



*Throughout his life, Wilford Woodruff exhibited many spiritual gifts.
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“TO EVERY MAN IS GIVEN A
GIFT”: THE SPIRITUAL LEGACY
OF WILFORD WOODRUFF

STUDENTS of the life of Wilford Woodruff know how deeply spiritual he was. In fact, his spirituality has become somewhat legendary within the Church. Regarding one aspect of President Woodruff’s spirituality—communing with those who have died—Truman G. Madsen noted:

Section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants says that the Melchizedek Priesthood, in holding the keys of the spiritual blessings of the Church, is to have the privilege of holding communion with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn. Who are they? Apparently they are the most righteous, who have filled their missions on earth and are now serving worthily in the spirit world or have inherited celestial

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glory. Did Joseph have communion with them while he was on earth? Yes. The only other man in LDS history who enjoyed a comparable richness of communion was Wilford Woodruff, who seemed to have had that gift from birth, and who seemed to live as if with one foot in the spirit world and one foot in this one. Only Wilford Woodruff could say to a brother as he went down the street in Salt Lake City, “Brother John, it’s good to see you,” and then could add as an afterthought, “You know, I don’t think I’ve seen your father since he died.”¹

Elsewhere we find this: “Wilford Woodruff’s entrance into the spirit world at the age of ninety-one must have been a very natural thing for him, for he had received visitors from that sphere on many occasions. Some of those visitors were Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, George A. Smith, and Jedediah M. Grant. George Washington and many other prominent men of the past sought the blessings of the temple at the hand of this spiritual servant of the Lord.”² President Woodruff himself humbly acknowledged his own spiritual proclivity when he said, “I have been blessed at times with certain gifts and graces, certain revelations and ministrations.”³ Jesus spoke of the spiritual “signs [which] shall follow them that believe” (Mark 16:17). Clearly, Woodruff was a modern-day example of the sundry powers promised in scripture to those called of God. Of these gifts and powers, he once said, “I did not . . . join any church [in my youth] for the reason that I could not find . . . anywhere the manifestations of the Holy Ghost with its attendant gifts and graces. . . . I believed every gift [of the Spirit] . . . to be just as necessary now to constitute the true Church of Christ and Kingdom of God as in any age of the world.”⁴

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When we examine the numerous spiritual encounters Wilford experienced throughout his lifetime, we conclude he may have actually experienced every spiritual gift mentioned in scripture, and a number more besides. Perhaps this should not be surprising. One passage in the Doctrine and Covenants states that to “some it may be given to have all those gifts, that there may be a head, in order that every member may be profited thereby” (D&C 46:29).⁵ And speaking of the President of the Church, another passage reads: “Behold, here is wisdom; yea, to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet, having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church” (D&C 107:92).⁶ What is curious is that these spiritual endowments became somewhat common in Woodruff’s life well before he was called as an Apostle or as President of the Church.

What follows are examples of the spiritual gifts and endowments received and exercised by Wilford Woodruff during his lifetime. Because he left a meticulous journal, I have confined my comments primarily to his own words. Constraints on the length of this paper allow me to offer but a few examples of his spiritual endowments. Suffice it to say that many others could be given.

THE GIFT TO BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE
CHRIST (D&C 46:14; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:9)

On December 29, 1833, two missionaries knocked on the door of Wilford Woodruff’s brother Azmon, who was living in Richland, New York. At the time, twenty-six-year-old Wilford was boarding with Azmon and his wife. The missionaries announced that they were holding a meeting at the schoolhouse that evening and invited Wilford and Azmon to attend. The brothers accepted

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the invitation and went to the schoolhouse. They believed what they heard. Wilford recorded:

Elder [Zera] Pulsipher opened with prayer. He knelt down and asked the Lord in the name of Jesus Christ for what he wanted. His manner of prayer and the influence which went with it impressed me greatly. The spirit of the Lord rested upon me and bore witness that he was a servant of God. After singing, he preached to the people for an hour and a half. The Spirit of God rested mightily upon him and he bore a strong testimony of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon and of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I believed all that he said. The spirit bore witness of its truth. Elder [Elijah] Cheney then arose and added his testimony to the truth of the words of Elder Pulsipher.

Liberty was then given by the elders to anyone in the congregation to arise and speak for or against what they had heard, as they might choose. Almost instantly I found myself upon my feet. The spirit of the Lord urged me to bear testimony to the truth of the message delivered by these elders. I exhorted my neighbors and friends not to oppose these men; for they were the true servants of God. They had preached to us that night the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. When I sat down, my brother Azmon arose and bore a similar testimony. He was followed by several others.⁷

Two days after the meeting, in water mixed with ice and snow, Wilford and three others were baptized.⁸ His quest for truth and his faith in the words of others had brought him to the meeting. That same faith enabled him to receive his own witness that the words spoken were true. Two months after his baptism, he wrote

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to his father informing him that his seeking had ended and that he had found “the everlasting gospel.”⁹

THE GIFT TO KNOW THAT JESUS CHRIST
IS THE SON OF GOD (D&C 46:13)

In his patriarchal blessing, President Woodruff was promised, “Thine eyes shall be open to look within the veil to behold the things of eternity. Yea the Lord of Glory shall appear unto thee. Thou shall put thy hands upon his feet and feel his wounds with thy hands, that thou mayest be a special witness of his name.”¹⁰ He did not record the fulfillment of this blessing. Perhaps, like most Presidents of the Church, he felt such an experience was too sacred to share. Of course, he acknowledged to the Saints that the very day he first heard a Mormon preach he received a witness from the Spirit that the Church was true. And certainly this qualifies him as one having a “personal knowledge” that Jesus is the Christ. But there were other experiences President Woodruff had which, although spoken of only in veiled terms, indicate that he received a more literal fulfillment of the promise. One brother in attendance at the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple reported, “President Wilford Woodruff told some of the saints that our Savior had appeared unto him in the east room in the Holy of Holies, and [Jesus] told him that he had accepted of the Temple and of the dedicatory services. . . . President Woodruff saw the Savior and talked with him face to face.”¹¹ Thus, while this promised blessing appears to have been fulfilled in literal terms, it seems well to acknowledge that in varying degrees, this gift was his throughout his life, even before he was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ.

