

FOUNDATION OF THE GOSPEL

THE FALSE GODS WE WORSHIP

Jesus Christ our lord is under no obligation to save us, except insofar as we repent. We have ignored him, disbelieved him, and failed to follow him. We have changed the laws and broken the everlasting covenant. We stand at his mercy, which will be extended only if we repent. But to what extent have we repented? Another prophet said, "we call evil good and good evil." We have rationalized ourselves into thinking we are "not so bad." We see evil in our enemies, but NONE IN OURSELVES. Are we fully ripe? Has the rot of age and flabbiness set in? Will we change?

Apparently we would rather do things the devil's way than the Lord's way. It seems, for instance, that we would rather TAX OURSELVES INTO SLAVERY than pay our tithing; rather build shelters and missiles and bombs than drop to our knees with our families in solemn prayer, night and morning, to our God who would give us protection.

It seems that, rather than fast and pray, we prefer to gorge ourselves at the banquet tables and instead of disciplining ourselves, we yield to physical urges and carnal desires. Too many of our wives and mothers prefer the added luxuries of two incomes to the satisfactions of seeing children grow up in the fear and love of God. We golf and hunt and fish and watch sports rather than solemnize the Sabbath. Total morality is found neither among the people nor among the leaders of the state and nation. Personal interests and ulterior motives block the way. Old Man "Rationalization" with his long beard is ever present to tell us that we are justified in these deviations, and because we are not vicious enough to be confined in penitentiaries we rationalize that we are not failing to measure up. "Experience keeps a dear school," said Benjamin Franklin, "but fools will learn in no other." Thus, as a nation we continue in our godlessness. While the iron curtains fall and thicken we eat, drink, and make merry. While armies are marshalled and march and drill and officers teach men how to kill, we continue to drink and carouse as usual. While bombs are detonated and tested, and fallout settles on the already sick world, we continue in idolatry and adultery.

While corridors are threatened and concessions are made, we live riotously, and divorce and marry in cycles, like the seasons. While leaders quarrel and editors write and authorities analyze and prognosticate, we break all the laws in God's catalog. While enemies filter into our nation TO SUBVERT AND INTIMIDATE AND SOFTEN US, we continue on with our destructive thinking---"It can't happen here."

If we would but believe the prophets! For they have warned that if the inhabitants of this land are ever brought down into captivity and enslaved, "it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land" (2 Ne 1:7). This is a land which the Lord has preserved "for a righteous people" (Ether 2:7).

O that men would listen! Why should there be spiritual blindness in the day of brightest scientific and technological vision? Why must men rely on physical fortifications and armaments when the God of heaven yearns to bless them? One stroke of his omnipotent hand could make powerless all nations who oppose, and save a world even when in its death throes. Yet men shun God and

PUT THEIR TRUST IN WEAPONS OF WAR, in the "arm of flesh." All this continues despite the lessons of history. Will we ever turn wholly to God? Fear envelops the world which could be at ease and peace.

In view of the promises God has given respecting America, who can doubt that he would be willing to do the same for us as for ancient Israel? Conversely, should we not expect the same punishments if we fail to serve him?

To ancient Israel these (PUNISHMENTS) were listed:

The land will be barren (perhaps radioactive or dry from drought).

The trees will be without fruit and the fields without verdure.

There will be rationing and a scarcity of food, and sore hunger.

No traffic will jam your desolate highways.

Famine will stalk rudely through your doors and the ogre of cannibalism will rob you of your children and your remaining virtues will disintegrate.

There will be pestilence uncontrollable.

Your dead bodies will be piled upon the materialistic things you sought so hard to accumulate and save.

I will give no protection against enemies.

They that hate you shall reign over you.

There will be faintness of heart, " and the sound of a shaken leaf" shall cause you into flight and you will flee when none pursue.

Your power--your supremacy--your pride in superiority--will be broken.

Your heaven shall be as iron and your earth as brass. Heaven will not hear your pleadings nor earth bring forth its harvest.

