

Opposition to the Gospel and the Work of God—Honesty, Etc

Orson Hyde

Journal of Discourses 6:8

Section I

A question arises in the minds of some few, and perhaps in the minds of a great many—"How will our present difficulties terminate? I would like to know the sequel. We have been kept in suspense for a length of time, and I would like to know the final issue."

In my opinion, there is no person that can know the final result of the present movements until it is seen. We have faith in relation to it, and the assurance of the Almighty that all will be well; but the exact how and manner in which it will be brought about we cannot tell; for it is by faith that we move, and not by sight. But in the course of some remarks which I may make, you may, perhaps, be led to a satisfactory conclusion as to what the final issue may be, and not only the final issue, for we are already satisfied about that, but with regard to the progressive stages leading to it.

It is said in the good Book that "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many learned are called; but God hath chosen the poor of this world and rich in faith to be the heirs of his kingdom." We are furthermore told that he has "chosen the weak things of this world, and things that are not, to bring to naught the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." Now I will quote from a modern writer— "Say first of God above, then man below, How can we reason but from what we know?"

I will go back to the days of the commencement of this Church, when a young man of no particular literary qualifications was called upon to bring to light truths that have been hid for ages—truths in themselves grand and sublime; yet, when brought forth, they were clothed in language not so eloquent as might please the ears of many of the learned. They were not dressed up in the style of modern oratory; and because of this, they were rejected by the fashionable and religious world. The religious world had been taught and completely molded after the fashion and learning of this world, so that a man could not be considered a qualified orthodox preacher, unless he had been through college and acquired the learning of the age.

Here, then, an illiterate youth rises up with a system of true religion, that lays the axe at the root of every other system in Christendom. Look at the odds that were apparently against this young man, even Joseph Smith, the martyr, the Prophet of the Most High—without learning—without resources or friends to back him up—with the whole tide of popular sentiment arrayed against him, backed up by all the learning of the world. If we look at him through a worldly eye, the odds were materially against him.

You are acquainted with the history of the Church, and well know how matters went on. You know the many trials to which Joseph the Prophet and his friends were subjected, and the difficulties with which they had to contend. But was there ever an instance when the enemy gained an advantage over the truth of heaven or thwarted the purposes of this illiterate young

man? No. Did they not call to their aid all the learning and craftiness of the world in proportion as the cause he advocated increased? And did they succeed any better? When the cause became more extensive among men, did opposition succeed any better than at the commencement? Not at all.

In process of time, the Elders went forth preaching this Gospel; and remember, there were not many learned—not many mighty that were called, and I may say, none at all. With the limited abilities they possessed, they went forth to proclaim a system of truth that laid the axe at the root of the false religions and false philosophy of the world; while the learning, popularity, and resources of the world were arrayed against us, which we had to meet; poor and limited in abilities, in learning, and worldly qualifications, we were despised and regarded as a set of outcasts.

With all the powerful odds against us, the truth greatly gained ground. Let me appeal to the experience of all present, while I ask you if you have ever known an instance where a faithful Elder, who has kept his garments clean and unspotted from the world, has ever been confounded while administering the word of life as proclaimed through that illiterate young man, Joseph Smith? To be sure, a few who may have got the "big head," or been puffed up in their own imaginations, have been foiled, or those who have been in transgression. God despises a victory gained by such characters. He will not acknowledge or own a victory gained in this cause by a corrupt and wicked member of his Church. I do not know positively how that is, however, and I will not stop to investigate it. Suffice it to say, it is the pure in heart that God delights to work with. Just like any good mechanic, when he wishes to make a nice piece of work, he wants tools that are sharp and clean to do it with. He will not work with dull and rusty tools to execute a nice job of work.

So it is with our heavenly Father: although he may use seemingly awkward instruments, yet they are polished after his mind and will; and he, being the master builder, knows what pleases him best.

Scott's Thoughts:

My first thoughts were drawn to the point that Orson makes about the formal education that Joseph didn't have and yet he was very learned in regards to Gospel Education in an unpolished way. He learned the Gospel first and viewed all the rest of life and worldly learning through that Gospel lens. This is something that is lost in today's world for the most part, we allow ourselves to be taught first from a worldly perspective and then view the Gospel through a worldly lens, and worse yet we allow and even encourage this same thing to happen to our children and grandchildren! Here's a few of my favorite quotes about this principle of learning and education.

“It is a paradox that men will gladly devote time every day for many years to learn a science or an art; yet will expect to win a knowledge of the gospel, which comprehends all sciences and arts, through perfunctory glances at books or occasional listening to sermons. The gospel should be studied more intensively than any school or college subject. They who pass opinion on the gospel without having given it intimate and careful study are not lovers of truth, and their opinions are worthless” (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham [1987], 16–17).

There is no shortcut to learning truth. You have to invest time in reading the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets. If you want to grow spiritually, you have to feed your spirit by feasting on the word every day. Larry R Lawrence (The Light of the Perfect Day)

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2016/03/the-light-of-the-perfect-day?lang=eng>

I was then drawn to this concept or idea of the axe being laid at the root of the tree, what an incredible and powerful visual, just to think of the coming change to the tree when the axe is put to use, for all intents the life of the tree is ended and it is cast into the fire since there wasn't any good fruit produced from the tree. It's important that we understand what the tree represents and what the fruit is. (Carlos, Son of Manasseh, did an excellent breakdown on Jacob 5)

“Here, then, an illiterate youth rises up with a system of true religion, that lays the axe at the root of every other system in Christendom” (From this talk breakdown)

Wow! Do we realize what he's saying in that one sentence? “Every other system in Christendom” now that brings up a good question, what does he mean by the use of the word “system”? Don't most mainstream Christian faith's have some sort of system or process to bring about salvation? Isn't that the whole point to Christianity? These other systems will all fail to produce Exaltation in the Highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom, so they will be hewn down and cast into the fire.

The world say that we have principles that really lay the **axe** at the roots of the trees; **Matt. 3:10** of all false creeds; Remarks by President Brigham Young, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, Sunday p.m., July 31, 1859.

these principles are laying the axe at the root of the trees, and that tree will fall which is not connected with God and His children. The Scripture says that there is an **axe laid at the root** of every tree. **Matt. 3:10** that is, it is laid at the root of every man and woman, and that axe will be used to slay them, if they persist in iniquity. If there is an axe at the root of my tree, let me so live that I may be worthy to pick up that axe and slay the wicked, and not be slain. That man or woman who will not do that, will be slain.

A Discourse by President Heber C. Kimball, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, Feb. 8, 1857.

Reported By: G. D. Watt.

Now this figure of the **axe** being laid at the root of the tree, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire. **Matt. 3:10** being equally as applicable to God's people in these days as to His people in the days in which it was spoken, is very impressive, and should be retained in every mind; every heart should reflect upon it, and everyone should inquire, “Am I a subject for the burning, or am I bearing good fruit?” Remarks by Elder Erastus Snow, delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, February 28, 1869.

I think we can agree that “bringing forth good fruit” represents a religion and or individuals who are capable of providing, making & keeping Eternal Covenants that will produce exaltation in the Celestial kingdom, This means keeping all the commandments, following all the counsel and urgings from our Prophet, Pres. Nelson. Not just the ones we are comfortable with or like in the moment or are generally accepted in today’s society. The Lord requires complete obedience in order to receive all that he wants to bless us with.

Jacob 5:74 And thus they labored, with all diligence, according to the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard, even until the bad had been cast away out of the vineyard, and the Lord had preserved unto himself that the trees had become again the natural fruit; and they became like unto ³one body; and the fruits were equal; and the Lord of the vineyard had preserved unto himself the natural fruit, which was most precious unto him from the beginning.

This verse is certainly using language that points us to Celestial Law, the most precious fruit to the Lord are individuals or rather families that can reside in Celestial Glory, he knows that not all his children will live worthy of those blessings but that is his greatest desire, that is why the Plan of Salvation was put into place, that is why the Atonement happened, so the valiant, diligent, courageous and faithful could return to live with Him again.

Time is running out, the furnace of affliction and tribulation has already been ignited. How close do we need to get to have the dross burned away from our Gold? Or do we need to take a trip through the furnace to have this refining process happen? What about our family and other loved ones?

We need to be Hot or Cold, not lukewarm. (Rev.3:15-16), the lukewarm and the cold will not receive Exaltation in the highest degree. Here’s another great question, how committed to the Gospel must we be? To help answer this I took some quotes from a talk that Joseline or Aaron shared on discord a couple weeks ago from Bruce R. McConkie

In this war all who do not stand forth courageously and **valiantly** are by that fact alone aiding the cause of the enemy. “They who are not for me are against me, saith our God.” ([2 Ne. 10:16.](#)) **We can’t be partially for the Lord, it’s all or nothing!**

We are either for the Church or we are against it. We either take its part or we take the consequences. We cannot survive spiritually with one foot in the Church and the other in the world. We must make the choice. It is either the Church or the world. There is no middle ground. The summer patriot and the sunshine saint retreat when the battle wages fiercely around them. Theirs is not the conqueror’s crown. They are overcome by the world.

Members of the Church who have testimonies and who live clean and upright lives, but who are not courageous and valiant, do not gain the celestial kingdom. Theirs is a terrestrial inheritance. Of them the revelation says, “These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.” ([D&C 76:79.](#))

The testimony of Jesus is to believe in Christ, to receive his gospel, and to live his law. To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to take the Lord’s side on every issue.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1974/10/be-valiant-in-the-fight-of-faith?lang=eng>

I believe Pres. Nelson summarized the Level of commitment to the Gospel and our Savior best with the following questions? Please listen to these questions and consider the depth and detail required in order to answer YES to them all.

Are *you* willing to let God prevail in your life? Are *you* willing to let God be the most important influence in your life? Will you allow His words, His commandments, and His covenants to influence what you do each day? Will you allow His voice to take priority over any other? Are you *willing* to let whatever He needs you to do take precedence over every other ambition? Are you *willing* to have your will swallowed up in His?¹⁸

And finally the words of Joseph Smith,

“Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things, never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.”

My challenge to everyone is better learn to view life’s challenges and experiences through the Gospel lens and to Live our lives in such a way that we can pick up the axe that is laid at our roots and use it to slay the wicked philosophies and traditions in our lives, and who knows, as Heber said maybe even to slay the wicked themselves if the Lord requires it!