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THE GIFT TO HAVE FAITH TO BE HEALED (D&C 46:19; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:9; MORONI 10:11)

Throughout his life, President Woodruff had plenty of opportunities to seek healing from faithful men who held the priesthood. In 1856, his own carelessness while skinning a disease-ridden dead cow nearly cost him his life. On April 28, 1856, he wrote: "Several have died this spring by skinning cattle [that] have died. All should be more cautious than what I have been in this matter, and not run the risk of losing their lives by trying to save the skins of animals [that] die with disease. . . . I was only saved through the power and mercy of God."¹² The next day, Woodruff added this journal entry:

The poison [from the dead cow] had so thoroughly penetrated my whole system, that my strength left me; I could not stand, I was led to my bed, my bowels and stomach ceased to act, my speech was like that of a drunken man. President [Brigham] Young called, in company with Dr. Sprague, and laid hands upon me, and rebuked the disease and the power of the destroyer which had seized my body, and promised me in the name of the Lord, that I should not die, but live to finish my work which was appointed me upon the earth. I soon began to recover. The poison and mortification left my system and . . . in a few days I was well again.¹³

President Woodruff was a believer in the power of the priesthood. The words he penned during this experience stand as a testament to his conviction that through faith in God and his holy priesthood, one can be spared from both suffering and premature death.

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THE GIFT TO HEAL (D&C 46:20–21;
1 CORINTHIANS 12:9–10; MORONI 10:11–12)

President Woodruff received the gift to heal soon after he joined the Church. On January 3, 1837, approximately three years after he was baptized, he recorded in his journal, “President Z. Coltrin ordained me as a member of the First [Quorum of the] Seventy and pronounced great blessings upon my head by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. Some of them . . . are . . . that the Lord would give me great . . . faith so that I should heal the sick, cause the blind to see, the lame to leap as an heart, the deaf to hear, stop the mouths of lions, and raise the dead to life.”¹⁴ The blessing given by Zebedee Coltrin was fulfilled on numerous occasions. For example, President Woodruff recorded an opportunity to exercise his priesthood that caught him somewhat off guard:

A man of the world, knowing of the miracles which had been performed, came to [the Prophet Joseph] and asked him if he would not go and heal two twin children of his, about five months old, who were both lying sick nigh unto death.

They were some two miles from Montrose.

The Prophet said he could not go; but, after pausing some time, he said he would send someone to heal them; and he turned to me and said: “You go with the man and heal his children.”

He took a red silk handkerchief out of his pocket and gave it to me, and told me to wipe their faces with the handkerchief when I administered to them, and they should be healed. He also said unto me: “As long as you will keep that handkerchief, it shall remain a league between you and me.”

I went with the man, and did as the Prophet commanded me, and the children were healed.

I have possession of the handkerchief unto this day.¹⁵

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Aware that the power that performed these miracles was not his own, but rather a gift from God, on June 3, 1840, Woodruff wrote:

A notable miracle was wrought by faith and the power of God in the person of Sister Mary Pitt. . . . She had been confined six years to her bed, with [a] spine which mostly deprived her of the use of her feet and ankles; and had not walked for eleven years, only with the use of crutches. Elders Young, Richards and [I] laid hands upon her and rebuked her infirmity, and her ankle bones received strength and she now walks without the aid of crutch or staff.¹⁶

Woodruff concluded each year's journal with a summary of the significant events of that year. In his December 1846 summary, he wrote, "I looked over my journals commencing with AD 1834 ending with AD 1846 making thirteen . . . years, during which time. . . . I have administered by anointing and [the] laying on of hands unto three hundred and sixty four sick persons, . . . many of which were healed. I blessed . . . one hundred and ninety-four children."¹⁷ Woodruff lived another fifty-two years, blessing thousands more as an Apostle and then as President of the Church. He unquestionably had the gift of faith to heal others.

THE GIFT TO RAISE THE DEAD (MATTHEW 10:8; ACTS 26:8; 4 NEPHI 1:5; D&C 124:100)

Although the gift of power to raise the dead might be classed with the gift of healing, many Latter-day Saints who possess the gift of healing have never raised another from the dead. Thus I have classified this as a separate gift of the Spirit. This gift was exercised by Wilford Woodruff in behalf of his wife Phebe. He recorded:

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December 3rd found my wife very low. . . . She seemed to be sinking gradually, and in the evening the spirit apparently left her body, and she was dead. The sisters gathered around, weeping, while I stood looking at her in sorrow. The spirit and power of God began to rest upon me until . . . faith filled my soul, although she lay before me . . . dead.

I had some oil that was consecrated. . . . I took it and consecrated it again before the Lord, for anointing the sick. I then bowed down before the Lord, prayed for the life of my companion, and in the name of the Lord anointed her body with the oil. I then laid my hands upon her, and in the name of Jesus Christ I rebuked the power of death and of the destroyer, and commanded the same to depart from her, and the spirit of life to enter her body. Her spirit returned to her body, and from that hour she was made whole.¹⁸

Having the spiritual courage to pronounce such a blessing is a testament to both Wilford’s faith and his spiritual awareness of the Lord’s will. One biographer wrote, “Wilford the Faithful.’ That was the title given to Wilford Woodruff in the early days of the Church, and it was a title justly earned.”¹⁹ This experience alone would be sufficient to justify the title.

THE GIFT OF THE BEHOLDING OF
ANGELS AND THE MINISTERING OF
SPIRITS (MORONI 10:14; D&C 13:1)

One historian wrote, “Like Paul, Wilford Woodruff attested to the administration of angels.”²⁰ In his patriarchal blessing, given by Joseph Smith Sr. on April 15, 1837, Wilford was promised: “Thou mayest have the administration of the angels of heaven. An holy angel shall soon administer unto thee and reveal unto thee

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thy duty; yea, and give unto thee many instructions.”²¹ During the winter of 1840, while serving with the Twelve in Great Britain, Woodruff, along with Elder George A. Smith, was physically attacked by the devil in the city of London. Elder Woodruff spoke of the assault on numerous occasions. On October 18, 1840, he wrote in his journal:

We retired to rest in good season, and I felt well in my mind and slept until twelve at night. I awoke and meditated upon the things of God until near three o'clock; and while forming a determination to warn the people in London and overcome the powers of darkness by the assistance of God, a person appeared unto me, which I considered was the Prince of Darkness or the devil. He made war with me, and attempted to take my life. He caught me by the throat and choked me nearly to death. . . . As he was about to overcome me I prayed to the father, in the name of Jesus, for help. I then had power over him, and he left me, though much wounded. Three personages dressed in white came to me, and prayed with me, and I was immediately healed, and [they] delivered me from all my troubles.²²

On later occasions, Woodruff wrote of Satan doing physical harm to both him *and* George A. Smith, and had it not been for “three holy messengers . . . dressed in temple clothing” who gave each a priesthood blessing, both of them would have been killed by Satan on that occasion.²³ Elder Woodruff was the recipient of visitations from both heavenly and demonic beings—the former attesting to his personal righteousness, and the latter attesting to the threat his work posed to the adversary.