Your strength will be spent in vain as you plow, plant and cultivate.

Your cities will be shambles; your churches in ruins. .

Your enemies will be astonished at the barrenness, sterility, desolation of the land they had been told was so choice, so beautiful, so fruitful. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths under compulsion.

You shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

Your people will be scattered among the nations as slaves and bondsmen.

You will pay tribute and bondage, and fetters shall bind you.

What a bleak prediction The Israelites failed to heed the warning. They ignored the prophets. They suffered the fulfillment of every dire prophecy.

Do we twentieth-century people have reason to think that we can be immune from the same tragic consequences of sin and debauchery if we ignore the same divine laws? Nations, like individuals, must "repent or suffer." There is only one sure cure for the earth's sick condition. That infallible cure is simply righteousness, obedience, godliness, honor, integrity. Nothing else will suffice.

Pres. Spencer W. Kimball (Miracle of Forgiveness-Pg. 316)

There were exceeding many prophets among us. And the people were a stiffnecked people, hard to understand. And there was nothing save it was exceeding harshness, preaching, and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually reminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God, and all these things--stirring them up continually to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was nothing short of these things, and exceeding great plainness of speech, would keep them from going down speedily to destruction. (Enos:22-23)

The Lord gave us a choice world and expects righteousness and obedience to his commandments in return. But when I review the performance of this people in comparison with what is expected, I am appalled and frightened. Iniquity seems to abound. The Destroyer seems to be taking full advantage of the time remaining to him in this, the great day of his power. Evil seem about to engulf us like a great wave, and we feel that truly we are living in conditions similar to those in the days of Noah before the Flood.

When I...fly over the vast and beautiful expanse of our globe, I compare these beauties with many of the dark and miserable practices of men, and I have the feeling that the good earth can hardly bear our presence upon it.

The Brethren constantly cry out against that which is intolerable in the sight of the Lord; against pollution of mind, body, and our surroundings; against vulgarity, stealing, lying, pride, and blasphemy, against fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and all other abuse of the sacred power to create; against murder and all that is like unto it; against all manner of desecration.

That such a cry should be necessary among a people so blessed is amazing to me. And that such things should be found even among the Saints to some degree is scarcely believable, for these are a people who are in possession of many gifts of the Spirit, who have knowledge that puts the eternities into perspective, who have been shown the way to eternal life.

Sadly, however, we find that to be shown the way is not necessarily to walk in it, and MANY have not been able to continue in faith. These have submitted themselves in one degree or another to the enticings of Satan and his servants and joined with those of "the world" in lives of ever-deepening idolatry.

I use the word idolatry intentionally. Carnal man has tended to transfer his trust in God to material things. When men have fallen under the power of Satan and lost the faith, they have put in its place a hope in the "arm of flesh" and in "gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know"-that is, in idols. It is my firm belief that when we read the scriptures, and try to "liken them unto ourselves," we will see MANY parallels between the ancient worship of graven images and behavioral patterns in our very own experience.

In spite of our delight in defining ourselves as modem, and our tendency to think we possess a sophistication that no people in the past ever had--in spite of these things, we are, on the whole, an idolatrous people—a condition most repugnant to the Lord.

We are a warlike people, easily distracted from our assignment of preparing for the COMING OF THE LORD. When enemies rise up, we commit vast resources to the fabrication of gods of stone and steel-ships, planes, missiles, fortifications-and depend on them for protection and deliverance. When threatened, we become anti-enemy instead of pro-kingdom of God; we train a man in the art of war and call him a patriot, in the manner of Satan's counterfeit of true patriotism. We forget that if we are righteous the Lord will either not suffer our enemies to come upon us or He will fight our battles for us.