Micah’s Thoughts:

The one and only thing that I would like to comment on in this section would be his line, “He will not work with dull and rusty tools to execute a nice job of work.” This concept/doctrine is everywhere in the teachings of Joseph Smith, the Standard Works, etc. It was something that was taught often and frequent but has since died down. Whenever a modern prophet or apostle says anything even remotely close to this, they are lambasted as being “un-Christlike”. Some examples include:

President Nelson: “Lazy learners and lax disciples will always struggle to muster even a particle of faith.”

Elder Holland: “Come as you are but don’t expect to stay as you”

Elder Neal A Maxwell: “It simply will not work “to glide naively through life,” saying as we sip another glass of lemonade, “Lord, give me all thy choicest virtues, but be certain not to give me grief, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor opposition. Please do not let anyone dislike me or betray me, and above all, do not ever let me feel forsaken by Thee or those I love. In fact, Lord, be careful to keep me from all the experiences that made Thee divine. And then, when the rough sledding by everyone else is over, please let me come and dwell with Thee, where I can boast about how similar our strengths and our characters are as I float along on my cloud of comfortable Christianity.”

Brigham Young: “As for making Saints of those characters, we have no such anticipation; we wish to make Saints of those who sincerely desire to be Saints, who are willing to sacrifice their carnal, sinful, devilish feelings, to forsake them altogether, and to strive to become Saints and to establish the principles of honesty within them; we expect that such persons will be Saints, and

we feel like doing all that we can to aid them in a righteous course. ...There are practices among this people which have injured my feelings. I see some men so greedy after the things of the world, that they will take their grain from the mouths of innocent, helpless women and children who are suffering for food, and sell it to Gentile merchants to speculate upon...They have not raised any wheat this year, and now they are whining after me, "Will you let us have a little tithing wheat?" They ask what I have to say to them; I have this to say to every man in this congregation and throughout this Territory, and from this time henceforth, know my feelings, if you will sell grain to the Gentiles, or to your enemies, for the sake of their money when it is needed to be distributed among this people, I wish you would take your property and leave this Territory, for you are not worthy of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you are unworthy a citizenship in the kingdom of God. If those who are going to sell their grain to speculators this year will rise up and tell us who they are, I will hold up my hands for them to be forthwith severed from this Church, to be delivered over to the buffetings of Satan." (JD 3:115, Brigham Young, Necessity of Home Missions, Etc.)

Joseph F. Smith: "The work is marching forward, and if we do not keep pace with it, we must eventually be left behind. Better far for us to keep up with the rank and file, and to walk shoulder to shoulder with the authorities of the Church; with those who have the spirit of the Gospel in their hearts; with those in whose bones burn the fire of truth and the testimony of Jesus Christ, who are continually exhorting the people to be diligent in keeping the commandments of God. We should do what is right. We should be virtuous, honorable and charitable, and we should be liberal in our hearts to all mankind. We can afford to be liberal. We have received that which pertains to eternal growth, to eternal increase, to eternal happiness; we have received that which pertains to dominion, and power, and glory and to thrones and principalities. Freely we have received, and freely we can afford to give; for in giving we do not diminish our own store." (The Hatred of the World, Etc. JD 24:245)

There are countless examples of this but like I said earlier, people today generally speaking in a state of ignorance attack this as being un-Christlike. So why don't we instead go right to the source, to Jesus Christ himself.

3 Nephi 24

2 But who may abide the day of [of the Lord's] coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts.

6 For I am the Lord, I change not;

President Nelson reminds us that the Lord will perform his mightiest works between now and when he comes again, I testify, using the Lord's words above, that only those sanctified and unified will be used by the Lord for those events.

D&C 103:19–20. Why Did the Lord Promise Modern Israel That Both His Angels and His Presence Would Go before Them?

The Lord sought to make ancient Israel “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). He told Moses to prepare the people so that He could “come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai” (Exodus 19:11). The people saw the power of God manifested on the mount, and they were fearful. They asked that the Lord not speak directly with them but rather that Moses speak with God and bring His message to them (see Exodus 10:18–21; Deuteronomy 5:22–31). Despite Moses' efforts to sanctify the people, they would not prepare themselves to see God by living the higher laws that would enable them to become a holy nation. Therefore, they were given the “law of carnal commandments” (D&C 84:27) and were led, no longer by the Lord's immediate presence, but by his angels (see D&C 84:23–26; Exodus 23:20; JST, Exodus 34:1–2).

In the final dispensation these circumstances will not exist. Latter-day Saints have been given the higher priesthood and the laws and ordinances that enable them to be brought back into the presence of God (see D&C 84:19–22; 107:18–19). There will be a pure people prepared to receive the Lord when He comes (see Moses 7:62–64; D&C 35:20–21; 100:16). Those who return to redeem Zion will live the laws of the celestial kingdom (see D&C 105:5) and thus will be prepared to be led by the presence of the Lord.

Elder Orson Pratt spoke of the need to become a sanctified people. “When we go back to Jackson County, we are to go back with power. Do you suppose that God will reveal his power among an unsanctified people, who have no regard nor respect for his laws and institutions, but who are filled with covetousness? No. When God shows forth his power among the Latter-day Saints, it will be because there is a union of feeling in regard to doctrine, and in regard to everything that God has placed in their hands; and not only a union, but a sanctification on their part, that there shall not be a spot or wrinkle as it were, but everything shall be as fair as the sun that shines in the heavens.” (In *Journal of Discourses*, 15:361.)

Section II

Has the greatest champion against "Mormonism" ever been confident enough in his own success and triumph in any debate with the Elders of this Church to publish his own arguments with those of his opponent? I do not know but there have been such instances, but not one now occurs to my mind; while, on the other hand, our faithful Elders have not been afraid or ashamed to publish both sides of the question for all eyes to look upon.

Often we have seen pieces in public journals, and also books published against us in burning zeal, and flaming with vengeance against us, and seemingly calculated to overthrow us, exposing what they called the wickedness of the "Mormons," beguiling and duping their hearers with cunningly devised falsehoods. Very many cases of this kind we have seen, and have also seen their end. The Almighty has put his hand over them, and they have sunk so low that the strongest prejudiced hand against us will not now reach down to bring them up. Their power has become weakness, and their influence is blasted forever by the breath of the Almighty.

Does the everlasting Gospel lose its influence with the good and pure of mankind? Upon those who are not disposed to work righteousness alone is its influence lost—upon those who shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians;" but with the honest, simple-hearted sons of men it is just as sweet now as ever it was; and to them its charms increase, notwithstanding all the trials and difficulties they endure for its sake.

"This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." Was it the Gospel of the kingdom that was preached in ancient days—in the days of the Apostles, that went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world? It was the Gospel, but I conclude that it was not the Gospel of the kingdom; for that was to be revealed at the time when the kingdom of God should be established on the earth, to stand forever. "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached as a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

Where has this Gospel been preached? Through the United States of America, in Europe, Asia, and Africa. I do not say that it has been sounded distinctly in the ears of everybody living; but I do say that the sound has gone into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

I recollect a certain saying in a revelation that was given to the Saints in the early days of this Church. The Lord said, through Joseph Smith, that it became every man, after being warned, to warn his neighbor, that all may be without excuse. If all the people who have heard the word had been as faithful in warning their neighbors as the few Elders who are now under the sound of my voice have been in warning those with whom they have been associated, and to whom they have been sent, and among whom they have labored, would not the whole world have been fully warned at this time? Yes.

In another revelation to the first Elders of this Church, who had been forth preaching in their weakness (being called in at Kirtland, Ohio), the Lord told them to wash their feet in testimony that they were clean from the blood of this generation, and goes on to say, "Let those who are not of the first Elders of my Church remain in the vineyard, for their garments are not yet clean." Those first Elders had labored but a short time in the vineyard—perhaps one or two years, when it was said, "Your garments are clean."

There are Elders who have labored from sea to sea, from island to island, from country to country, and have spent the vigor and strength of their days in the work of proclaiming the Gospel. May we not say, upon the same principle, that their garments are clean from the blood of this generation? If so, what does it imply? That we shall not be held under condemnation if we never preach to them again. And there is another thing implied in this: If this generation shall rise against you to slay you for your religion, and because you are righteous, your garments being clear of their blood, and you slay them, their blood is upon their own heads. This is what I understand by being clear from the blood of this generation. It is an important saying. In my opinion, it means more than a casual observer would attach to it. It is a deep saying. If you have warned them—have called upon them to repent—offered them the blessing of eternal life through the Gospel, and they thrust it from them, let what will happen to them, your garments are clean from their blood.

Now we see that the Gospel has gone into all nations, countries, and kingdoms; for the man that has been warned should have warned his neighbor, and the nation that has been warned

should have warned its neighboring nation, &c.; so they are without excuse before God, whatever excuse they may plead before man.

We can see the unabating success of the Gospel from the time Joseph got the plates until now, and the defeat and downfall of every opponent that has risen up to oppose its progress. If there had been any purpose in God that this work should be overthrown, would he not have suffered it to be done before this? For all means that could possibly be invented by the powers of earth and hell have been brought to bear against it, and every man who has risen up against it has gone down, and his published works have become a stink in the nostrils of even this wicked generation, to say nothing of the Saints. The wicked themselves are even ashamed of their sayings and of their writings against the cause of truth. Their expositions of "Mormonism," as they call them, are hardly cold from the press until they are dead, their influence killed, and there is no sale for their books. The words of the Apocalypse very appropriately apply to their case—"No man buyeth their merchandise any more."

I will venture to say that no publication has ever been issued against this work, only for the purpose of getting gain. Men have not been inspired to oppose it for the sake of the souls of men, but to save their craft, their salary, their party, their honor, and their credit in the sight of men.

Antonia's Thoughts:

Brother Orson begins by explaining that the spreading of this Restored Gospel had many efforts to be thwarted by God's enemies and lays he case that in the end they have been UNSUCCESSFUL.

Brothers and Sisters this is God's Work and we a blessed to live during this dispensation .

Brother Orson gets to the meat of what I studied in this statement.