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THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT (D&C 46:23, 27;
101:95; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:10)

While engaged in spreading the gospel in Memphis, Tennessee, Elder Woodruff spoke to a crowd of some five hundred individuals who can only be categorized as nonbelievers. It appears they only entertained his hour-and-a-half discourse in hopes of having a little fun. However, through a manifestation of the gift of discernment, Woodruff turned the table on his adversaries. He wrote:

I prayed to the Lord to give me His spirit and to show me the hearts of the people. I promised the Lord, in my prayer, that I would deliver to that congregation whatever He would give to me. I arose and spoke one hour and a half, and it was one of the best sermons of my life. The lives of the congregation were open to the vision of my mind, and I told them of their wicked deeds and the reward they would obtain. The men who surrounded me dropped their heads. . . .

Soon I was shown to a . . . room adjoining . . . one in which were assembled many of the men whom I had been preaching to. I could hear their conversation. One man said he would like to know how that Mormon boy knew of their past lives.²⁴

Woodruff did not record what came of the experience. But it is clear that the specific manifestation of the gift of discernment planted a seed in the hearts of those who heard him speak.

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THE GIFT OF TONGUES AND THE
INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES (D&C
46:24-25; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:10; MORONI
10:15-16; ARTICLES OF FAITH 1:7)

Although he seldom records details, Woodruff mentions several occasions on which he exercised the gift of tongues or the gift of interpretation of tongues. Within a one-month period, he recorded the following three entries in his journal:

December 17, 1837: "I blessed two children, and I spake in tongues and interpreted and prophesied, and we rejoiced."²⁵

December 23, 1837: "I preached at Mr. John M. Suller's. The power of God rested upon me. I spoke in tongues and interpreted."²⁶

January 19, 1838: "I arose to speak and the power of God rested upon me. I prophesied of the judgments of God, and spoke in tongues and interpreted the same."²⁷

The reason for his lack of details regarding the manifestations of these gifts is unclear. Certainly his silence is in keeping with the Prophet Joseph's declaration, "The gift of tongues is the smallest gift perhaps of the whole, and yet it is one that is the most sought after."²⁸ Joseph also stated that it is "not necessary for tongues to be taught to the Church."²⁹ Regardless, on several occasions the gift of tongues and interpreting tongues were manifest by Woodruff. In each case, these gifts were manifest in context of preaching the restored gospel, which Joseph indicated was the primary reason for these specific gifts of the Spirit.³⁰

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THE GIFT OF RECEIVING
REVELATION (ARTICLES OF FAITH
1:7; MORONI 10:5, D&C 76:1–10)

Receiving personal revelation was a constant in the life of Wilford Woodruff. Time and again, he recorded miraculous spiritual promptings or revelations that directed and protected him. What follows is but a sampling of his many encounters with personal revelation:

During the evening a hard thunderstorm was approaching us. My mules were tied to a large oak tree on the opposite side of the street. I felt impressed to move my mules away to another place. I did so. I also removed my children out of the carriage and made them a bed in the house. I also moved my carriage one rod down to the house in which Mrs. Woodruff, myself, and one child slept. We had just retired to bed when the storm reached us with great fury. In a moment the large oak tree came thundering to the ground with a mighty crash. Had I not . . . moved my mules it probably would have killed them. Had I not . . . moved my carriage it would have crushed it to atoms and killed us, . . . for the body of the tree fell where my carriage [previously] stood. . . . I considered it an interposition of providence.³¹

In a completely different type of revelation, and apparently in anticipation of the trials that would come upon the Church due to the practice of plural marriage, on December 16, 1856, Woodruff wrote, “I feel strongly pressed in spirit that some great trials await this people, and many will not be able to stand, but will fall away. I pray the Lord to preserve the presidency of this Church.”³²

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On another occasion, the Lord sent Elder Woodruff a revelation to protect him, but in this case he ignored the prompting and experienced the consequences:

Some years [ago] I had a part of my family living in Randolph, Rich County. I was there on a visit, with my team, in the month of December.

One Monday morning . . . the Spirit . . . said: "Take your team and go home to Salt Lake City."

When I named it to my family who were at Randolph they urged me strongly to stop longer.

Through their persuasion I stayed until Saturday morning, with the Spirit continually prompting me to go home. I then began to feel ashamed to think that I had not obeyed the whisperings of the Spirit to me before.

I took my team and started early on Saturday morning. When I arrived at Woodruff, [Utah,] the Bishop urged me to stop until Monday and he would go with me.

I told him, "No, I had tarried too long already."

I drove on sprightly, and when within fifteen miles of Wasatch, a furious snow storm overtook me, the wind blowing heavily in my face.

In fifteen minutes I could not see any road whatever, and knew not how or where to guide my horses.

I left my lines loosely on my animals, went inside my wagon, tied down the cover, and committed my life and guidance into the hands of the Lord, trusting to my horses to find the way, as they had twice before passed over that road.

I prayed to the Lord to forgive my sin in not obeying the voice of the Spirit to me, and implored Him to preserve my life.

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My horses brought me into the Wasatch station at 9 o'clock in the evening, with the hubs of my wagon dragging in the snow.

I got my horses under cover, and had to remain there until the next Monday night, with the snow six feet deep . . . and still snowing.

It was with great difficulty . . . that I saved the lives of my horses by getting them into a box car and taking them to Ogden; while if I had obeyed the revelation of the Spirit of God to me, I should have traveled to Salt Lake City over a good road without any storm.³³

Woodruff gave his own explanation of the lesson learned from this experience. He said, “As I have received the good and the evil, the fruits of obedience and disobedience, I think I am justified in exhorting all my young friends to always obey the whisperings of the Spirit of God, and they will always be safe.”³⁴ While he experienced the gift to receive personal revelation a countless number of times, he learned that this gift of the Spirit was of no value if not strictly obeyed.