Can we not take the Lord at his word and exercise a particle of faith in him? Our assignment is affirmative: to forsake the things of the world, to leave off idolatry and press forward in faith, to carry the gospel to our enemies. We must leave off the worship of modern-day idols and a reliance on the "arm of flesh" for the Lord said in our day, "I will not spare any that remain in Babylon." (D&C 64:24)

As we near the YEAR 2000, our message is the same as that which Peter gave, and that which the Lord himself gave, "Prepare ye, PREPARE YE FOR THAT WHICH IS TO COME, for the Lord is NIGH." (D&C 1:11-12)

Pres. Spencer W. Kimball-First Presidency Message June 76 Ensign

Let's not be foolish and suppose that because the sun is shining today that there won't be clouds tomorrow. The Lord has told us by revelation some of the things that are ahead of us, and we are LIVING IN THE DAY when the fulfillment of those prophecies IS NOW AT HAND.

Pres. Harold B. Lee - Apr 69 CR

I do hope that we are familiar with these coming events....and that we keep the vision of them continually before our minds...because upon a knowledge of them, and an assurance of their reality and a witness that each of us may have part therein, rest the efficacy of Christ's admonition, "**be not troubled.**"

Pres. Marion G. Romney - CR Oct 66

The time is coming when we will be mixed up in these now peaceful valleys to the extent that it will be difficult to tell the face of a Saint from the face of an enemy against the people of God. Then is the time to look out for THE GREAT SIEVE, for there will be a great sifting time, and MANY WILL FALL.....THERE IS A TEST, A TEST, A TEST COMING. The difficulties will be of such a character that the man or woman who does not possess a personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got this testimony, you must live right and call upon the Lord, and cease not until you obtain it.

Heber C. Kimball 1856 - quoted by J. Golden Kimball CR Oct 1930

All true Latter-day Saints will be tested to the limit. Many will apostatize, and others will stand still, not knowing what to do...the Saints will be put to a test that will try the integrity of the best of them. The pressure will be so great that the righteous among us will cry unto the Lord day and

night until deliverance comes. Then there will be a great sifting time and many will fall...The time will come when no man or woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within themselves. If you do not have a knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, HOW CAN YOU STAND?

Heber C. Kimball-Prophetic Sayings of

Some of you young men are going to engage in that (final) battle. Some of you are going to engage in the final testing time... which is closer to us than we know. (The Kingdom of God) is rolling forward with a power and a force that will stop the enemy in its tracks while some of you live. The time will come when those who are not for Him will be found to be against Him. (These young men) are fighting not against flesh and blood alone. They are fighting against ENEMIES IN HIGH PLACES, EMPIRES, organized sin, ORGANIZED (orchestrated?) rebellion, riots, and all manner of disobedience and lawlessness.

Hugh B. Brown - CR Oct 67

As conditions worsen, it becomes more apparent every day that we are on a collision course with disaster. Nothing short of the guidance of the Holy Spirit can bring us through safely. A world calamity can be avoided only if enough people can be brought to humble THEMSELVES and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Pres. Marion G. Romney - Jan 1980 Ensign

If the afflictions which have been predicted do come upon us, they will come upon us because we have not kept the faith and because we have been disobedient and have thrown away the opportunities that our Heavenly Father has given us to prepare for the day of calamity which He foretold, over one hundred years ago, would come in this generation.

Pres. Harold B. Lee - May 46 Improvement Era

Here then is the key---LOOK TO THE PROPHETS for the words of God, that will show us how to prepare for the calamities which are to come. The days ahead are sobering and challenging. Oh, may we be prepared spiritually and temporally!

Pres. Ezra Taft Benson - CR Oct 73

How on the face of the earth could a man enjoy his religion when he had been told by the Lord how to prepare for a day of famine, when, instead of doing so, he had fooled away that which would have sustained him and his family?

Elder George A Smith JD 12:142

Men depend on armaments as on idols. O FOOLISH MEN who think to protect the world with armaments, battleships, and space equipment, when only righteousness is needed! We look to foreign programs, summit conferences, land bases. We depend on fortifications, our gods of stone, upon ships and planes and projectiles, our gods of iron--gods which have no ears, no eyes, no hearts. We pray to them for deliverance and depend upon them for protection--LIKE THE GODS OF BAAL.

