

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD OR NOTHING

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In these dread and drear days in which we live, worldliness and carnality and evil cover the earth and threaten to engulf even the saints of God.

Men are divided into two camps. Some are the children of Christ, others are the children of the devil; some are the children of light, others of darkness. And there is open warfare between the two forces.

We have great reason to fear and tremble lest any of us who have chosen to follow Christ should become as other men—acceptors of worldly philosophies and revelers in worldly ways.

May I speak in plainness of some of the ills and evils of which we must beware lest the floods of sin sweep us to an eternal spiritual death.

Then I shall set forth the standards by which each of us may know with surety whether our course and way of life has divine approval.

First, then, let us view the world around us:

There are in this sad and sorry society of ours many learned and adept educators who teach things that are contrary to the divine will. They seem to be more concerned with sustaining the dogmas of their academic disciplines than in discovering ultimate truth.

There are gifted authors whose literary skills find expression in filth and vulgarity.

There are famous artists whose paint brushes daub out tawdry messages of lewdness and disharmony.

There are skilled sculptors whose chiseling's in stone and weldings in metal do anything but speak peace to the soul.

There are charismatic actors who portray evil and immoral and depraved characters so that these figments of someone's imagination are glamorized and held out as the assumed norms of society.

There are musicians whose discordant compositions and degrading lyrics dull the sensitivities of the soul; singers whose dress, deportment, and renditions encourage immorality and drug abuse; fashion designers whose modish dress creations invite and encourage evil thoughts and immoral acts; intellectuals whose speculations destroy faith; preachers whose doctrines damn the souls of men.

All of these, and others of like ilk, are led by Lucifer. They are going contrary to the mind and will of the Lord, are leading others astray, and will lose their own souls unless they repent.

There is in the world a force for good and a force for evil. God is the source of all good, Lucifer of all evil.

The light of Christ, sent forth from the presence of God, invites and entices men to do good and work righteousness. The whisperings of Satan, authored by him and broadcast by his fellow devils, invite and entice men to do evil.

Satan, our common enemy, now rages in the hearts of men, and those who heed his pleas become enemies to God.

Satan is a spirit man. He is affable and persuasive; he has a dynamic personality, is a great orator, and knows more than any of us mortals.

Lucifer is a philosopher, an educator, and a minister, and he has his mortal disciples who do his bidding in each of these fields.

His philosophers propound theories to explain God and immortality, good and evil, and all of the eternal verities, without reference to the Lord or revelation.

His educators teach courses whose purpose is to deny the fall of man and the consequent atonement of Christ.

His ministers devise doctrines which allow men to live in their sins and yet have a feeling they are worshipping the Lord and will be saved in his kingdom.

Lucifer is a political leader and an intellectual giant, and he has his mortal disciples who espouse his political causes and who use their intellectual powers to destroy faith. He has in effect his own university where his spirit followers are taught what to say to their mortal counterparts.

In their courses in philosophy and on the social sciences they reject the Judeo-Christian ethic and devise other teachings and propose alternative life styles to indicate how men should live.

In the intellectual fields they reason and speculate and postulate and create doctrines that please the carnal mind.

His politicians gain control of nations and kingdoms and rule by the sword. They deny freedom to their subjects and make a mockery of what we have come to call civil rights.

Lucifer is also a poet, logician, and lawyer; he is a man of war, a rebel, a traitor; and his whole aim is to enslave men and to destroy their souls. And always he persuades willing mortals to represent him in these fields.

There are of course wise educators, true philosophers, and uplifting authors. There is music, art, and literature that is edifying and decent. There is much that is good in the world.

To enable us to judge between the good and the evil, may I now raise a standard round which wise and decent people may rally to overcome the wiles of the devil and to escape the ills that otherwise will surely come upon them.

There are many tests which every person may take to determine whether he is on the Lord's side of the line, or whether he is hearkening to the counsel of the evil spirits who are subject to Satan. I shall mention only four of these tests.

First: The test of honoring, loving, and serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every person born into the world is endowed by his Creator with an enlightening Spirit. Man does not walk alone. All men by instinct, automatically, as a natural inheritance know the difference between good and evil. All have a conscience.

Mormon tells us: "Everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God."

All such is inspired by the Spirit of Jesus Christ as it works in the hearts of all men. And, be it known, everything that is decent and true in the world bears witness of Christ and glorifies and honors his holy name.

"But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil." (Moro. 7:16-17.)

If we love the Lord and revere his holy name; if we are alive in Christ and are guided by his Spirit; if we have taken upon ourselves his name, thus becoming true Christians—we will never do anything to bring disrepute upon him.