On October 25, 1891, he recorded in his journal his remarks to the Saints: “I have received a revelation and a commandment from the Lord, which I have not revealed to any man, which I shall reveal to this assembly. And the command of the Lord I shall give to this people, which is this.” He then proceeded to describe what he saw in vision regarding what would happen to the Church and its leaders and properties if the practice of plural marriage was not ended: “the confiscation and loss of all temples; the cessation of all temple ordinances for the living and the dead; the imprisonment of the First Presidency, the Twelve, and many other leaders, including many heads of families; and the

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confiscation of the personal property of the Saints who continued to practice plural marriage.”³⁵

Woodruff often wrote in his journal such words as “Thus saith the Lord, to my servant Wilford.”³⁶ He also recorded many personal revelations in his journal, often writing them in the form and language of scripture. However, he did not often publically use that language with the Saints. On October 25, 1891, he wrote:

Some had thought that revelation had ceased, but this is not the case. The Lord is with us and gives us revelation. But I will say for myself that I wish to avoid saying “Thus saith the Lord” as far as I can when I give the will of the Lord to the people. In the days of Joseph Smith, it was “Thus saith the Lord” almost daily until the revelations now embodied in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants had been given. Since that day President Brigham Young, John Taylor, and myself have seldom used the words (thus saith the Lord) when giving the word of the Lord to the people.³⁷

These are but a representative handful of the hundreds of such revelatory experiences in the life of Wilford Woodruff.³⁸ Each revelation evidences he was in possession of the gift of receiving revelation.

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY (D&C 46:22;
JOEL 2:28; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:10; MORONI
10:13; ARTICLES OF FAITH 1:7)

The prophet Joel spoke on behalf of the Lord, saying, “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall *prophesy*, your old men shall dream *dreams*, your young men shall see *visions*” (Joel 2:28; emphasis added). This verse is a

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perfect introduction to the next three gifts of the Spirit—the gift of prophecy, the gift of dreams, and the gift of visions. Wilford Woodruff enjoyed each of these gifts in abundance.

Regarding prophecy, Wilford’s journal often refers to his having the gift, but he typically does not elaborate on what he prophesied.³⁹ Usually he simply states that he had the gift of prophecy that day. For example, on March 25, 1849, he wrote that he performed ordinations and was “filled with the spirit of God, prophecy and rejoicing.”⁴⁰ Similarly, on April 7, 1837, he wrote, “The power of God and the spirit of prophecy and revelation rested upon us. . . . And I, Wilford, testify in the name of Jesus Christ that many precious things were shown me concerning my brethren, by the Holy Spirit, in prophecy and revelation.”⁴¹ Of course, there are examples where he recorded the specifics of what he had prophesied. On May 1, 1836, he wrote, “I had the spirit of God and of prophecy. I prophesied to the people of the judgments of God that await them.”⁴² And on January 1, 1862, he spoke prophetically of the destiny of the United States: “And the Lord will continue to weaken this nation until they are broken to pieces and cast down, to rise no more forever.”⁴³ He recorded a rather significant prophecy on January 23, 1881: “[I] Bore testimony to the work of God and . . . said Joseph F. Smith, [who] was one of the First Presidency, . . . would be President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in his day.”⁴⁴ In fulfillment of this prophecy, twenty years later, in 1901, Joseph F. Smith became President of the Church.

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THE GIFT OF PROPHETIC AND DIVINE DREAMS (JOEL 2:28; DANIEL 1:17; ACTS 2:17)

Woodruff put a great deal of credence in dreams and held that God regularly spoke through them.⁴⁵ He was so convinced that God used dreams as a means of divine communication that he seldom distinguished between a dream and a vision. As far as he was concerned, they were one and the same. Of Woodruff's perception of the sacred and oft-inspired nature of dreams, one author notes, "Woodruff had learned to pay close attention to his dreams and to act on any truth that he felt they conveyed."⁴⁶ Owing to the fact that so many of his dreams proved to be inspired, prophetic, or divine, it is little wonder he believed in them so strongly. He even held that some dreams that he could not find an interpretation for were nonetheless inspired and meaningful.⁴⁷ It was not uncommon for him to record a dream and then comment that he believed it was of God but did not know what it meant.⁴⁸

Woodruff commonly saw deceased persons in his dreams. On at least two occasions after the Martyrdom, the Prophet Joseph Smith appeared to Wilford and taught him.⁴⁹ On one occasion, Woodruff stated, "Joseph Smith visited me a great deal after his death, and taught me many important principles. The last time he visited me was while I was . . . going on my last mission to preside in England." He then added:

Joseph Smith continued visiting myself and others up to a certain time, and then it stopped. The last time I saw him was in heaven. In the night vision I saw him at the door of the temple in heaven. He came and spoke to me. He said he could not stop to talk with me because he was in a hurry. The next man I met was Father Smith; he could not talk with me because he was in a hurry. I met half a dozen brethren who

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had held high positions on earth, and none of them could stop to talk with me because they were in a hurry. I was much astonished. By and by I saw the Prophet again, and I got the privilege to ask him a question. “Now,” said I, “I want to know why you are in a hurry. I have been in a hurry all through my life; but I expected my hurry would be over when I got into the kingdom of heaven, if I ever did.” Joseph said: “I will tell you, Brother Woodruff. Every dispensation that has had the priesthood on the earth and has gone into the celestial kingdom, has had a certain amount of work to do to prepare to go to the earth with the Savior when He goes to reign on the earth. Each dispensation has had ample time to do this work. We have not. We are the last dispensation, and so much work has to be done, and we need to be in a hurry in order to accomplish it.” Of course, that was satisfactory to me, but it was new doctrine to me.⁵⁰

This particular dream gave him a sense of urgency about the work and added to his general feeling that the Lord’s coming was near.