Pres. Spencer W. Kimball - CR Apr 60

I still fear that we are going to have a war before too long that on each side will be intended to be a virtually exterminating war. I would like each one of you to think of having around you--you farmers--a production that would enable you to live (and possibly for a while without too much mechanization), and help some of your city folk to live, too. It is a terrible picture even to think about, but we will be shortsighted if we do not.

Pres. J. Reuben Clark, Jr. - Welfare Conf. 11 Oct 58

We heard him reply in answer to a question as to why he had put his life savings into his presently-owned Grantsville ranch: "This is all I have to leave to my family when I die, and if they are not too lazy to work it, they won't starve. I have told them that when the first atomic bomb is dropped here in America, that they are to go out there on the ranch and stay until it is over." This last seemed not only to be wise council, but also A PROPHECY. His only son, J. Reuben Clark III, is the family steward of this practical and foresighted legacy.

Pres. J. Reuben Clark, Jr. quoted by Harold B. Lee - Imp. Era Sept 6 61

The world is again balancing itself on the brink of another catastrophe of equal proportions (to the days of Noah) because of our evil. We are aware that at any moment our present peaceful calm may give way to the awful calamity of fire and destruction that may be unloosed upon us at any minute. In our day as well as Noah's, the people have been warned. What a fearful thing when man brings such dreadful destruction upon himself by his own thoughtlessness and disobedience.

What about us and our day? Jesus indicated that history would repeat itself. "As the days of Noah were, so also should the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt. 24:34) We have been warned that the earth will be cleansed by fire. And according to scripture, the catastrophe reserved for our day may make Noah's flood seem like a summer picnic.

As in the days of Noah, we still seem more concerned in laying the foundations of our fortunes than in laying the foundations of salvation and Christian character in our families. May we accept God's invitation to come into the ARK that through our obedience, we and our families may find safety when the pending troubles break over the world.

Elder Sterling W. Sill - The Upward Reach pg. 71-77

If the Gentiles on this land reject the word of God and conspire to overthrow liberty and the constitution, their doom is fixed, and they "shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant".

Verily I say unto you, the rest of my servants, go ye forth, unto the great and notable cities and villages, reproofing the world in righteousness of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days. (D&C 84:117)

Pres. Ezra Taft Benson - CR Sept 30 1961

We live in a day of great challenge. We live in that time of which the Lord spoke when he said, "Peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion." (D&C 1:35.) We live in that day which John the Revelator foresaw when "the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 12:17.) The dragon is Satan; the woman represents the Church of Jesus Christ. Satan is waging war against the members of the Church who have testimonies and are trying to keep the commandments. And

while many of our members are remaining faithful and strong, some are wavering. Some are falling. Some are fulfilling John's prophecy that in the war with Satan, some Saints would be overcome. (See Rev. 13:7.)

Pres. Ezra Taft Benson - CR Apr 86

Yea, they have ALL gone out of the way; they have become corrupted. Because of PRIDE they are puffed up. WO, WO, WO, be unto them, saith the Lord God Almighty, for they shall be thrust down to hell! Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth!

For the day shall come that the Lord God will speedily visit the inhabitants of the earth; and in that day that they are fully ripe in iniquity they shall perish.

The devil at that day shall rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good. And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: ALL IS WELL IN ZION; YEA, ZION PROSPERETH, ALL IS WELL, and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

Therefore, WO BE UNTO HIM THAT IS AT EASE IN ZION! WO BE UNTO HIM THAT CRIETH: ALL IS WELL! Yea, WO be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men. And in fine, WO unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the TRUTH OF GOD. Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm,...WO BE UNTO THE GENTILES, SAITH THE LORD GOD OF HOSTS! For notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, THEY WILL DENY ME! (2 Nephi 28:11-32)