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In another revelation to the first Elders of this Church, who had been forth preaching in their weakness (being called in at Kirtland, Ohio), the Lord told them to wash their feet in testimony that they were clean from the blood of this generation, and goes on to say, "Let those who are not of the first Elders of my Church remain in the vineyard, for their garments are not yet clean." Those first Elders had labored but a short time in the vineyard—perhaps one or two years when it was said, "Your garments are clean."

There are Elders who have labored from sea to sea, from island to island, from country to country, and have spent the vigor and strength of their days in the work of proclaiming the Gospel. May we not say, upon the same principle, that their garments are clean from the blood of this generation? If so what does it imply? That we shall not be held under condemnation if we never preach to them again. And there is another thing implied in this: If this generation shall rise against you to slay you for your religion, and because you are righteous, your garments being clear of their blood, and you slay them,

their blood is upon their own heads. This is what I understand by being clear from the blood of this generation. It is an important saying. In my opinion, it means more that a casual observer would attach to it. It is a deep saying. If you have warned them—have called upon them to repent—offered them the blessing of eternal life through the Gospel, and they thrust it from them, let what will happen to them, your garments are clean from their blood.

What does the phrase “blood on one’s head or on one’s garment” mean?

Keith H. Meservy, professor emeritus of ancient scripture at BYU, a member of a Church writing committee, and a member of the bishopric of the Pleasant View Third Ward, Provo Utah Sharon East Stake.

This question is best answered by first looking at the responsibility of an ancient watchman—a responsibility involving life-and-death issues.

Anciently, a watchman was responsible to keep the surrounding country under surveillance from a spot on the watchtower, to identify any hostile force that invaded the land, and to warn citizens of the invasion. Only when he recognized the danger and warned them of their peril could citizens take measures to protect their lives.

“When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:

“If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

“Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

“He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.” (Ezek. 33:2–6.)

As conquering enemies destroy physical life, sin destroys spiritual life. But those who are sick enough to die, when warned of their danger, might save their lives through repentance. And thus one might see why the Lord would call Ezekiel to be a watchman—to warn citizens of their soul-destroying dangers. If they heeded his

warning and repented, they would live. If not, they would die spiritually—but he would not be responsible for their deaths; he would have fulfilled his calling and delivered his own soul:

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: ...

“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

“Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” (Ezek. 3:17–19.)

Other prophet-teachers have exemplified and taught this principle of responsibility. King Benjamin explained that he had assembled his people “that I might be found blameless, and that your blood should not come upon me, when I shall stand to be judged of God of the things whereof he hath commanded me concerning you

“That I might rid my garments of your blood. ...

“That I might declare unto you that I can no longer be your teacher.” (Mosiah 2:27–29; italics added.)

In great humility, Paul likewise testified to “the elders of the church” at Ephesus how diligent he had been in teaching, in testifying, and in warning them so he would not be stained by their blood.

“Ye know,” said he, “after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

“Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears; ...

“I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ...

“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

“For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. ...

"By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:17–31; italics added.)

Perhaps the expression of the application of this principle in the lives of Jacob and his fellow worker and brother, Joseph, is the most sober in the scriptures:

"We did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might [to teach them correct principles] their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day." (Jacob 1:19.)

Any divine calling involves the same life-and-death matters. Leaders and parents are called to teach of the way leading to life and warn of the way leading to death. Their callings are sacred and carry heavy responsibilities.

Of this point, Elder John Taylor has said, "If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty." (Journal of Discourses, 20:23.)

However, while the Lord's servants teach that the wages of sin are death, the devil shouts that sinning is really living. Thus, it is imperative that divine servants teach clearly and simply, for only when the teaching is so clear that individuals cannot misunderstand are God's children free to choose.

Then, if they ignore the call, they will die, but their blood will be on their own heads. On the other hand, if they have not been taught or warned—and could have been if the Lord's servants had done their duty—their spiritual death, or "blood," will be upon the head of their "watchmen."

For this reason, parents who do not teach their children "to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents." (D&C 68:25–26; see also Moses 6:53–62, especially vs. Moses 6:57–58.)

The Lord has made those who have been taught the truth responsible for sharing it with others.

"Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

*"Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads."
(D&C 88:81–82.)*

Thus, parents, teachers, and leaders who strive to live and teach gospel principles can be assured that they will not be held accountable for the sins of those over whom they have been given charge, for symbolically, their own "garments" are spotless.

JACOB 1

2 And he gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should ^awrite upon ^tthese plates a few of the things which I considered to be most precious;

4 And if there were preaching which was ^asacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying, that I should engraven the ^bheads of them upon these plates, and touch upon them as much as it were possible, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of our people.

5 For because of faith and great anxiety, it truly had been made manifest unto us concerning our people, what things should ^ahappen unto them.

6 And we also had many revelations, and the spirit of much prophecy; wherefore, we knew of ^aChrist and his kingdom, which should come.

7 Wherefore we labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to ^acome unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God, that they might enter into his ^rrest, lest by any means he should swear in his wrath they should not ^eenter in, as in the ^aprovocation in the days of temptation while the children of Israel were in the ^awilderness.

8 Wherefore, we would to God that we could persuade all men ^anot to rebel against God, to ^bprovoke him to anger, but that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his ^ccross and bear the shame of the world; wherefore, I, Jacob, take it upon me to fulfil the commandment of my brother Nephi.

18 For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been ^aconsecrated priests and ^tteachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi.

19 And we did ^amagnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the ^rresponsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not ^tteach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their ^ablood might not come

upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day.

MOSIAH 2

9 And these are the words which he ^aspake and caused to be written, saying: My brethren, all ye that have assembled yourselves together, you that can hear my words which I shall speak unto you this day; for I have not commanded you to come up hither to ^btrifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you should ^chearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your ^dhearts that ye may understand, and your ^eminds that the ^fmysteries of God may be unfolded to your view.

15 Yet, my brethren, I have not done these things that I might ^aboast, neither do I tell these things that thereby I might accuse you; but I tell you these things that ye may know that I can answer a clear ^bconscience before God this day.

27 Therefore, as I said unto you that I had ^aserved you, ^bwalking with a clear conscience before God, even so I at this time have caused that ye should assemble yourselves together, that I might be found blameless, and that your ^cblood should not come upon me, when I shall stand to be judged of God of the things whereof he hath commanded me concerning you.

28 I say unto you that I have caused that ye should assemble yourselves together that I might ^arid my garments of your blood, at this period of time when I am about to go down to my grave, that I might go down in peace, and my immortal ^bspirit may join the ^cchoirs above in singing the praises of a just God.

40 O, all ye ^aold men, and also ye young men, and you little children who can understand my words, for I have spoken plainly unto you that ye might understand, I pray that ye should awake to a ^bremembrance of the awful situation of those that have fallen into transgression.

ETHER 12

2 And ^aEther was a prophet of the Lord; wherefore Ether came forth in the days of Coriantumr, and began to prophesy unto the people, for he could not be ^brestrained because of the Spirit of the Lord which was in him.

3 For he did ^acry from the ^bmorning, even until the going down of the sun, exhorting the people to believe in God unto repentance lest they should be ^cdestroyed, saying unto them that ^dby ^efaith all things are fulfilled

26 And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: **“Fools mock**, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness;

27 And if men come unto me I will show unto them their **“weakness**. I **“give** unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my **“grace** is sufficient for all men that **“humble** themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make **“weak** things become strong unto them.

35 Wherefore, I know by this thing which thou hast said, that if the Gentiles have not **“charity**, because of our weakness, that thou wilt prove them, and **“take away** their **“talent**, yea, even that which they have received, and give unto them who shall have more abundantly.

36 And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles **“grace**, that they might have charity.

37 And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made **“clean**. And because thou hast seen thy **“weakness** thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.

38 And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the **“judgment-seat** of Christ, where all men shall know that my **“garments** are not spotted with your blood.

39 And then shall ye know that I have **“seen** Jesus, and that he hath talked with me **“face to face**, and that he told me in **“plain** humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;

40 And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing.

LUKE 11

23 He that is not with me is **“against** me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

28 But he said, Yea rather, **“blessed are** they that hear the word of God, and **“keep** it.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the **“blood** of all the prophets, which was **“shed** from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the **“temple**: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, **“lawyers!** for ye have taken away the **“key** of **“knowledge**: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye **“hindered**.

THUS IN SUMMARY WE LEARN THAT

1. *We should be preaching day and night to EVERYONE*
2. *We are the WATCHMEN on the tower .. supposed to be about the work of warning, "sounding the TRUMPET"*
3. *Warnings/Examples of Ezequiel, King Benjamin, Paul, Jacob, Joseph, John Taylor etc.. and I would ADD Micah and Ashley*
4. *What are we warning? The Saviors Coming and the ONLY saving grace can be found thru REPENTANCE, REPENTANCE REPENTANCE*
5. *There is NO EXCUSES.. shyness, difficulty in speech, word, etc.... NO EXCUSES*
6. *The Lord will enable the willing thru his Holy Spirit*
7. *In doing this we WASH OUR HANDS, HEAD, GARMENTS of their blood.*

I end with the words of Moroni:

41 And now, I would commend you to ^aseek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth ^brecord of them, may be and abide in you forever. Amen.

Micah's Thoughts:

If you go back to the early brethren and Joseph Smith you will find a lot more quotes and a lot more teaching that "the gospel has gone into the whole world". It's only been within the last few generations that this new understanding or teaching of this doctrine has been developed in which people are convinced that the gospel has to be preached in some specific, almost ritualistic formula before this prophecy can said to be fulfilled. Mix that with now an almost total ignorance on the part of the members to what "the end" means- this has reference to the Great and Dreadful Day, not the Mount of Olives or the New Jerusalem, and you have a very confused populace. People should not be looking for that a sign yet to be fulfilled before major events can take place.

Elder Orson Hyde gives a fantastic breakdown of being freed from the blood of this generation because they have preached and warned sufficiently. Normally I don't get personal or share personal examples (maybe Ammon is rubbing off on me) but I can testify that the Lord told me that I was not free of the blood of this generation and that I needed to continue to raise my warning voice. Earlier this year the Lord told me, "Make it to 2023". Hopefully I will be freed at such time. May we all understand the severity and the seriousness of being a watchman on the tower, to be counted worthy to be numbered among Israel is my prayer for I know "in that day all who are found upon the watch-tower, or in other words, all mine Israel, shall be saved" (D&C 101:12).

