drinking Coke and not coffee?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. It's just the way it says it in the scriptures." He said, "It that as far as you've gone?" He just ripped me. I'll never forget that. I've not had a Coke since 1972. But the Word of Wisdom is larger than that; it really is. Those of us who don't take care of ourselves with exercise, and eating properly express ingratitude for what we are, and who we are, and why we are. Some of these things I think we ignore at the risk of

demonstrating ingratitude.

Prayer is a source of gratitude. I now know more about prayer than I knew before. I can now pray, I want to assure you of that. I've learned that prayer is only an expression of how I want to behave. Prayer mostly is behavioral. So if I want to thank Him for blessings I don't just do that with words at the end of the day, although I do that. I thank him with behavior during the day. Prayer is a way we behave, the way we act, the way we react, the way we serve, and the way we live.

Elder Maxwell went on to add another dimension to this that worries me a bit. He said maybe moods can be an expression of ingratitude.

Do any of you know anybody who gets up in the morning and is just grouchy? It takes until about noon before they warm up and you can communicate with them. Do you know of somebody who can see the bad side, the negative side of whatever comes before them? What about somebody who is critical of others? I was raised by a widow. I never heard my mother criticize another person in all the years I knew her. She could not see fault in other people. It was beyond her capacity. She had no ability to criticize whatsoever. I've tried to follow that example and have not done nearly as well. But somebody who is critical of others, is moody toward others, is grouchy; all those are expressions of ingratitude and the very kind of thing that Samuel was worried about and what Elder Maxwell was saying. He goes on to talk about how attitude as part of gratitude becomes part of how we might trample on the Holy One of Israel.

I've introduced a very large subject to you, with the hope that somehow we can understand that the year 2001-the Trade Center in New York, and the fighting that's going on in Afghanistan-and the book of Helaman have astounding similarities. I don't think anybody can read this and not have a greater testimony that the Book of Mormon is divinely inspired. I say Joseph Smith was either a prophet or he was a prophet. He was either a prophet because he created such a magnificent thing, looking forward into our time with events so similar as to be mind-boggling, or he translated the book. That's why I say he was either a prophet or a prophet, there's no way around it because of the beauty of what he's written.

Young people, you should consider it an honor to be here at this institution. You should consider it an honor to be in this part of the world. You should demonstrate that by your honest service. And part of that is to be a good student in preparing yourself for your life and for the things you may have to do to help Heavenly Father with His kingdom. I tell you the person that practices the law of gratitude more than anyone I know is Gordon B. Hinckley. He feels that he owes it. He has this great sense of debt to the Church and to the people. Two weeks ago, in our temple meeting he was quite emotional as he expressed his love for the people, for their faith and their goodness. He said, "I'd like to just hug every-

one of them. And then I'd like to shake them up." You know what I mean. We all need a little shaking up.

So today, as you walk from this devotional, it would be my hope and my prayer that the solution to the problems of this world is not going to be basically a military event. I'm convinced that the basic problems this earth faces will ultimately only be solved by the missionary system of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What happened to the problems with dissenters in the book of Helaman? The people finally gave up the war and went in with missionaries. Missionaries carrying the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ were able to solve those problems. Now, I don't know if we're going to get missionaries into Afghanistan. I've been there and I've tried. We finally got a few into Pakistan, and a few into Indonesia, and a few into Malaysia, all Muslim countries. Afghanistan is a whole new block and most of them are going to be a real challenge to us. So whether we'll find the same solution there as was found in the Book of Mormon, I'm not certain. But I believe this: if there is a solution to this, and if we do bring some peace to this earth it will be because of the missionary system of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

May God help us all, and you, to understand our role in all of this.

