Under the Siege of Wickedness

Harold B. Lee

You leaders, put into full gear the total programs that are heaven-sent in these days to stem the tide of wickedness that is rolling over the earth as an avalanche. [Conference Report (Oct. 1971), p. 62; or Ensign (Dec. 1971), 31]

Spencer W. Kimball

The forces of good are clearly and continually under attack. There are times when it seems the world is almost drowning in a flood of filth and degradation. And I want to cry out, “Hold on! Hold on to what is right and true. Therein is safety. Don’t let yourself be swept away.”

In 1946 I visited Hawaii shortly after a huge tidal wave, where walls of water some forty feet high struck Hilo and the Hamakua coast, and I saw the devastation that resulted. . . .

We, too, are faced with powerful, destructive forces unleashed by the adversary. Waves of sin, wickedness, immorality, degradation, tyranny, deceitfulness, conspiracy, and dishonesty threaten all of us. They come with great power and speed and will destroy us if we are not watchful. [Conference Report, September-October 1978, pp. 3-8]

Ezra Taft Benson

I testify that wickedness is rapidly expanding in every segment of our society (see D&C 1:14–16, 84:49–53). It is more highly organized, more cleverly disguised, and more powerfully promoted than ever before. Secret combinations lusting for power, gain, and glory are flourishing. A secret combination that seeks to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries is increasing its evil influence and control over America and the entire world (see Ether 8:18–25).

I testify that the church and kingdom of God is increasing in strength. Its numbers are growing, as is the faithfulness of its faithful members. It has never been better organized or equipped to perform its divine mission.

I testify that as the forces of evil increase under Lucifer’s leadership and as the forces of good increase under the leadership of Jesus Christ, there will be growing battles between the two until the final confrontation. As the issues become clearer and more obvious, all mankind will eventually be required to align themselves either for the kingdom of God or for the kingdom of the devil. As these conflicts rage, either secretly or openly, the righteous will be tested. God’s wrath will soon shake the nations of the earth and will be poured out on the wicked without measure (see Joseph Smith—History 1:45, D&C 1:9). But God will provide strength for the righteous and the means of escape; and eventually and finally truth will triumph (see 1 Nephi 22:15–23).

I testify that it is time for every man to set in order his own house both temporally and spiritually. [Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 103; or Ensign (Nov. 1988), p. 87]

Gordon B. Hinkley

Never before, at least not in our generation, have the forces of evil been so blatant, so brazen, so aggressive as they are today. Things we dared not speak about in earlier times are now constantly projected into our living rooms. All sensitivity is cast aside as reporters and pundits speak with a disgusting plainness of things that can only stir curiosity and lead to evil. . . . The home is under siege. So many families are being destroyed. . . . Sisters, guard your children. They live in a world of evil. The forces are all about them. [“Walking in the Light of the Lord,” Ensign (Nov. 1998), pp. 97-100]

How to Fortify Ourselves Against Wickedness

Ezra Taft Benson

The word of God, as found in the scriptures, in the words of living prophets, and in personal revelation, has the power to fortify the Saints and arm them with the Spirit so they can resist evil, hold fast to the good and find joy in this life.

Now to you priesthood leaders we say, look to the prophetic counsel of Lehi and Paul (1 Ne 8:28, 32; 12:17; 15:23-24; 1 Tim 3:1-7, 13-15) and others like them. In that counsel you will find the solution to the challenges you face in keeping your flocks safe from the “ravening wolves” that surround them. (See Mt 7:15; Acts 20:29.) We know that you too have great anxiety for the members of your wards and stakes and expend great time and effort in their behalf. There is much that we ask of you who have been chosen for leadership. We place many loads upon your shoulders. You are asked to run the programs of the Church, interview and counsel with the members, see that the financial affairs of the stakes and wards are properly handled, manage welfare projects, build buildings, and engage in a host of other time-consuming activities.
While none of those activities can be ignored and laid aside, they are not the most important thing you can do for those you serve. In recent years, time and time again we have counseled you that certain activities bring greater spiritual returns than others. As early as 1970, President Harold B. Lee told the regional representatives:

“We are convinced that our members are hungry for the gospel, undiluted, with its abundant truths and insights.... There are those who have seemed to forget that the most powerful weapons the Lord has given us against all that is evil are His own declarations, the plain simple doctrines of salvation as found in the scriptures.” (In regional representatives’ seminar, 1 Oct 1970, p. 6.)

In a First Presidency message in 1976, President Kimball said: “I am convinced that each of us, at least some time in our lives, must discover the scriptures for ourselves -- and not just discover them once, but rediscover them again and again.... The Lord is not trifling with us when he gives us these things, for ‘unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.’ (Lk12:48.) Access to these things means responsibility for them. We must study the scriptures according to the Lord’s commandment (see 3 Ne 23:1-5); and we must let them govern our lives.” (Ensign, September 1976, pp. 4-5.)

In April 1982, Elder Bruce R. McConkie spoke to the regional representatives about the priority the scriptures should take in our labors. He said: “We are so wound up in programs and statistics and trends, in properties, lands and mammon, and in achieving goals that will highlight the excellence of our work, that we have ‘omitted the weightier matters of the law.’... However talented men may be in administrative matters; however eloquent they may be in expressing their views; however learned they may be in the worldly things -- they will be denied the sweet whisperings of the Spirit that might have been theirs unless they pay the price of studying, pondering, and praying about the scriptures.” (In regional representatives’ seminar, 2 April 1982, pp. 1-2.)

That same day, Elder Boyd K. Packer spoke to the stake presidents and regional representatives. He said: “Buildings and budgets, and reports and programs and procedures are very important. But, by themselves, they do not carry that essential spiritual nourishment and will not accomplish what the Lord has given us to do.... The right things, those with true spiritual nourishment, are centered in the scriptures.” (In meeting with stake presidents and regional representatives, 2 April 1982, pp. 1-2.)

I add my voice to these wise and inspired brethren and say to you that one of the most important things you can do as priesthood leaders is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently. Feast upon the words of Christ. Learn the doctrine. Master the principles that are found therein. There are few other efforts that will bring greater dividends to your calling. There are few ways to gain greater inspiration as you serve.

But that alone, as valuable as it is, is not enough. You must also bend your efforts and your activities to stimulating meaningful scripture study among the members of the Church. Often we spend great effort in trying to increase the activity levels in our stakes. We work diligently to raise the percentages of those attending sacrament meetings. We labor to get a higher percentage of our young men on missions. We strive to improve the numbers of those marrying in the temple. All of these are commendable efforts and important to the growth of the kingdom. But when individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow. . . .

Oh, my brethren, let us not treat lightly the great things we have received from the hand of the Lord. His word is one of the most valuable gifts He has given us. I urge you to recommit yourselves to a study of the scriptures. Immerse yourselves in them daily so you will have the power of the Spirit to attend you in your calling. Read them in your families and teach your children to love and treasure them. Then prayerfully and in counsel with others, seek every way possible to encourage the members of the Church to follow your example. [“The Power of the Word,” Ensign (May 1986), pp. 79-82]