Elder Orson Hyde gives a fantastic golden priestcraft quote here, laboring for gain vs for the souls of men. I did an insight on priestcraft in the Three Brothers CFM and a much larger priestcraft section will appear in the glossary of the Macro Last Day Timeline book.

Section III

The system of truth revealed through Joseph Smith is not clothed in language so eloquent as this literary generation would desire. As a general thing, you know, a real polished scoundrel wears the finest cloth—the most fashionable garb, that he may be looked upon as an honest man by those who judge from outward appearances and not righteous judgment.

The truth is not always clothed in the nicest style, or according to the ideas of this world; but the Lord sends it forth in the shape of a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. He is not pleased to conform to the views of this generation. They have got to take salvation just as he offers it to them, or else take damnation: they can have their choice. It is not for them to serve up the dish they shall eat; but it is for the Almighty to dress it as suits himself; and if the sinner take it, it will heal him.

The patient does not prescribe nor tell the doctor what he wants of him—that is, supposing the doctor to be what he ought to be. He examines the patient, knows the nature of the disease, and prescribes accordingly. The patient takes the medicine, and asks no questions for conscience sake.

So it is with our heavenly Father. The world is diseased, and he has prepared a remedy, and served it up as suits himself, not consulting the vitiated appetites of this consumptive generation to whom he administers it. It is like a root out of dry ground: it is without form or comeliness, without beauty, that men should not desire it. Awkward and unclothed as it is with worldly wisdom, behold, the illiterate Elders of Israel are sent with it, and they have marched through the colleges and literary institutions of the learned world, and have defeated those who dared to come out to oppose and put them to flight; and all their learning, iniquity, cunning, and worldly wisdom were turned into foolishness.

A little boy, filled with the Spirit of the living God throws out an idea that completely knocks in "pie" all their calculations. A simple sentence from the mouth of an uneducated youth often dissipates their profound wisdom into folly and nonsense. They know not what to do. They attempt to grasp a thing without form or comeliness. They know not where to get hold of it; and when they think they have hold of it, it slips through their hands. Such has been the great success of the preaching of the word.

Now, then, if they resort to force of arms or to brute force to overpower us, may we not safely calculate that the results will be similar to those in the mental contest? "Say first of God above, then man below, How can we reason but from what we know?"

So far, we do actually know and understand. It is demonstrated by our experience, and we are prepared to say that it is truly so. Behold, the wicked are unwilling to be converted by the gentle means the Lord God of Israel has introduced. They are satisfied that they cannot prevail against us by argument; and even polygamy, in all the glaring forms they may please to give it, offers obstacles too formidable for them to encounter by argument, Scripture, philosophy, or truth. But "overcome it must be," say the enemy; and "we will not rest until we have resorted to the last extremity. We will try the force of arms!" "Very well, if that is your mode of warfare," says the Almighty, "I do not desire it; but I will show you that I am not only a man of reason, Scripture, and truth, but a man of war too. If force of arms is your plan and mode of attack, you will find me ready to meet you in that and in every method you may adopt."

Behold, they rise up in war against the Saints. The Saints heretofore, when attacked on moral and Scripture principles, have stood up to oppose the enemy. If they had not done this, the enemy would have overpowered us. We have always met him with the truth and the simple arguments which God has furnished us with, and have always been successful; and perhaps, had we stood up to oppose him with force of arms, we might have been equally successful: but I cannot say how that is. The time, probably, had not come for us to take that position; and consequently, when it came to force of arms, the enemy must needs be made the aggressor. He was permitted to prevail against us for the time being; and whether that was not the very means of putting us in a position whereby we could successfully oppose him in that way, when the time did come, we can easily judge. I guess it is all right and has worked for our good; and herein we can discern that our heavenly Father has exemplified a glorious truth to us, that all things shall work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose.

If we had taken this position in Missouri or in Nauvoo, before breakfast they could have ordered their affairs and come upon us, and it would have required a standing army of the angels of God to defend us. But the time had not yet come; therefore the Lord suffered them to prevail until he should get us where he wanted us: "And then shall the prophecies of my servants be fulfilled in the scenes that shall transpire with you." It never could have been said, "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains," if we had remained in the valley of the Mississippi.

The Lord considered it necessary that we should be removed into the chambers of the Almighty, or to some place prepared to receive us, where he might display his power, and get for himself a name and honor that shall never be forgotten. Sometimes a defeat is equal to a victory. I recollect of reading an account, the saying of a celebrated General, after he had gained a victory and lost a great portion of his men. One of his officers congratulated him on his victory. "Ah!" said he, "Another such victory would entirely ruin me."

Sometimes victory is worse than defeat. I consider that the defeat the Saints have suffered is tantamount to victory, and better than victory, because we have come to a place which the Lord wanted us to occupy.

Jessica's Thoughts:

Black - Orson Hyde's talk

Purple - Words of the Prophets/Apostles/etc

Red - Scriptures

Blue - my words

The system of **truth** revealed through Joseph Smith **is not clothed in language so eloquent** as this literary generation would desire. ... a **real polished scoundrel wears the finest cloth**—the **most fashionable** garb, **that he may be looked upon as an honest man by those who judge from outward appearances and not righteous judgment.**

Truth only needs to be stated as it is, not "dressed up".

Elder David A. Bednar (*Face2Face* 9/13/21) -

“We don't need to defend the doctrine. We need to declare it. In the simplicity of the doctrine there's nothing to defend. **It stands for itself.**”

Jeremiah M. Grant (*JD 2:273, March 11, 1855*) -

“We cannot create principle [or truth], **we can only discover it.** If you were to discover a new principle, you would err in saying that you had created a principle, that you had brought one into existence. Principle eternally exists, and **man cannot create it.** If you discover any law in mathematics, in astronomy, or any principle or law connected with the sciences, this is no proof that you have brought into existence a new law, or process of law, for the principle existed before you made the discovery.”

Elder Randall K. Bennett (*Choose Eternal Life, 2011*) -

“During your premortal life you learned to **love truth.** You made correct eternal choices. You knew that here in mortality, there would be afflictions and adversity, sorrow and **suffering, tests and trials** to help you **grow and progress.** You also knew that you could continue making correct choices, repent of incorrect choices, and through the Atonement of Jesus Christ inherit eternal life.”

David O. McKay (*Christ, the Light of Humanity, Apr 1968*) -

“No man can be a true member of this Church and not **love truth.**”

Brigham Young (*JD 1:117-119, Feb 27, 1853*) -

“Again, what do you **love truth** for? Is it because you can **discover a beauty in it,** because **it is congenial to you** or because you think it will make you a ruler, or a Lord? If you conceive that you will attain to power upon such a motive, you are much mistaken. It is a trick of the unseen power, that is abroad amongst the inhabitants of the earth, that leads them astray, binds their minds, and subverts their understanding.

“Suppose that our Father in heaven, our elder brother, the risen Redeemer, the Savior of the world, or any of the Gods of eternity should act upon this principle, to love truth, knowledge, and wisdom, because they are all powerful, and by the aid of this power they could send devils to hell, torment the people of the earth, exercise sovereignty over them, and make them miserable at their pleasure; they would cease to be Gods; (*Alma 42:22*) and as fast as they adopted and acted upon such principles, they would become devils, and be thrust down in the twinkling of an eye; the extension of their kingdom would cease, and their Godhead come to an end.

“Language, to convey all the truth, does not exist. Even in the Bible, and all books that have been revealed from heaven unto man, the language fails to convey all the truth as it is. Truth, wisdom, power, glory, light, and intelligence exist upon their own qualities; (*D&C 93:30*) they do not, neither can they, exist upon any other principle. Truth is congenial with itself, and light cleaves unto light, it seeks after itself, and clings thereto. It is the same with knowledge, and virtue, and all the **eternal attributes**; they follow after and attract each other. (*D&C 88:40-41*) Mercy cleaves to mercy, because it is mercy; light to light, because it is light, and there is no darkness, no deception, no falsehood in it. **Truth cleaves unto truth, because it is truth;** and it is to be adored,

1. because it is an attribute of God,
2. for its excellence,
3. for itself.

“It is upon this principle, that these principles should be held, esteemed, practiced. Any persons, men or women, who do not receive these principles **for the love** which they bear towards them, because of their **beauty, excellence, and glory**; and because they are congenial to their feelings upon this principle, **are not Saints!** They exist upon their own basis, and rest upon their own foundation. Eternal justice, mercy, love, and truth, never can be moved; they are attributes that correspond, and are congenial with each other; they promote each other, fortify the heavens, the Gods, and that which the Gods possess.”

Brigham Young (*JD 4:279, Mar 15, 1857*) -

“Do you know that **men and women of God love truth**? They do **not** love sophistry, it is an abomination to them. **When men are smooth as oil, with a smile always upon their countenances**, as some Elders have, **to gain an influence, the love people have for such men is rotten, is without foundation**; and in the day of trouble, when they need a foundation in their people, they will find that it will fall to the ground, and that the people will pass by them and say, “We do not know those men.” **Let your influence and your power be gained by the power of the Lord Almighty, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and see that you have within you a well of water, springing up to everlasting life.** (*John 4:14*) Then when your brethren and sisters come around you they will drink at that fountain, and say, “We are one with you.”

Elder George A. Smith (*Opposition to “Mormonism,” Etc., Nov 15, 1857*) -

“As a people having a knowledge of the first principles of the Gospel of salvation, we are qualified above all others to **appreciate the value** of the truths of heaven when they are revealed to us. It is of the utmost importance that we divest ourselves of every corrupt and selfish principle and of every species of “covetousness, which is idolatry.” (*Col. 3:5*)

“Dressing up” truth to please others is fearing man above fearing the Lord.

