



Type: Magazine Article

Judgments of the Lord to Pour Forth

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Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 69, No. 12 (December 1966)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 1099-1100

Abstract: This article says that there is great need throughout the world for repentance and purification through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. For the good of mankind Satan was cast down to the earth that there might be an opposition in all things and punishments affixed. Those who profit from the experiences of others and are willing to look to God and live will be spared from the calamities that will plague the earth in these last days.

Judgments of the Lord to Pour Forth

President Joseph Fielding Smith

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• According to the dictionary, chastity means "the quality or state of being chaste, free from sexual impurity—free in thought; modest, virtuous and free from vulgarity."

When the Savior was with the Nephites he emphasized this principle and said to them:

"And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

"Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do;

"Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day." (3 Ne. 27:19-22.)

From the observation that we make as we travel from one place to another and from what we read in the public press, we are of necessity forced to the conclusion that repentance from sin is extremely essential throughout the world today. There has seldom been a time in the history of mankind when sin was not prevalent and the violation of the divine commandment was almost, if not entirely, universal. We read in the sacred writings that it was not long after the children of Adam and Eve were grown that these children began to pair off and establish families in the earth, and the influence of Satan was felt among them, and they began to forget the teachings their parents had given them. Thus do the scriptures read:

"And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and daughters.

"And Satan came among them, saying: I am also a son of God; and he

commanded them saying: Believe it not; and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish." (Moses 5:12-13.)

Very frequently I have this question asked of me: "When Lucifer, or the devil, was cast out of heaven, why did the Lord permit him to come to this earth to tempt and torment mankind? Why did he not punish him by sending him to some other, but isolated, place with his angels?"

My answer has been that the Father permitted Lucifer to come here so that he could tempt us and test our faith. It is a divine decree, and one that is evidently essential, that we have this mortal probation; we are in it to be tested and proved to see if we can keep the commandments in the face of temptation or trial. Our Eternal Father did not place us here without some protection against sin and the temptations of Satan. In the very beginning Adam and Eve were definitely instructed in the way of salvation and were given strict commandments to serve the Lord and bring their children up in the light and truth of the gospel, the principles of which are essential to man's salvation. Evidently angels from heaven were their instructors, and while the record does not reveal the event, Eve was baptized as well as Adam. Let it be remembered that the Fall was not the terrible thing which so many good people believe it to have been and which is proclaimed quite generally in the so-called Christian world. It is customary for many religious teachers in the world to refer to the Fall as "man's shameful fall," and it is so recorded in the King James translation of the Bible. However, the Fall was an essential part of man's mortal probation. It is a mistaken notion that prevails quite generally in the world that Adam and Eve would have lived in a world of ease, with their posterity, free from temptation and sin, if that fruit had not been taken. The fact is very clear, nevertheless, that had Adam and Eve not partaken, the great gift of mortality would not have come to them. Moreover, they would

have had no posterity, and the great commandment given to them by the Lord would not have been fulfilled.

The divine truth is that Adam and Eve were expected to do the very thing that they did. All of this was part of the divine plan.

This mortal life is a part of our eternal life. Adam's "transgression," and I place the word in quotation marks, was an essential act which opened the doors for the millions of spirits to come to this earth and receive bodies of flesh and bones preparatory to their eternal salvation and exaltation.

Mortality, therefore, is a part of the eternal plan in relation to the salvation and exaltation of the human family. Here we are tried, tempted, and proved to be either worthy of exaltation to thrones and kingdoms or partakers of his displeasure and thus assigned to some lesser kingdom.

Lehi, when giving counsel to his son Jacob, spoke by prophecy of the coming of the Son of God in the meridian of time and had this counsel for him:

"Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

"Behold he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

"Wherefore how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.

"Wherefore, he is the first-fruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved.

"And because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him. Wherefore, the ends of the law which the Holy One hath given, unto the inflicting of the punishment which is affixed, which punishment that is affixed is in opposition to that of the happiness which is affixed, to answer the ends of the atonement—

"For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my first-born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it

should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.

"Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes, and also the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God." (2 Ne. 2:6-12.)

In course of time, so the scriptures say, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5.)

And thus, down through the ages, we discover, if we are willing to believe what is written in the scriptures, that judgments and destructions had to be poured out upon the wicked because they would not repent.

Not only were these punishments meted out to the inhabitants of the so-called Old World, but destructions awaited the inhabitants of this western world for the same cause. Through their prophets (I am speaking of the Nephites and Lamanites), they were constantly reminded that this land is "choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people." (Eth. 2:7.)

But we who live in the present day should take heed and profit by the experiences of those who have gone before and not fall into their grievous errors. We should remember that the same warnings have been given to us and "to all the inhabitants of the earth," that destruction awaits this age unless men refrain from wickedness and abominations. Let us not forget that the Lord said it should be in this day as it was in the days of Noah. We should remember also that he is still a "God of wrath" as well as a "God of love," and that he has promised to pour out his wrath upon the ungodly and to "take vengeance upon the wicked" who will not repent.

Not only did the ancient prophets predict that such should be the case in these latter days; the Lord has also spoken it in our own dispensation.

I want to bear testimony to this congregation, and to the heavens and the earth, that the day is come when those angels are privileged to go forth and commence their work. They are laboring in the United States of America; they are laboring among the nations of the earth; and they will continue. We need not marvel or wonder at anything that is transpiring in the earth. The world does not comprehend the revelations of God. It did not in the days of the Jews; yet all that the prophets had spoken



concerning them came to pass. So in our day these things will come to pass. We cannot draw a veil over the events that await this generation. No man who is inspired by the Spirit and power of God can close his ears, his eyes, or his lips to these things.

And thus we might quote indefinitely from the ancient prophets as well as from the prophets of this dispensation and even from the Lord himself, in relation to the troubles, destructions, wars, and plagues which are to come upon the inhabitants of the earth—yes, even Zion also—unless the people repent. "The Lord's scourge," so he says, "shall pass over by night and by day, and the report thereof shall vex all people: yea it shall not be stayed until the Lord come;

"For the indignation of the Lord is kindled against their abominations and all their wicked works."

But the promise has been made to Zion and the pure in heart, that they shall escape if they "observe to do all things whatsoever I [the Lord] have commanded. . . ." (D&C 97:23-25.)

What is here given will suffice as a warning to a "perverse generation" and to remind the members of the Church that the Lord has said:

"Even so it shall be in that day when they shall see all these things, then shall they know that the hour is nigh.

"And it shall come to pass that he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come, even for the signs of the coming of the Son of Man.

"And they shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath.

"And they shall behold blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke." (D&C 45:38-41.)

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:34-36.)

May we walk in paths of righteousness for his name's sake is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.