The account of the appearance of the signers of the Declaration of Independence to President Woodruff is commonly cited within the Church.⁵¹ However, less well known is an experience he had some time later. On March 19, 1894, he wrote, “I had a dream in the night. I met with Benjamin Franklin. . . . I spent several hours with him and talked over our endowments. He wanted some more work done for him than had been done, which I promised him he should have (i.e., his second anointing). . . . I made up my mind to get [the] second anointing [done] for Benjamin Franklin and George Washington.”⁵²

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Beyond the commonplace visitation of deceased persons, Woodruff also had dreams about the passing of loved ones. For example, on November 28, 1839, he recorded, "I spent the day at Mr. Tilton's (and the night), and had a dream while upon my bed. And in my dream I saw Mrs. Woodruff. . . . I asked where Sarah Emma was (our only child). She [said], weeping and kissing me, she is dead. We sorrowed a moment and I awoke. . . . Is this dream true? Time must determine." The following year, Wilford went back to his November 28 entry and penned this comment: "This dream was a warning of what was to come. Sarah Emma died 17th of July, AD 1840."⁵³

About four months before the death of President John Taylor, Woodruff had another unsettling prophetic dream. On March 15, 1887, he recorded, "I dreamed again last night of attending another general conference. President Taylor was present, but seemed in poor health. He seemed to think he should soon pass away. . . . I do not now understand what those dreams mean." More than four months later, President Woodruff added the following notation to his March 15, 1887, entry: "I received a letter today from A. M. Tenney. President Taylor died July 25th, 1887."⁵⁴

In some respects, President Woodruff's dreams must have been a burden to him, yet his entries indicate no sense of anxiety. It appears that he considered this gift as simply one more way in which the Lord communicated with him.

THE GIFT OF VISIONS (JOEL 2:28; HOSEA 12:9-10; ARTICLES OF FAITH 1:7)

President Woodruff was the recipient of many visions. Sometimes he noted these visions with only a passing reference.⁵⁵ At other times, he described what he saw in great detail. In his

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December synopsis of the year 1893, he wrote, “The greatest event of 1893 was the dedication of the Great Salt Lake Temple. . . . Near[ly] 50 years ago, while in the city of Boston, I had a vision of going with the Saints to the Rocky Mountains, building a temple, and [in the vision] I dedicated it. Two nights in succession, before John Taylor’s death, President Young gave me the keys of the temple and told me to go and dedicate it, which I did.”⁵⁶

One of President Woodruff’s most detailed visionary accounts was one wherein he saw what appears to be a futuristic vision of the United States. In this vision, he saw wickedness, abominations, corruption, and, in consequence of these, the judgments of God poured out upon this once chosen land. The details are graphic, the specifics amazing, and the warning ominous.⁵⁷ One can only guess if he understood what he saw to be literal or figurative. Regardless, President Woodruff was a visionary in the most literal sense of the word. And like his predecessors in the prophetic office, both ancient and modern, he was the recipient of the visions of heaven. The messages contained in those visions sobered him.

THE GIFT OF POWER TO CAST OUT EVIL
SPIRITS (MATTHEW 10:1; MARK 3:15)

I will briefly examine the gift of power over evil spirits. We have previously noted the experience Elders Woodruff and Smith had in London with an evil spirit that physically attacked them. The focus here, however, will be upon President Woodruff’s power to cast out such spirits when they attacked those around him. His journal is filled with experiences of this kind.⁵⁸ Note a few examples:

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[June 11, 1837] I returned with several elders to Elder Stoddard's to spend the night, and there was a woman present who was possessed with the devil. She was oft times dumb and greatly afflicted by the evil spirits that dwelt in her. She believed in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and us as his servant[s], and called upon us to cast the devil out of her. According to her request, four of us laid hands upon her and commanded the devil, in the name of Jesus Christ, to depart out of her. . . . It was immediately done, and the woman arose with great joy and gave thanks and praise unto God, for according to her faith she was made whole from that hour.⁵⁹

[January 18, 1840] I had not been with Elder Clayton but a few minutes before I was called upon to visit three sick persons and administer to them according to the order of the gospel (i.e., by prayer and the laying on of hands).

One case was very distressing. We found the sister possessed of the devil and a burning fever on the brain. She was raging and trying to tear herself, although [being held down by] the hands of three or four men. We laid hands upon her and commanded the devil to depart and the fever to stand rebuked in the name of Jesus Christ, and it was done, though not without a great struggle.⁶⁰

[January 24, 1848] Brothers Pratt and Levi Richards and myself visited Brother Henman's family to administer to them, for the whole family was sick and had been troubled with evil spirits. We prayed with this family, and laid hands upon seven that were sick. . . . The spirit of the Lord was with us, and we rebuked the sickness and commanded the evil spirits to depart, and they received a blessing upon the family.⁶¹

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He had numerous encounters with those possessed by Satan, and God granted him the power and the faith to cast out foul spirits and rebuke their influence in the lives of believers.

OTHER GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

In reference to the gifts of the Spirit listed in Doctrine and Covenants 46, 1 Corinthians 12, and Moroni 10, Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated, “These are by no means all of the gifts. In the fullest sense, [the gifts of the Spirit] are infinite in number and endless in their manifestation.”⁶² Thus, it should be noted that there are other “gifts” that are no less divine in their origin and no less important to those who are privileged to receive and exercise them. President Woodruff experienced many of these other gifts.

THE GIFT OF RECOGNIZING
THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES
(1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-6; D&C 45:16)

As with many in the early days of the Restoration, Woodruff saw signs of the times manifest and believed them to be strong evidence that this was the dispensation of the fulness of times. For example, on one occasion he recorded in his journal what he believed was a heavenly manifestation associated with biblical descriptions of signs that would precede the coming of the Son of Man. On the evening of February 20, 1838, he observed the following:

I walked out of the house and cast my eyes towards the heavens and a glorious scene presented itself to our view.

[A] light commenced in the northeast and spread to the west, and soon rolled up over head; . . . it centered in the

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heavens and rolled forth fire, blood, and smoke like contending armies: the whole heavens was illuminated with blood and fire for the space of half an hour. . . . It seemed at times as though the veil was about to rend in twain, and the throne of God to appear. . . .

This is one of the signs in the heavens in the last days spoken of by the ancient, as well as modern, prophets. Oh, may God hasten the day when the scenery will be wound up.⁶³

Some time later, he recorded a similar experience:

About seven o'clock p.m. I discovered a stream of light in the southwest quarter of the heavens. The rays of light were in the form of a broadsword, with the hilt downward [and] the blade raised, pointing from the west southwest, raised to an angle of 45 degrees from the horizon and extending nearly . . . to the zenith of the degree where the sign appeared. This sign gradually disappeared from half past seven, and at nine o'clock immediately disappeared.