Elder Lynn G. Robbins (*Which Way Do You Face?, Oct 2014*) -

“Trying to please others before pleasing God is **inverting the first and second great commandments** (see *Matthew 22:37–39*). It is forgetting which way we face. And yet, we have all made that mistake because of the fear of men. In Isaiah the Lord warns us, “Fear ye not the reproach of men” (*Isaiah 51:7* see also *2 Nephi 8:7*) In Lehi’s dream, this fear was triggered by the finger of scorn pointed from the great and spacious building, causing many to forget which way they faced and to leave the tree “ashamed” (see *1 Nephi 8:25–28*)

...the Lord sends [truth] forth in the shape of a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. He [does] not ... conform to the views of this generation. They have got to take salvation just as he offers it to them, or else take damnation... It is not for them to serve up the dish

they shall eat; but it is for the Almighty to dress it as suits himself; and if the sinner take it, it will heal him.

The patient does not prescribe nor tell the doctor what he wants of him—... He examines the patient, knows the nature of the disease, and prescribes accordingly. The patient takes the medicine, and asks no questions...

So it is with our Heavenly Father. The world is diseased, and he has prepared a remedy, and served it up as suits himself, ... It is like a root out of dry ground: it is without form or comeliness, without beauty, that men should not desire it.

1 Nephi 16:2 -

“wherefore, **the guilty taketh the truth to be hard**, for it cutteth them to the very center.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (*“Yet Thou Art There,” Oct 1987*) -

“God is not only there in the mildest expressions of His presence, but also in those seemingly harsh expressions. For example, when truth “cutteth ... to the very center” (1 Ne. 16:2) this may signal that **spiritual surgery** is underway, painfully severing pride from the soul.”

Elder George A. Smith (*Opposition to “Mormonism,” Etc., Nov 15, 1857*) -

“I feel to rest satisfied that the Almighty will control all those things for the good of this people. The Lord has said it is his business to take care of his Saints. (D&C 104:15) If you are taking care of a child and are rearing it up to manhood, you have to look after its education, correct its morals, regulate its conduct, and inflict punishment when necessary, that the child may realize the difference between good and evil—between doing right and doing wrong. Peradventure the Lord wishes to have a **tried people**, and he has determined to try the Saints sufficiently, and he will protect them in his own way. The Lord will apply the rod. Sometimes he has scourged the people of Israel in one way, and sometimes in another. Sometimes he has scourged them with pestilence, with wasting, and destruction, and sometimes with famine, or by delivering them into the hands of their enemies; and in all these ways he has scourged his people that they might know and realize that God is over them, and that he controls all things.”

Awkward and unclothed as it is with worldly wisdom, ... the **illiterate** Elders of Israel are sent with it, and they have marched through the **colleges and literary institutions** of the learned world, and have **defeated those who** dared to **come out to oppose** and put **them** to flight; and **all their learning, iniquity, cunning, and worldly wisdom were turned into foolishness.**

Elder George A. Smith (*Opposition to “Mormonism,” Etc., Nov 15, 1857*) -

(I changed this to the present tense to apply it us)

“When we ... face the science, the learning, the eloquence, the skill, and the intellect of the entire world—a single handful of us against the whole world—God [will bear] us off victorious. His hand [will preserve] us. His Spirit [will inspire] us, so that the mighty

[are] confounded, the eloquent [are] put to silence, and the learned [are] constrained to say to their fellow men, “Do not listen to it; do not read their books; do not hear them, nor go where they are. You may be deceived.” ...

“Elder Hyde, in drawing the comparison in reference to the millions of our enemies—to the great wealth that they possess, showed their advantages in numbers and wealth. But let me ask this question, Have they got a thing that the Lord did not give them? Have they got a solitary farthing that the Lord did not bestow upon them? If they use that which he has given them for evil, they will have to give a minute account of that stewardship.”

Elder Carlos E. Asay (*Opposition to the Work of God, Oct 1981*) -

“Allow me to suggest a course of action [to help oppose those that are trying to oppose us]—one which is in harmony with the teachings of the Savior, and one which, if followed, will be in harmony with the wise counsel of prophets past and present:

1. **Avoid those who would tear down your faith.** Faith-killers are to be shunned. The seeds which they plant in the minds and hearts of men grow like cancer and eat away the Spirit. True messengers of God are builders—not destroyers. We send our missionaries into the world to teach and to assist people in receiving truth line upon line until the fulness of the gospel is received. (*See D&C 98:12*)
2. **Keep the commandments.** President Brigham Young promised, “All we have to do is to go onward and upward, and keep the commandments of our Father and God; and he will confound our enemies.” (*Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957, p. 347.*) If we obey holy laws, we will take upon ourselves “the whole armour of God” and we will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (*See Eph. 6:11–18*) Moreover, obedience ensures us of the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit.
3. **Follow the living prophets.** [Heber J. Grant] taught: “Always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it. ... But you don’t need to worry. The Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray.” (*Heber J. Grant, quoted by Marion G. Romney in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, p. 78.*) We walk in uncharted mine fields and place our souls in jeopardy when we receive the teachings of anyone except he that is ordained of God. (*See D&C 43:2–7, D&C 52:9*)
4. **Do not contend or debate over points of doctrine.** The Master warned that “the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil.” (*3 Ne. 11:29*) We are inconsistent if we resort to Satanic tactics in attempting to achieve righteous ends. Such inconsistency results only in frustration, loss of the Spirit, and ultimate defeat. Remember, “We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege.” (*A of F 1:11*)

5. **Search the scriptures.** Few of us would go astray or lose our way if we regarded the scriptures as our personal guide or compass. (See *Alma 37:44*) The iron rod is the word of God, and if held to, we will not fall.
6. **Do not be swayed or diverted from the mission of the Church.** There are those who would draw you off course and cause you to waste time and energies. Satan used a diversion ploy when he tempted Christ in the wilderness. The Savior's decisive response, "Get thee hence, Satan" (*Matt. 4:10*) is a proper example for all of us.
7. **Pray for your enemies.** Christ said to the Nephites, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you." (*3 Ne. 12:44* see also *Matt. 5:44*, *3 Ne. 12:10–12*)
8. **Practice "pure religion."** Involve yourself in Christian service. Succor the needs of the sick and poor; visit the fatherless and widows, and be charitable to all whether in the Church or out of the Church. (See *James 1:27* and *Alma 1:30*)
9. **Remember that there may be many questions for which we have no answers and that some things have to be accepted simply on faith.** An angel of the Lord asked Adam, "Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord?" He answered, "I know not, save the Lord commanded me." (*Moses 5:6*) There may be times when we are called upon to climb Mount Moriahs and to sacrifice our Isaacs without a full and prior explanation. Faith is the first principle of the gospel; it is a principle of progress."

A little boy, filled with the Spirit of the living God throws out an idea that completely knocks in "pie" all their calculations. A simple sentence from the mouth of an uneducated youth often dissipates their profound wisdom into folly and nonsense.

Alma 37:6 -

"Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that **by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise.**"

1 Cor. 1:26–27 -

"**Not many wise** men after the flesh, not many **mighty**, not many **noble**, are called:

"But God hath chosen **the foolish things** of the world **to confound the wise**; and God hath chosen **the weak things** of the world **to confound the things which are mighty**"

Doctrine and Covenants 45:57-59 -

"**They that are wise and have received the truth**, and have **taken the Holy Spirit for their guide**, and have **not been deceived**—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but **shall abide the day.**"

"And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

“For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver’

Joseph Smith (*TPJS 313*) -

“If I esteem mankind to be in error, shall I bear them down? No. I will **lift them up**, and **in their own way** too, if I cannot persuade them my way is better; and I will not seek to compel any man to believe as I do, only by the **force of reasoning**, for truth will cut its own way.”

Now, then, if they resort to force of arms or to brute force to overpower us, may we not safely calculate that the **results will be similar to those in the mental contest?**

Elder George A. Smith (*JD 6:60, Nov 15, 1857*) -

“In almost every instance, what has been by all philosophers and wise men considered the worst argument that ever was used has been resorted to—that is, brute force. You convince a man by brute force, and he is of the same opinion that he was before. You force a man to accede to your laws and rules, and his mind is only enslaved; and then, when it breaks loose, it is ten thousand times worse than if no brute force had been used.”

Behold, **the wicked are unwilling to be converted** by the **gentle means** the Lord God of Israel has introduced. They are satisfied that they cannot prevail against us by argument; ... in all the glaring forms they may please to give it, offers obstacles too formidable for them to encounter by argument, Scripture, philosophy, or truth. But "overcome it must be," say the enemy; and "we will not rest until we have resorted to the last extremity. We will try the force of arms!"

"Very well, if that is your mode of warfare," says the Almighty, "I do not desire it; but **I will show you that I am not only a man of reason, Scripture, and truth, but a man of war too**. If force of arms is your plan and mode of attack, **you will find me ready to meet you in that and in every method you may adopt**."

Behold, they rise up in war against the Saints. The Saints heretofore, when attacked on moral and Scripture principles, have stood up to oppose the enemy. If they had not done this, the enemy would have overpowered us. **We have always met him with the truth and the simple arguments which God has furnished us with, and have always been successful**; ... **when it came to force of arms, the enemy must needs be made the aggressor**. He was **permitted to prevail against us for the time being**; and whether that was not **the very means of putting us in a position whereby we could successfully oppose him** in that way, ... and herein we can discern that our Heavenly Father has exemplified a glorious truth to us, that **all things shall work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose**.

President Brigham Young (*Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p. 351.*) -

“Every time you kick ‘Mormonism’ you kick it upstairs; you never kick it downstairs. The Lord Almighty so orders it.”

Elder Carlos E. Asay (*Opposition to the Work of God, Oct 1981*) -

I assure you that our cause is **just** and it **will succeed**, regardless of the opposition exerted against us. Earlier Saints were bolstered by these words: “As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from **pouring down knowledge** from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.” (D&C 121:33)

... therefore **the Lord suffered them to prevail until he should get us where he wanted us:** “And then shall the prophecies of my servants be fulfilled in the scenes that shall transpire with you.”

The Lord considered it necessary that we should be removed into the chambers of the Almighty, or **to some place prepared to receive us, where he might display his power, and get for himself a name and honor that shall never be forgotten.**

...I consider that the defeat the Saints have suffered is tantamount to victory, and better than victory, because we have come to a place which the Lord wanted us to occupy.