Second: The test of upholding, sustaining, and supporting the gospel cause.

All the blessings of earth and heaven are made available through the gospel. The creation of all things, the fall of Adam, the atonement of Christ, the probationary nature of mortality—all these are part of the gospel.

To believe the gospel is to believe in Christ and become an heir of all things. The gospel cause is the greatest cause in which men or angels or gods can engage.

The gospel brings salvation. If ministers, or intellectuals, or speculators, or others preach or teach anything contrary to gospel standards, their views are not of God.

The gospel embraces all truth; it is the system that sets forth the origin and destiny of man. If philosophers and teachers postulate false theories about the creation, of life in all its forms and varieties, and if they substitute their own moral views for the traditional Judeo-Christian ethic, their views are not of God.

The gospel includes all that is good and uplifting. The divine word affirms: “And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.” (D&C 50:23.) If music, art, sculpture, dancing, literature, entertainment, fashions, or anything else, does not edify; it is not uplifting, decent, and wholesome—it is not of God.

The gospel exalts and ennobles the family. It is the plan of progression whereby we can create for ourselves eternal family units patterned after the family of God our heavenly Father.

If there is legislation, proposed or enacted, which hinders the family from pursuing its divine destiny; if there is immorality or abortion or unnatural sex acts; if there is any social practice that demeans, restricts, or inhibits the creation of a proper eternal family unit—it is not of God.

If we are converted to the gospel and believe in our hearts that it is the Lord’s eternal plan of salvation; if we know that all good, all truth, and even eternal life itself comes through the gospel; if we have taken the Holy Spirit for our guide, as we await the return of Him whose gospel it is—we will never do anything to hinder the gospel cause or to raise doubts in the minds of other men.

Third: The test of accepting, befriending, and blessing the Lord’s anointed.

The Lord and his prophets are one. It is not possible to accept and honor the one without the other. He that receiveth the Lord’s servants receiveth him. Those who give but a glass of cool water to a prophet, because he is a prophet, are promised a prophet’s reward.

To Abraham the Lord said: “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee.” (Abraham 2:11.)

And so it is with reference to all the prophets.

Thus saith the Lord: “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” (Ps. 105:15.)

Those who reject the prophets and oppose prophetic causes are not of God. “For they who are not for me are against me, saith our God.” (2 Ne. 10:16.)

Four: The test of cherishing, supporting, and upholding the one true Church.

Christ is the Savior; his gospel is the plan of salvation; his prophets proclaim his word to the world; and the Church administers his affairs on earth. It is his earthly kingdom.

His Church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has established it as a city set upon an hill and as a light to the world. And he has commanded his Church to raise “a standard for the nations.” (D&C 115:5.)

This standard, this ensign to the world, this gospel flag, has now been raised and it is the standard by which all else will be judged.

In the providences of the Lord—it is his decree and not ours—all things will be judged by gospel standards as that gospel is administered by the one true Church. It could not be otherwise, for the mind and will and purposes of the Lord are found in that kingdom which is his own.

And all else, all that runs counter to his kingdom, all that opposes and rejects and fights his Church, is not of God.

The tests, then, by which all men may know with a perfect knowledge whether they are in harmony with the divine will, or whether they are espousing causes and pursuing courses that are not of God, center in their attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Toward his everlasting gospel, toward his servants and his prophets, and toward his Church.

We need not be deceived. We and all men can sit in judgment on worldly ways and worldly philosophies. We can choose the right and reject the evil.

It is written: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” (Jas. 4:7-8.)

We may be soldiers, farmers, or judges; we may be educators, authors, or historians; we may be shepherds of sheep or drovers of cattle; we may earn our bread in any one of a thousand temporal pursuits.

But all of these things are but avocations; they are but temporary employment; they serve us for a fleeting moment here on earth.

We are also the elders of Israel who hold the holy priesthood. We are also the agents and servants and ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are our true vocations. Our labors in our Father's business must take precedence over all else. Through them we earn the eternal bread of which men may eat and never hunger more.

If and when there is a conflict of interest between our earthly pursuits and our eternal pursuits, it is time to take stock and choose to walk in the course charted from on high.

Our chief obligation is to follow the Lord and work for his interests. Our pledge, sworn on the altars of God, is and must be that we will never do anything to destroy faith.

We must never perform an act or espouse a cause that runs counter to the needs and purposes of the Church. If this means we must forsake the course followed by others in the world, so be it.

Come what come may we must put first in our lives the things of God's kingdom.

Each of us must say in our hearts and from our lips: "As for me and mine, it is and shall be, the kingdom of God or nothing."

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.