The following is the declaration of Joseph the Seer concerning the foregoing sign:

*"As sure as there is a God who sits enthroned in the heavens, and as sure as he ever spoke by me, so sure there will be a speedy and bloody war, and the broadsword seen last evening is the sure sign thereof."*⁶⁴

The significance of these two experiences is not immediately apparent. But, as Woodruff notes, the Prophet Joseph certainly saw these as signs that great turmoil was about to overtake the earth. They also stand as evidence of Wilford's gift to behold the signs of the times in a very dramatic fashion.

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THE GIFT OF DIVINE PROTECTION

(2 NEPHI 10:11-16; 3 NEPHI 4:30)

Wilford Woodruff was well known for surviving many accidents. In his journal accounts of injuries and near-fatal accidents, he chronicled some two dozen different mishaps (from the time he joined the Church up until he turned forty-nine), some of which nearly took his life, including the following:

1. Fell into a cauldron of boiling water (age three).
2. Fell from the beam of a barn, striking his face on the floor and nearly breaking his neck (age five).
3. Broke an arm by falling down the stairs, then broke the other arm by falling onto a pile of timber (age five or six).
4. Was chased by an angry bull (age six).
5. Broke both bones in his lower leg while riding in a carriage (age six).
6. Nearly suffocated under a large pile of hay (age seven).
7. Was in a wagon that overturned when the horse pulling it was spooked (age eight).
8. Fell fifteen feet from a tree, landed on his back, and had the air knocked out of him (age nine).
9. Nearly drowned in the Farmington River (age twelve).
10. Nearly froze to death in a winter storm (age thirteen).
11. Split his foot nearly in two with an ax (age fourteen).
12. Was bitten by a rabid dog in the last stages of hydrophobia (age fifteen).

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13. Was thrown from a horse that was running full speed down a rocky precipice. He landed on his feet but broke his left leg in two places and injured both ankles (age seventeen).
14. Fell headfirst from the top of a waterwheel and was nearly crushed by the wheel (age twenty).
15. Fell about twenty feet from the top of a flourmill's breast wheel, landing on the rocks below and being nearly crushed by the wheel (age twenty-four).
16. Got a severe case of "lung fever" or pneumonia (age twenty-four).
17. On the day of his baptism, had a horse kick his hat off, missing his face by about two inches. That same day he was dragged by two horses down a hill (age twenty-six).
18. Was nearly shot when a rifle discharged, missing his chest by inches (age twenty-seven).
19. Was nearly shot again when the trigger of a musket pointing at his chest was accidentally pulled, but the gun misfired (age twenty-seven).
20. Was dragged for about half a mile by horses when his wagon broke (age thirty-two).
21. Became delirious from a severe attack of bilious fever. He was confined to bed for forty days from the sickness. He experienced two more relapses, one of which caused him to stop breathing (age thirty-five or thirty-six).

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22. Was in a train crash where his boxcar was thrown from the tracks. Several passengers were killed or seriously injured, but Wilford was unharmed (age thirty-six).
23. Was struck in the chest by a tree he was felling. He broke his breastbone and three ribs and bruised several vital organs (age thirty-nine).
24. Became poisoned by skinning a dead, diseased cow (age forty-nine).⁶⁵

Although these incidents make him look clumsy, he did not see himself as such. Rather, he saw himself as being under attack by the adversary, who sought to take his life from him:

I have been a marked victim . . . of the destroyer from my infancy up to the present day. I have faced accident, misfortune, and apparently death so many times and in so many shapes and forms, from my childhood through life thus far, that it has become a proverb with me to say that there has seemed to be two powers constantly watching me and at work with me: one to kill and the other to save me. Thus far the power to save me and preserve my life has prevailed. How long I shall be blessed with this preserving power and care, time must determine.⁶⁶

As a singular example of how God protected President Woodruff and those around him, note the following experience, which happened while he was on assignment to gather Latter-day Saints in the East:

It took me two years to gather up everybody [who was a member of the Church] . . . in New England and Canada . . . (there were about one hundred of them). We arrived at Pittsburgh one day at sundown. We did not want to stay there,

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so I went to the first steamboat that was going to leave. I saw the captain and engaged passage for us on that steamer. I had only just done so when the Spirit said to me . . . very strongly, “Don’t go aboard that steamer, nor your company.” Of course, I went and spoke to the captain, and told him I had made up my mind to wait. Well, that ship started, and had only got five miles down the river when it took fire, and three hundred persons were burned to death or drowned. If I had not obeyed that spirit, and had gone on that steamer with the rest of the company, you can see what the result would have been.⁶⁷

Shortly before his death, President Woodruff penned, “It is very remarkable how my life has been preserved through so many years, considering what I have passed through in my day and generation. I have to acknowledge the hand of God in the preservation of my life up to the present hour. God moves in a mysterious way.”⁶⁸ Perhaps Satan’s knowledge of President Woodruff’s future contributions explains the onslaught of the physical attacks. Regardless, it seems evident that a gift was operative in his life, ensuring his constant preservation.

THE GIFT TO ASK AND RECEIVE,
TO KNOCK AND HAVE THINGS OPENED
(MATTHEW 7:7; 3 NEPHI 27:29; D&C 4:7)

Time and again in the scriptures, readers are admonished to ask and receive, to *knock* and have things *opened*. This gift of the Spirit requires a significant degree of faith. President Woodruff had that faith. His awareness of this endowment came shortly after his baptism:

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In the fall [of 1834] I had a desire to go and preach the gospel. I knew the gospel which the Lord had revealed to Joseph Smith was true, and of such great value that I wanted to tell it to the people who had not heard it. It was so good and plain, it seemed to me I could make the people believe it.

I was but a teacher, and it is not a teacher’s office to go abroad and preach. I dared not tell any of the authorities of the Church that I wanted to preach, lest they might think I was seeking for an office.

I went into the woods where no one could see me, and I prayed to the Lord to open my way so that I could go and preach the gospel. While I was praying the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and told me my prayer was heard and that my request should be granted.