Orson Pratt (JD 17: 292) -

“We are promised that after much tribulation comes the blessing. (D&C 58:4) The Lord says—“I the Lord have decreed a certain decree that my people shall realize, that after their tribulations they shall be redeemed, and **restored to the lands of their inheritances.**” (D&C 103:11-13)

Brigham Young (JD 9:137, July 28, 1861) -

“When will Zion be redeemed? When will the Savior make his appearance in the midst of his people? (D&C 1:36) When will the veil be taken away, that we may behold the glory of God? Can any of you answer these questions? Yes, readily, when I tell you. The redemption of Zion is the first step preparatory to the two last-named events. Just as soon as the Latter-day Saints are ready and prepared to return to Independence, Jackson County, in the State of Missouri, North America, just so soon will the voice of the Lord be heard, “Arise now, Israel, and make your way to the Center Stake of Zion.” Do you think there is any danger of our being ready before the Lord prepares the other end of the route? Do you believe that we, as Latter-day Saints, are preparing our own hearts, our own lives, to return to take possession of the Center Stake of Zion, as fast as the Lord is preparing to cleanse the land from those ungodly persons who dwell there? You can read, reflect, and make your own calculations. If we are not very careful, the earth will be cleansed from wickedness (Moses 7:48) before we are prepared to take possession of it. We must be pure to be prepared to build up Zion.”

Heber C. Kimball (JD 2:156, Nov 26, 1854) -

“Unto us it is the “last days,” in which, the Lord says by His Prophets, when you hear of war, and rumors of war, (Matt. 24:6) it will not be long before you have it in your own land. (D&C 38:29) Now are we as a people **preparing and qualifying ourselves** for that day, lest it overtake us as a thief in the night? (1 Thes. 5:2) It certainly will if we do not **wake up from our slumber.**”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson (*Come to Zion, Oct 2008*) -

“To come to Zion, it is not enough for you or me to be somewhat less wicked than others. We are to become not only good but holy men and women. Recalling Elder Neal A. Maxwell’s phrase, let us once and for all establish our residence in Zion and give up the summer cottage in Babylon” (*see Neal A. Maxwell, A Wonderful Flood of Light [1990], 47*).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson (*Come to Zion, Oct 2008*) -

“Under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, early members of the Church attempted to establish the center place of Zion in Missouri, but they did not **qualify** to build the holy city. The Lord explained **one of the reasons for their failure**:

“They have **not learned to be obedient** to the things which I required at their hands, but are **full of all manner of evil**, and **do not impart of their substance**, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them;

“And are **not united** according to the union required by **the law of the celestial kingdom**” (*D&C 105:3–4*)

“There were **jarrings**, and **contentions**, and **envyings**, and **strifes**, and **lustful** and **covetous** desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances” (*D&C 101:6*)

“Rather than judge these early Saints too harshly, however, we should look to ourselves to see if we are doing any better.

“Zion is Zion because of the **character, attributes**, and **faithfulness** of her citizens. Remember, “the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of **one heart and one mind**, and **dwelt in righteousness**; and there was **no poor among them**” (*Moses 7:18*) If we would establish Zion... we must rise to this standard. It will be necessary:

1. to become **unified** in one heart and one mind; (by)
 - a. overcome jarrings, contentions, envyings, and strifes
 - b. forgive all men
 - c. place the Savior at the center of our lives
 - d. follow those He has commissioned to lead us
 - e. have love and concern for one another
2. to **become, individually and collectively, a holy people (pure in heart)**; (by having)
 - a. a constant remembrance of the Savior
 - b. a constant remembrance of our pledge of **obedience, sacrifice, consecration, and fidelity**
 - c. no lustful desires
 - d. a hunger and thirst after righteousness
3. to **care for the poor and needy** with such effectiveness that we eliminate poverty among us. (some ways we can do this is by)

- a. “impart... [our] portion”
- b. ungrudgingly be equal in temporal things
- c. generosity...contribute to fast offerings and humanitarian projects
- d. prayerfully consider whether we are doing what we should and all that we should in the Lord’s eyes
- e. remain aloof from covetousness and the lust to acquire more and more of this world’s goods
- f. [avoid] **materialism** [which] is just one more manifestation of the **idolatry** and **pride** that characterize Babylon
- g. be content with what is sufficient for our needs

“We cannot wait until Zion comes for these things to happen—Zion will come only **as** they happen.”

John Taylor (*JD 1:148-149*) -

“It is necessary, then, that we pass through the school of suffering, trial, affliction, and privation, to know ourselves, to know others, and to know our God. Therefore it was necessary, when the Savior was upon the earth, that he should be tempted in all points, like unto us, and “be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” (*Heb. 4:15*) to comprehend the weaknesses and strength, the perfections and imperfections of poor fallen human nature.”

Elder Carlos E. Asay (*Opposition to the Work of God, Oct 1981*) -

“The Savior **learned obedience** by the **things which he suffered**. (*See Heb. 5:8*) Joseph Smith’s **oppositions** gave him **experience** and **worked for his good**. (*See D&C 122:7*)

Brigham Young (*JD 8:66-67*) -

“You all know that the Saints must be made pure, to enter into the celestial kingdom. It is recorded that **Jesus was made perfect through suffering**. (*Heb. 5:8-9*) If he was made perfect through suffering, **why should we imagine for one moment that we can be prepared to enter into the kingdom of rest with him and the Father, without passing through similar ordeals?**

“The iniquity of the evildoer must be made manifest, and those who hate the kingdom of God on the earth must have the privilege of filling up the cup of their iniquity. (*D&C 103:3*) The Lord has led the people through scenes of sorrow and affliction; but what have we passed through here during the two last years? Nothing, comparatively speaking. I can say that I do not consider that I have ever suffered anything for this kingdom—nothing in the least. **I have never sacrificed anything**, without it be the evil propensities that are sown in our nature, springing from the seed that was sown at the fall. May that be termed a sacrifice? I will not call it so. **What do we possess on this earth? Do we even own our bodies? Had we the power to produce them? Is the intelligence in these bodies our own? Did we organize and implant it? No human being has had power to organize his own existence. Then there is a greater than**

we. Are we our own in our bodies? Are we our own in our spirits? We are not our own. We belong to our progenitors—to our Father and our God. (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*)

“We say that we have lost an ox, a cow, or a horse; or, “I left my farm, my house, and have sacrificed a great deal for this work.” **This is a mistake. You had nothing to lose.** Not one particle of all that comprises this vast creation of God is our own. **Everything we have has been bestowed upon us for our action, to see what we would do with it—whether we would use it for eternal life and exaltation or for eternal death and degradation,** until we cease operating in this existence. We have nothing to sacrifice: then let us not talk about sacrificing.”

Lorenzo Snow (*JD 16:276, Oct 7, 1873*) -

“And I think we are not justified in anticipating the privilege of returning to build up the Center Stake of Zion, until we shall have **shown obedience to the law of consecration.** One thing, however, is certain, we shall not be permitted to enter the land from whence we were expelled, till our hearts are prepared to honor this law, and we become **sanctified through the practice of the truth.**”

Elder George A. Smith (*JD 6:60, Nov 15, 1857*) -

“**Such a people will have the blessings of God: such a people can be protected by the Almighty: such a people cannot be overthrown by all earth and hell combined. Then let us be such a people; and if corruption exists in our hearts, let us cut it out; for I can tell you we shall be sifted as with a sieve;** (*Amos 9:9*) and while our enemies are endeavoring to destroy us and desiring to murder us, to exterminate us, to deprive us of our existence, to wipe us from the earth, to blot out the name of the kingdom of God, they are only suffered to crowd upon us that we may be tried and purified.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson (*Come to Zion, Oct 2008*) -

“And so today the Lord’s people are gathering “out from among the nations” as they gather into the congregations and stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that are scattered throughout the nations. Nephi foresaw that these “dominions” would be small but that the Lord’s power would descend “upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, ... who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they [would be] armed with righteousness” (*see 1 Nephi 14:12–14*). **The Lord calls upon us to be beacons of righteousness to guide those who seek the safety and blessings of Zion:**

“Verily I say unto you all: **Arise and shine forth,** that thy light may be a standard for the nations;

“And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a **defense, and for a refuge from the storm,** and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth” (*D&C 115:5–6*).

Elder George A. Smith (*JD 6:60, Nov 15, 1857*) -

“This is the sentiment that I have with regard to the means made use of for the purpose of punishing and sifting us, or turning those who are corrupt and causing them to flee away, or of waking us up to our duty. ...

“I know that this is the work of God, and that he will sustain his servants; and if we will love truth, though few, compared with our enemies, we shall have light, life, power, and dominion, while our enemies will lift up their eyes in hell...(*Luke 16:23*). May God prepare us for all that we have to encounter, ”

Elder Carlos E. Asay (*Opposition to the Work of God, Oct 1981*) -

“And may we go forward “armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory” (*1 Ne. 14:14*) is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”

Micah’s Thoughts:

How often is this still the case, what Elder Orson Hyde warns of at the beginning of this section? That people tend to only look at the outward appearance to judge a man’s honesty. His hairstyle? His clothing choices? Facial hair? His favorite colors? Etc. And they will use this and make snap judgements about people’s honesty. We should know that the most dishonest of men and women do so in secret chambers behind closed doors away from prying ears etc. There was a famous American politician that was caught saying, “I have a public position and a private position.” We should be very careful not to judge that which is of God to be of the devil. If the Lord rewards those who have done good unto the least of these shall not the Lord speedily avenge his elect? Yea, he shall speedily avenge those who do faithfully serve him and uphold him. As for those who think that they can maintain their secret combinations and waltz into the New Jerusalem the Lord warned such that when he (the Lord) begins to make bare his arm in the eyes of all nations and perform his marvelous work and a wonder, “Wo unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord! And their works are in the dark; and they say: Who seeth us, and who knoweth us? And they also say: Surely, your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay. But behold, I will show unto them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I know all their works.” (2 Nephi 27:27) The Lord continues in 2 Nephi 27 speaking of the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon coming forth and says in verse 29, "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."

Nephi gives us commentary on these very events when he preached:

2 Nephi 9

31 And wo unto the deaf that will not hear; for they shall perish.

32 Wo unto the blind that will not see; for they shall perish also.

33 Wo unto the uncircumcised of heart, for a knowledge of their iniquities shall smite them at the last day.

34 Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.

