
Rejecting the Word of God

D&C 40

When Church leaders speak of the life of James Covill, their remarks are about his rejection of the word of God. Of the many Church leaders who have spoken of Covill, perhaps President Joseph Fielding Smith described his failings best:

We are led to believe that in this promised blessing, this foolish man was convinced of the truth, for it is clear that the Lord revealed to him things which he and the Lord alone knew to be the truth. However, when he withdrew from the influence of the Spirit of the Lord and had time to consider the fact that he would lose the fellowship of the world, and his place and position among his associates, he failed and rejected the promises and blessings which the Lord offered him.¹

Rejecting the word of God is not exclusive to this dispensation nor is it without consequences. In 1 Nephi 19:13 the Lord revealed that the “Jews shall be scourged because they reject signs and [the] power of God.” When those who resided “upon promised land reject the Holy One, judgments shall rest upon them” (2 Nephi 1:10).

Elder Randall K. Bennett at the October 2011 general conference spoke about the consequences of choice by illustrating his remarks with a story:

Our grandchildren are learning that when they make a choice, they also choose its consequences. Recently one of our three-year-old granddaughters refused to eat her dinner. Her mother explained, “It’s almost bedtime. If you choose to eat dinner, you are choosing ice cream for dessert. If you choose not to eat dinner, you are choosing to go to bed now, without ice cream.” Our granddaughter considered her two

¹ Joseph F. Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:174.

choices and then stated emphatically, “I want *this* choice—to play *and* eat only ice cream *and* not go to bed.”

Brothers and sisters, do we wish we could play, eat only ice cream, never go to bed, and somehow avoid consequences like malnutrition and exhaustion?

In reality we have only two eternal choices, each with eternal consequences: choose to follow the Savior of the world and thus choose eternal life with our Heavenly Father or choose to follow the world and thus choose to separate ourselves from Heavenly Father eternally.²

For those who fail to make the choice, President Thomas S. Monson concluded that indecision is a decision not to accept the word of God:

Let us not find ourselves as indecisive as is Alice in Lewis Carroll’s classic *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. You will remember that she comes to a crossroad with two paths before her, each stretching onward but in opposite directions. She is confronted by the Cheshire cat, of whom Alice asks, “Which path shall I follow?” The cat answers, “That depends where you want to go. If you do not know where you want to go, it doesn’t matter which path you take.”³

President Monson assured Latter-day Saints, “Unlike Alice, we all know where we want to go, and it *does* matter which way we go, for by choosing our path, we choose our destination.”⁴

In the case of James Covill, by rejecting the word of God he chose not to fulfill his calling to go to Ohio and cry with a loud voice, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand; crying: Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God” (D&C 39:19). The Lord said about James Covill, “He broke my covenant, and it remaineth with me to do with him as seemeth me good” (D&C 40:3).

² Randall K. Bennett, “Choose Eternal Life,” *Ensign*, November 2011.

³ Thomas S. Monson, “The Three Rs of Choice,” *Ensign*, November 2010.

⁴ Monson, “The Three Rs of Choice,” November 2010.