I felt very happy, and got up and walked out of the woods into the traveled road, and there I met a high priest who had lived in the same house with me some six months.

He had not said a word to me about preaching the gospel; but now, as soon as I met him, he said, “the Lord has revealed to me that it is your privilege to be ordained, and to go and preach the gospel.”

I told him I was willing to do whatever the Lord required of me. I did not tell him I had just asked the Lord to let me go and preach.

In a few days a council was called at Lyman Wight’s, and I was ordained a priest and sent on a mission into Arkansas and Tennessee, in company with an elder.⁶⁹

President Woodruff’s description of the event leaves one strongly doubting that coincidence could be the explanation behind the miracle. He had a pure intent and pure desire, and the

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Lord heard his pleadings—as he will hear each of us as we develop this gift and exercise it in faith.

THE GIFT OF KEEPING A JOURNAL

(D & C 21:1, 47:1, 69:3, 85:1)

Some might question the idea that consistent journal writing could be a gift of the Spirit. However, considering the magnitude of the contribution President Woodruff's journal has made upon the Church, one cannot deny that the Spirit was the inspiration behind his incessant writing. He certainly believed it was a gift God had given him.⁷⁰ And he was true to that gift's constant urging. Truman G. Madsen wrote, "Wilford Woodruff is the man who wrote in a journal almost every day for sixty-three years, thereby producing perhaps the most important single historical treasure we have in the Church. Why did he keep the journal? Because the Prophet admonished him to."⁷¹ On a number of occasions, Wilford spoke of his journal writing, and what drove him to consistently do it. His journal entry for March 17, 1857, reads: "I have been inspired and moved upon to keep a journal and write the affairs of this Church as far as I can. I did not understand why my feelings were exercised so much in the early age of this Church, but I understand it now. . . . This was a gift from God unto me, and I have kept a journal of almost every day of my life for the last twenty-four years."⁷²

A number of years later, he wrote:

I have had this spirit [of journal writing] upon me since I first entered this Church. I was baptized [after] the first sermon I heard, and from that day until now I have kept a daily journal. Whenever I have heard Joseph Smith preach, teach, or prophesy, I have always felt it my duty to write it. . . . I could

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not eat, drink, or sleep in peace until I did write it, and my mind has been so exercised upon this subject that when I heard Joseph Smith teach and I had not pencil and paper I would go home and sit down and write that whole sermon almost word for word and sentence by sentence as it was delivered. And when I had written it, it was taken from me. I remembered it no more.⁷³

This gift from God both drove him to write and endowed him with the ability to retain the words he heard so they could be accurately recorded. Many of Joseph Smith’s sermons included in the Prophet’s published history and Joseph Fielding Smith’s edited version of *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* are drawn from Woodruff’s handwritten accounts written under the influence of this gift of the Spirit.

CONCLUSION

So much could be said of President Woodruff’s spiritual legacy. The examples in this paper are just a sampling. One historian wrote, “His faith was such that he saw the hand of God in everything.”⁷⁴ Specifically speaking of his many gifts of the Spirit, Thomas G. Alexander states, “He coupled a firm dependence on inspiration in its various forms—dreams, visions, revelations—with a strong sense of personal destiny and Providential protection.”⁷⁵ President Woodruff’s innately spiritual and believing approach left its mark on many with whom he interacted—believer and nonbeliever alike. At his funeral, George Q. Cannon described him thus: “In the passing of President Woodruff, a man has gone from our midst whose character was probably as angelical as that of any person who has ever lived upon the earth. . . . He was a heavenly being. It was heaven to be in his company.”⁷⁶

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As prophets always are, President Woodruff was an example to the Saints, not only of courage and faithfulness but also of spirituality and fidelity to the Father. He was both the embodiment and realization of the scriptural declaration, “To every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God” (D&C 46:11).

NOTES

1. Truman G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 48–49.
2. Lawrence R. Flake, *Prophets and Apostles of the Last Dispensation* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2001), 47.
3. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 45.
4. Matthias Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 14–15.
5. In their commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett concluded, “According to [D&C 46] verse 29, the head of the Church possesses all the gifts of the Spirit.” *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), 2:81.
6. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler wrote, “The president of the Church not only presides over all of its members but also over all of the gifts given them of God to aid in the building of his earthly kingdom. Under the direction of the prophet countless calls are made to utilize those gifts in sharing the gospel with all the nations and peoples of the earth and in teaching and strengthening those already in the Church.” *Revelations of the Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 369.
7. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 33.
8. Thomas G. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, a Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 21.
9. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth*, 21.

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10. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 3:586, December 20, 1850. In an effort to make Woodruff's words more reader friendly, the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in his journal entries have been standardized throughout this paper.
11. Clynn L. Davenport, comp., *Biography of John Lee Jones, 1841–1935* (n.p.), 147–48, April 6, 1893, as cited in Matthew B. Brown and Paul Thomas Smith, *Symbols in Stone: Symbolism on the Early Temples of the Restoration* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 1997), 136; see also 121, 160.
12. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 4:415, April 28, 1856.
13. Wilford Woodruff, “History of Wilford Woodruff,” *Millennial Star*, June 24, 1865, 392; see also *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 4:414–16.
14. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:118–19, January 3, 1837.
15. Wilford Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal*, Third Book of the Faith-Promoting Series (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 65.
16. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:455, June 3, 1840.
17. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:111. For other examples of healings performed by Woodruff, see *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:66; 3:68; 3:147; 7:268; 7:286.
18. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 97. President Woodruff adds, “While I was undergoing this ordeal (as my wife related afterwards) her spirit left her body, and she saw it lying upon the bed and the sisters there weeping. She looked at them and at me, and upon her babe; while gazing upon this scene, two persons came into the room, carrying a coffin, and told her they had come for her body. One of these messengers said to her that she might have her choice—she might go to rest in the spirit world, or . . . she could have the privilege of returning to her tabernacle and continuing her labors upon the earth. The condition was that if she felt she could stand by her husband, and with him pass through all the cares, trials, tribulations, and afflictions of life which he would be called to pass through for the gospel's sake. . . . When she looked at the situation of her husband and child she said, ‘Yes, I will do it.’”

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At the moment that decision was made the power of faith rested upon me, and when I administered unto her, her spirit reentered her tabernacle, and she saw the messengers carry the coffin out of the door.” Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 97–98.