The Lord gives us the macro last-day timeline points of reference on this in

JST Matthew

25 Wherefore, if they shall say unto you: Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not;

26 For as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

27 And now I show unto you a parable. Behold, wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together; so likewise shall mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the earth.

Elder Orson Hyde then goes into the doctrine of celestial marriage which I personally won't be going into during this breakdown, that said, I find it disheartening to listen to the faith of the early brethren and sisters of the Church in defending this part of celestial law, saying that guns will not stop them or take away their testimonies of it. Generations later "Saints" themselves destroy these testimonies, no guns were required. But this was prophetic, if the effects were only coming from outside the Church the Lord would respond in kind. But if the Saints, due to their own negligence "pollute their inheritances" the Lord will not suffer that those who pollute their inheritances should inhabit the land. Which ties in perfectly with what Elder Orson Hyde said in the first section, that the Lord will not work with dull and rusty tools.

Section IV

We say, against all the learning, science, skill, talent, &c., of this world, which were arrayed against us, making the odds almost enough to discourage any people but the Latter-day Saints, We have prevailed; and when they come to force of arms, this must also be overcome. They will use the force of arms; for, say they, "The 'Mormons' must be overcome, or they will take away our place and nation, and we shall be overthrown, and there will be no stopping these people, if we let them go on any further." And some think it has gone so far now that they cannot stop it. I endorse the sentiment. They have let it go too long for their purpose.

I believe, when the Almighty conceives a work to do, he will carry it through in some way or shape. Behold, we are here, a little people collected together in the mountains, and are short of the munitions of war, while on the other hand the whole world is full of them. We are short of clothing, but tolerably plenty of food. And then look at the terrible odds that is arrayed against us. See their thousands of well-trained troops and the millions of money at their command. They can bring any sized army into the field, all armed and equipped with a splendid outfit. This is a powerful odds against us.

The science of war has been studied by them from the beginning. They have kept a school at West Point, in which they have trained and qualified their officers to take command, and they are schooled in all the tactics of modern warfare, except ours.

At the call of the President of the United States, there are thousands who will enroll as volunteers, and will be all armed and equipped, with money in their pockets and grub in their sacks, and no end to it either.

Are all these any worse for us to overcome, in our present condition, than it was to overcome the learning, strength, and moral influence and power that were arrayed against us when we were but a handful, and called to go and preach the welcome message of the Gospel? Is the odds any greater? I say not. The God who taught and sustained us in proclaiming this Gospel in its simplicity will also sustain us in whatever opposition may arise against us, provided we have the Spirit of God in our hearts. When we went to preach the Gospel, and had the Spirit of God in our hearts, and were not in transgression, we could handle them without mittens, because the Lord was with us.

Just so sure as we as a people are pure and undefiled before God our heavenly Father, there is no power that can prevail against us. I do not care if they have all the paraphernalia of war the world can produce, the Almighty has got weapons of warfare they never thought of, and means of defense for his people, and he delights to throw his shield over those who serve him and keep his commandments. The odds may appear against us in the eyes of the world; but when we contemplate that God is for us, and that all the holy angels in heaven are enlisted in our behalf, and we have purity, and sincerity, and truth in our hearts, these are bulwarks which they cannot scale. God grant that we may be shielded with this kind of armor!

I want now to speak in relation to a few things that pertain more particularly to individuals. You know, to be honest, when there is no temptation to be otherwise, is no particular credit to us. For me to have a chance to put forth my hand and steal my neighbor's food, when I have plenty, and I do not do it, is no particular credit to me for being honest. Suppose I am clad with all the clothing I desire, and my family also is well provided for in this article, for me to go and steal clothing would be outrageous in the extreme, and there would be no credit due to me for refraining from such an act. The time to test our real merit and integrity is when we are pinched with hunger and thinly clad: then is the time to test us. I do not say that a person going to steal under those circumstances would be any more justified. For a person to be forced to steal food, to save his life, is a circumstance that very rarely occurs with a just and righteous man. Should a good man, however, be reduced to such extremes, there is generally, among the Saints, provision made against such emergencies, rendering stealing unnecessary under any circumstances. We have heard of some instances where garments have been washed and hung out, and have been taken by some person in the daytime, and shirts and other articles not necessary to mention.

Brethren and sisters, I wish merely to say, Let our hands be clean, and try to the utmost of our power to get what we really need, and get it in an honorable and lawful way. We do not want to spoil the victory that lies right before us by dabbling in things that are not our own, neither convenient. If I were to apologize for such acts upon the principle of scarcity and want, it would be a license for everybody to "pitch in" that had a disposition to do so, and nobody would be safe. Let us be on the watch—watch ourselves, and suffer not any unlawful act of ours to tarnish the glorious victory that awaits us. Let us hold on and do the best we can, and let our neighbor's things alone, unless we can persuade him to sell them to us, or give them to us. Do not let us weaken our own confidence before God. But we need to march, shoulder to shoulder, upon the principles of purity and integrity; and as we have stood shoulder to shoulder heretofore, and carried this Gospel to the nations of the earth, and been pure in heart before God, have we ever

failed in accomplishing the purposes of Heaven? No. And I tell you, inasmuch as our hearts are pure as a people, full of integrity and the Holy Ghost, no power shall ever prevail against us from this time henceforth and forever. I feel in my soul and pray God to bless the pure in heart, who seek to do his will, live their religion, and honor their God; and we shall yet see the desire of our souls and be satisfied.

The priests of Christendom now say, "We cannot stand before this man," and they warn their flocks to keep away from the Latter-day Saints. "Are you reading that 'Voice of Warning?' Lay it out of your hands and put it out of your houses, for it is a dangerous book. Put away from you their tracts and books, for they are dangerous; and keep away, keep away from those dangerous men that are turning the world upside down." That is the cry throughout the world. What will be the cry when they come up against us and try the force of arms? It will be—"Let us not go up against Zion, for the people thereof are terrible: keep away, keep away." The one cry follows in the wake of the other. What makes the people of Zion terrible? Answer: Strict honesty and integrity before God. That is what will bring the cloud by day and the shining of a flame of fire by night; and upon all the glory there shall be a defense. God will surround the people of Zion as it were with a wall of fire, and he will make bare his arm in the eyes of the nation that wars against her, and she will be like a beacon light to seafaring men; and men will come and bring their clothing and their treasures, and we shall have an abundant supply of such things. Let us take care of what we have, keep it clean and patch it up, take care of our sheep and raise all the flax and wool we can, and the Lord will make up the balance; and if we do right we shall find that we have an overflowing treasury of every good thing; which may God grant, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Kelly's Thoughts:

1964–O:56, Ezra Taft Benson, *Three Threatening Dangers*

Some years ago President Joseph F. Smith, a prophet of the Lord, warned that "There are at least three dangers that threaten the Church within" (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 312). He also counseled the Authorities of the Church to warn the people unceasingly against them.

These dangers are:

Flattery of prominent men in the world,

False educational ideas,

Sexual impurity.

Flattery As the world gets more wicked, a possible way to attain worldly success may be to join the wicked. The time is fast approaching when it will require great courage for Latter-day Saints to stand up for their peculiar standards and doctrine—all of their doctrine, including the more weighty principles such as the principle of freedom. Opposition to this weighty principle of freedom caused many of our brothers and sisters in the pre-existence to lose their first estate in the war in heaven.

Seeking the applause of the world, we like to be honored by the men the world honors. But therein lies real danger, for oftentimes, in order to receive those honors, we must join forces with and follow those same devilish influences and policies which brought some of those men to positions of prominence.

More and more the honors of this world are being promoted by the wicked for the wicked. We see this in publicity and awards that are given to movies, literature, art, journalism, etc. We see in our own newspapers widely read columnists carried who advocate one world socialism who have been consistently caught in falsehoods, and who continually parrot the communist line. Less and less we see the virtuous rewarded by the world, and when they are, oftentimes it almost seems to be done insidiously in order to get us to swallow the many evils for which the wicked are even more profusely honored.

Yes, President Joseph F. Smith was right. Today we are being plagued within by the flattery of prominent men in the world.

Second, false educational ideas:

During the past several years many of our institutions of learning have been turning out an increasing number of students schooled in amorality, relativity, and atheism—students divested of a belief in God, without fixed moral principles or an understanding of our constitutional republic and our capitalistic, free enterprise economic system.

Now these false educational ideas are prevalent in the world, and we have not entirely escaped them among teachers in our own system. There are a few teachers within the Church who while courting apostasy still want to remain members in the Church, for being members makes them more effective in misleading the Saints. But their day of judgment is coming, and when it does come, for some of them it would have been better, as the Savior said, that a millstone had been put around their necks and they had drowned in the depths of the sea [Matt. 18:6](#) than to have led away any of the youth of the Church.

The Lord has stated that his Church will never again be taken from the earth because of apostasy. But he has also stated that some members of his Church will fall away. There has been individual apostasy in the past, it is going on now, and there will be an even increasing amount in the future. While we cannot save all the flock from being deceived, we should, without compromising our doctrine, strive to save as many as we can. For as President Clark said, "We are in the midst of the greatest exhibition of propaganda that the world has ever seen."

Parents, stay close to your children; you cannot delegate your responsibility to the educators no matter how competent they may be. Parents have a duty to train their children, to talk over their problems with them, to discuss what they are learning at school. And it is neither wise nor safe, as President Stephen L Richards stated, to leave the determination of our educational system and policies exclusively to the professional educators.

Students, study the writings of the prophets. Fortunately, the consistent position taken over the years by the prophets of the Church on vital issues facing this nation have recently been compiled in an excellent book entitled *Prophets, Principles and National Survival* [by Jerreld L. Newquist].

Students, pray for inspiration and knowledge. Counsel with your parents. Let Sunday be the day to fill up your spiritual batteries for the week by reading good church books, particularly the Book of Mormon. Take time to meditate. Don't let the philosophies and falsehoods of men throw you. Hold on to the iron rod. Learn to sift. Learn to discern error through the promptings of the Spirit and your study of the truth.

Yes, false educational ideas are a serious threat today.

Third- Sexual Immorality

Sexual immorality is a viper that is striking not only in the world, but in the Church today. Not to admit it is to be dangerously complacent or is like putting one's head in the sand.

No sin is causing the loss of the Spirit of the Lord among our people more today than sexual promiscuity. It is causing our people to stumble, damning their growth, darkening their spiritual powers, and making them subject to other sins.