19. Preston Nibley, *The Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 101.
20. Dean C. Jessee, “Wilford Woodruff,” in Leonard J. Arrington, ed., *The Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 128.
21. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:142, April 15, 1837.
22. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:532, October 18, 1840; see also Jessee, “Wilford Woodruff,” 128–29.
23. Wilford Woodruff, March 3, 1889, discourse in Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses* (Burbank, California, and Woodland Hills, UT: B. H. S. Publishing, 1987–1992), 1:218; Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal*, 109–10; Wilford Woodruff, October 19, 1896, discourse in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 5:236–37. No reference to this event by George A. Smith has survived. President Woodruff once said: “I have referred to the administration of angels to myself. What did these angels do? One of them taught me some things relating to the signs that should precede the coming of the Son of Man. Others came and saved my life.” Wilford Woodruff, discourse on October 19, 1896, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 5:238.
24. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 55–56.
25. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:191.
26. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:191.
27. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:223.
28. *The Teachings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Larry E. Dahl and Donald Q. Cannon (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 671.
29. *Teachings of Joseph Smith*, 670.
30. “Tongues were given for the purpose of preaching among those whose language is not understood; as on the day of Pentecost, etc.” *Teachings of Joseph Smith*, 670–71.

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31. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:355–56, July 5, 1848.
32. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 4:517, December 16, 1856.
33. Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal*, 90–91.
34. Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal*, 91.
35. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:168, October 24, 1891.
36. See, for example, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:524; 7:615; 7:616; 7:618; 6:20; 9:67; 9:464; 9:467; 9:469.
37. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:168, October 24, 1891.
38. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:524; 2:429; 3:382; 7:331; 7:531; 9:463–69.
39. For examples of the gift of prophecy, see *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:101; 1:411; 5:533; 7:464.
40. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:447, May 16, 1849.
41. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:137, April 7, 1837.
42. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:68, May 1, 1836.
43. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 6:3, January 1, 1862. Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that: during the Millennium “both church and state, as the world knows them, will . . . cease to be. When the Lord comes again, he will set up anew the political kingdom of God on earth. It will be joined with the ecclesiastical kingdom; church and state will unite; and God will govern in all things. . . . Once again the government of the earth will be theocratic. God will govern. . . . And all of this presupposes the fall of Babylon, and the death of false religions, and the fall of all earthly governments and nations. And these things, as we are aware, shall surely come to pass.” *The Millennial Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 596.
44. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:8, January 23, 1881.
45. See Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 22:331–33; see also Stuy, “Wilford Woodruff's Vision of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence,” *Journal of Mormon History* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 78 n. 38.
46. Stuy, “Wilford Woodruff's Vision,” 79.
47. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:24; 2:29; 2:448; 2:478; 3:116; 4:515; 8:429.

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48. Brian Stuy wrote that Wilford recorded in his personal journal at least three dozen of his own dreams, and numerous other dreams which he deemed significant that were had by his friends and acquaintances. Stuy further noted: "After recording a dream, he would frequently comment something like 'What this Dream means time will soon Determin[e].'" Stuy, "Wilford Woodruff's Vision," 78 n. 38.
49. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:478–479, November 1, 1844.
50. Wilford Woodruff, discourse delivered October 19, 1896, recorded in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 5:237–38; see also *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:578–79, October 20, 1850.
51. For an excellent analysis and interpretation of the historical events surrounding Woodruff's experiences, see Richard E. Bennett, "Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept: Reflections on the 1877 Commencement of the Performance of Endowments and Sealings for the Dead," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005): 39–77.
52. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:293, March 19, 1894.
53. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:370–71.
54. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:429.
55. For example, see *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:4, January 4, 1857.
56. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:279.
57. Woodruff did not record the vision immediately. He indicated in his journal under the date of June 15, 1878, that he received the vision on the evening of December 16, 1877. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:419–23. It appears he may have received a similar vision during the evening of January 26–27, 1880. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:546.
58. For example, see *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:471; 3:401; 4:517; 5:5.
59. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:152.
60. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:408. The day after this encounter, Wilford was called back to the same house. He recorded: "I was called upon with my Brethren to visit a child possessed of the devil, that endeavored to destroy the child. It was the child of the woman that was possessed with the devil,

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upon whom we laid hands Saturday evening. We laid hands upon the child that was writhing under the power of the devil, and commanded the devil to depart, in the name of Jesus Christ, and it was instantly done, and the child fell asleep.” *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:409.

61. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:314.
62. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 315. Likewise, Elder Marvin J. Ashton taught: “Taken at random, let me mention a few gifts that are not always evident or noteworthy but that are very important. . . . The gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; the gift of being able to weep; the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost. We must remember that to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.” “There Are Many Gifts,” *Ensign*, November 1987, 20.
63. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:228.
64. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 2:219, March 10, 1843; emphasis added. See also Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 5:300–301.
65. The list is taken from “History of Wilford Woodruff,” *Millennial Star*, see June 10, 1865, 359–60, June 17, 1865, 374–76, and June 24, 1865, 391–92; see also Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 5–11.
66. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 4:414–15, April 28, 1856.
67. Wilford Woodruff, in Durham, *Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 294–95. This is but one of many examples of preservation. See also *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:48; 2:129–30; 2:319–21; 3:469; 3:555–56; 3:563–65; 7:41–43; 7:483; 9:16; 9:85; 9:87.
68. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 9:449, March 1, 1897.
69. Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal*, 8.

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70. See *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:55, January 20, 1872.
71. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet*, 99. President Woodruff reported that Joseph Smith encouraged or commanded him to write. Speaking of journal keeping, Woodruff remarked, "I have many times thought the Quorum of the Twelve and others considered me rather enthusiastic upon this subject; but when the Prophet Joseph organized the Quorum of the Twelve, he counseled them to keep a history of their lives, and gave his reasons why they should do so." Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 476. "Following the death of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young encouraged Wilford to 'keep an account of things' as he would 'look to me for his journal some day.'" Jessee, "Wilford Woodruff," 139.
72. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:36, March 17, 1857.
73. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:55, January 20, 1872.
74. Jessee, "Wilford Woodruff," 126–27.
75. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth*, 332.
76. See Nibley, *Presidents of the Church*, 134–35; see also Flake, *Prophets and Apostles of the Last Dispensation*, 47–48.