We are far removed from the days of our forefathers who were persecuted for their peculiar beliefs. Some of us seem to want to share their reward but are oftentimes afraid to stand up for principles that are controversial in our generation. We need not solicit persecution, but neither should we remain silent in the presence of overwhelming evils, for this makes cowards of men. We should not go out of the path of duty to pick up a cross there is no need to bear, but neither should we sidestep a cross that clearly lies within the path of duty.

We are in the world, and I fear some of us are getting too much like the world. Rather than continue a peculiar people, some are priding themselves on how much they are like everybody else, when the world is getting more wicked. The Lord, as he prayed for his Apostles, said, ". . . the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" John 17:14 As Latter-day Saints, we too have been called out of the world.

We have prevailed; and when they come to force of arms, this must also be overcome. They will use the force of arms; for, say they, "The 'Mormons' must be overcome, or they will take away our place and nation, and we shall be overthrown, and there will be no stopping these people, if we let them go on any further." And some think it has gone so far now that they cannot stop it. I endorse the sentiment. They have let it go too long for their purpose.

President Nelson- Let God Prevail

*Are you willing to let God prevail in your life? Are you willing to let God be the most important influence in your life? Will you allow His words, His commandments, and His covenants to influence what you do each day? Will you allow His voice to take priority over any other? Are you *willing* to let whatever He needs you to do take precedence over every other ambition? Are you *willing* to have your will swallowed up in His?*

I believe, when the Almighty conceives a work to do, he will carry it through in some way or shape. Behold, we are here, a little people collected together in the mountains, and are short of the munitions of war, while on the other hand the whole world is full of them. We are short of clothing, but tolerably plenty of food. And then look at the terrible odds that is arrayed against us. See their thousands of well-trained troops and the millions of money at their command. They can bring any sized army into the field, all armed and equipped with a splendid outfit. This is a powerful odds against us.

The science of war has been studied by them from the beginning. They have kept a school at West Point, in which they have trained and qualified their officers to take command, and they are schooled in all the tactics of modern warfare, except ours.

At the call of the President of the United States, there are thousands who will enroll as volunteers, and will be all armed and equipped, with money in their pockets and grub in their sacks, and no end to it either.

Are all these any worse for us to overcome, in our present condition, than it was to overcome the learning, strength, and moral influence and power that were arrayed against us when we were but a handful, and called to go and preach the welcome message of the Gospel? Is the odds any greater? I say not. The God who taught and sustained us in proclaiming this Gospel in its simplicity will also sustain us in whatever opposition may arise against us, provided we have the Spirit of God in our hearts. When we went to preach the Gospel, and had the Spirit of God in our hearts, and were not in transgression, we could handle them without mittens, because the Lord was with us.

Just so sure as we as a people are pure and undefiled before God our heavenly Father, there is no power that can prevail against us.

1975–O:32, Ezra Taft Benson, A Message to the World

To the rulers and peoples of all nations, we solemnly declare again that the God of heaven has established his latter-day kingdom upon the earth in fulfillment of prophecies. Holy angels have again communed with men on the earth. God has again revealed himself from heaven and restored to the earth his holy priesthood with power to administer in all the sacred ordinances necessary for the exaltation of his children. His church has been reestablished among men with all the spiritual gifts enjoyed anciently. All this is done in preparation for Christ's second coming. The great and dreadful day of the Lord is near at hand. In preparation for this great event and as a means of escaping the impending judgments, inspired messengers have gone, and are now going, forth to the nations of the earth carrying this testimony and warning.

The nations of the earth continue in their sinful and unrighteous ways. Much of the unbounded knowledge with which men have been blessed has been used to destroy mankind instead of to bless the children of men as the Lord intended. Two great world wars, with fruitless efforts at lasting peace, are solemn evidence that peace has been taken from the earth because of the wickedness of the people. Nations cannot endure in sin. They will be broken up but the kingdom of God will endure forever.

Therefore, as humble servants of the Lord, we call upon the leaders of nations to humble themselves before God, to seek his inspiration and guidance. We call upon rulers and people alike to repent of their evil ways. Turn unto the Lord, seek his forgiveness, and unite yourselves in humility with his kingdom. There is no other way. If you will do this, your sins will be blotted out, peace will come and remain, and you will become a part of the kingdom of God in preparation for Christ's second coming. But if you refuse to repent or to accept the testimony of his inspired messengers and unite yourselves with God's kingdom, then the terrible judgments and calamities promised the wicked will be yours.

The Lord in his mercy has provided a way of escape. The voice of warning is to all people by the mouths of his servants. If this voice is not heeded, the angels of destruction will increasingly go forth, and the chastening hand of Almighty God will be felt upon the nations, as decreed, until a full end thereof will be the result. Wars, devastation, and untold suffering will be your lot except you turn unto the Lord in humble repentance. Destruction, even more terrible and far-reaching than attended the last great war, will come with certainty unless rulers and people alike repent and cease their evil and godless ways. God will not be mocked. He will not permit the sins of **sexual immorality**, secret murderous combinations, the killing of the unborn, and disregard for all his holy commandments and the messages of his servants to go unheeded without grievous punishments for such wickedness. The nations of the world cannot endure in sin. The way of escape is clear. The immutable laws of

God remain steadfastly in the heavens above. When men and nations refuse to abide by them, the penalty must follow. They will be wasted away. Sin demands punishment.

When the voice of warning goes forth it is always attended by testimony. In the great declaration issued by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ in 1845, this is the testimony which was borne, and we who are the apostles today renew it as our witness:

“We say, then, in life or in death, in bonds or free, that the great God has spoken in this age.—*And we know it.*”

“He has given us the Holy Priesthood and Apostleship, and the keys of the kingdom of God, to bring about the restoration of all things as promised by the holy prophets of old.—*And we know it.*”

“He has revealed the origin and the Records of the aboriginal tribes of America, and their future destiny.—*And we know it.*”

“He has revealed the fulness of the gospel, with its gifts, blessings, and ordinances.—*And we know it.*”

“He has commanded us to bear witness of it, first to the Gentiles, and then to the remnants of Israel and the Jews.—*And we know it.*”

“He has also said that, if they do not repent, and come to the knowledge of the truth, ... and also put away all murder, lying, pride, priestcraft, whoredom, and secret abomination, they shall soon perish from the earth, and be cast down to hell.—*And we know it.*”

“He has said, that when ... the gospel in all its fulness [is] preached to all nations for a witness and testimony, He will come, and all Saints with him, to reign on the earth one thousand years.—*And we know it.*”

“He has said that he will not come in his glory and destroy the wicked, till these warnings were given and these preparations were made for his reception.—*And we know it.*”

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of his revealed word shall fail to be fulfilled.”

“Therefore, again we say to all people, Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins; and you shall receive the Holy Spirit, and shall know the truth, and be numbered with the house of Israel.” (*Messages of the First Presidency, 1:263–64.*)

Micah’s Thoughts:

The first thing I would like to say about this section is it is just as easy to say “I don’t steal from my neighbor” living on the stolen wealth of your children and grandchildren (national debt) as it is to say “follow the prophet!” when the prophet is telling you to do something that you agree with. We have a generation of untimely figs who have not produced fruit meet for their father’s kingdom who are living fat in the promised land by the means of selling their children and grandchildren into slavery (national debt), who boast of virtues like “not stealing from their neighbors” etc. But what have ye in to boast? Living in such a state shouldn’t that be given?

Likewise, after all the testimonies that have been given shouldn't "following the prophet" in a state of ease be a given? And yet this generation of untimely figs has half are flinging themselves from the tree (i.e., the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) while "lifting up their voice, cursing God and dying spiritual" and the other half is clinging to the tree convinced that they only have to follow the prophet when they want to or when he is saying something that aligns with their political viewpoints.

President Eyring: "Another fallacy is to believe that the choice to accept or not accept the counsel of prophets is no more than deciding whether to accept good advice and gain its benefits or to stay where we are. But the choice not to take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. It becomes more dangerous. The failure to take prophetic counsel lessens our power to take inspired counsel in the future. The best time to have decided to help Noah build the ark was the first time he asked. Each time he asked after that, each failure to respond would have lessened sensitivity to the Spirit. And so each time his request would have seemed more foolish, until the rain came. And then it was too late." (Finding Safety in Counsel, , Apr 19917 Gen Con)

D&C 90:36–37. The Lord Will Chasten Zion until She Overcomes

Elder Melvin J. Ballard said of the Lord's promise to see that Zion overcomes and is clean: "That kind of promise entails the necessity of chastisement, when we need to be chastened and corrected and brought to a condition of repentance. I recognize that the Lord cannot fulfil his work nor accomplish his purposes without our willing obedience. He will not use this people unless we are willing to be used; but he has means of correcting, he has means of chastisement, which he will apply from time to time, and the only thing that impedes our progress today is our own lack of willingness to follow the counsel of those whom God has appointed to lead this people, because of the imagination of our hearts that we are wiser than they are." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1921, p. 100.)

- Student Manual

There is a reason why we are being told over and over again why the events we are passing through now are test runs for the same reasons why Elder Orson Hyde discussed in his talk. If we can't listen right now when it is not tough, we won't be able to survive when it gets tough, just like if we can't stop ourselves from stealing in abundance we won't stop stealing when in need.

The last thing I will mention is the golden quote that Elder Orson Hyde gives in this last section where he singles out honesty as the single greatest hindrance to the redemption of Zion and building of New Jerusalem. And we have gone full circle. We need to follow the counsel of the keys and be honest. We can't be found in secret chambers, we can't be found to be liars, etc. for that is how we pollute our inheritances.

There will be a cloud and a pillar of fire but the Lord "will not work with dull and rusty tools to execute a nice job of work"- let us make ourselves clean and sharp, let us increase our testimony of the Savior by deepening our understanding of the doctrine taught in his restored Church and by relentlessly seeking truth, anchored in pure doctrine we will be able to step forward with

dogged persistence and faith and cheerfully do all that the Lord requires at our hands- things that only members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can accomplish. Expect miracles, expect the pillar of fire and cloud by day, expect the Lord making bare his arms in the eyes of all nations, expect the redemption of Zion and then stand back, be still and see the salvation of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.