

CHAPTER 13

2 Nephi 28–30

Introduction

Some themes and teachings that were first presented in 2 Nephi 26 are built on in 2 Nephi 28. Nephi identified some of the false teachings and beliefs that are rampant in the latter days, and then he taught us what we must do to avoid being led astray. As you read 2 Nephi 29, look for ways the marvelous work of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration will help overcome false doctrines, false churches, and pride in the last days. Throughout your study, identify characteristics of God’s covenant people and the blessings that come to them as they repent and serve Him in righteousness.

Commentary

2 Nephi 28:1. “The Spirit Hath Constrained Me”

- Nephi felt “constrained” by the Spirit to record his prophecies of the last days. *Constrained* means being compelled or doing something out of necessity. There are other examples of being constrained by the Spirit (see 1 Nephi 4:10; Alma 14:11; 4 Nephi 1:48; D&C 63:64).

2 Nephi 28:2. This “Book Shall Be of Great Worth”

- The book mentioned in 2 Nephi 28:2 is the Book of Mormon and is the same book Nephi referred to in 2 Nephi 26–27, 29. Nephi said “the book shall be of great worth” to us because of conditions in the last days. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught how we can recognize the great worth of the Book of Mormon:


“Each of the major writers of the Book of Mormon testified that he wrote for future generations. . . .

“If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’ . . .

“. . . In the Book of Mormon we find lessons for dealing with persecution and apostasy. We learn much about how to do missionary work. And more than anywhere else, we see in the Book of Mormon the dangers of materialism and setting our hearts on the things of the

world. Can anyone doubt that this book was meant for us and that in it we find great power, great comfort, and great protection?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5–6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6–7).

2 Nephi 28:6–9. “False and Vain and Foolish Doctrines”

- Nephi exposed some of the “false and vain and foolish doctrines” that Satan professes and will continue to use (2 Nephi 28:9). Each of the phrases found in 2 Nephi 28:6–9  conveys a spiritually dangerous philosophy. Modern prophets have identified these ideas and have spoken against them:

“*Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die*” (v. 7). Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cautioned against this attitude:



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“The philosophy of ritual prodigalism is ‘eat, drink, and be merry, . . . [and] God will beat us with a few stripes’ (2 Nephi 28:8). This is a cynical and shallow view of God, of self, and of life. God never can justify us ‘in committing a little sin’ (v. 8). He is the God of the universe, not some night-court judge with whom we can haggle and plea bargain!

“Of course God is forgiving! But He knows the intents of our hearts. He also knows what good we might have done while AWOL [absent without leave]. In any case, what others do is no excuse for the discipline from whom much is required (see Alma 39:4). Besides, on the straight and narrow path, there are simply no

corners to be cut (see D&C 82:3)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 40; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 33).

“*God . . . will justify in committing a little sin*” (v. 8). The Doctrine and Covenants is clear: “For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven” (D&C 1:31–32).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles commented on the foolishness of thinking that we are better off for having sinned for the experience of it: “The idea that one is better off after one has sinned and repented is a devilish lie of the adversary. Does anyone here think that it is better to learn firsthand that a certain blow will break a bone or a certain mixture of chemicals will explode and sear off our skin? Are we better off after we have sustained and then healed such injuries? I believe we all can see that it is better to heed the warnings of wise persons who know the effects on our bodies” (“Sin and Suffering,” in *Brigham Young University 1989–90 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1990], 151).

“*Lie a little*” (v. 8). President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) admonished us to resist the temptation to lie a little: “Nephi so describes the people of his day, as he also describes so many of our day. How easy it is for us to say, ‘We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent’ (Articles of Faith 1:13). But how difficult for so many to resist the temptation to lie a little, cheat a little, steal a little, bear false witness in speaking gossipy words about others. Rise above it. . . . Be strong in the simple virtue of honesty” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 74; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 52).

“*God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved*” (v. 8). President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency spoke against this falsehood:

“[One deception] is what some erroneously call ‘premeditated repentance.’ There is no such doctrine in this Church. This may sound subtly appealing, but it is in fact pernicious and a false concept. Its objective is to persuade us that we can consciously and deliberately transgress with the forethought that quick repentance will permit us to enjoy the full blessings of the gospel, such as temple blessings or a mission. True repentance

can be a long, painful process. This foolish doctrine was foreseen by Nephi:

“‘And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; . . . there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God’ [2 Nephi 28:8].

“. . . All of our covenants must not only be received through ordinances but, to be eternal, must also be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. This divine stamp of approval is placed upon our ordinances and covenants only through faithfulness. The false idea of so-called premeditated repentance involves an element of deception, but the Holy Spirit of Promise cannot be deceived” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 61; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 46).

2 NEPHI 28:14

What challenge faces the humble followers of Christ? How can we avoid falling prey to this challenge?

2 Nephi 28:19–22. Strategies of the Devil

- As Nephi earlier identified false doctrines promoted by Satan, he also identified some of the strategies that promote “the kingdom of the devil” (2 Nephi 28:19). Our modern-day prophets and apostles have continued to identify the tactics used by Satan. Bishop Richard C. Edgley of the Presiding Bishopric warned us of the reality of the attacks of the adversary:

“We have . . . had very specific warnings regarding Satan’s power, influence, and determination. Nephi prophesied more than twenty-five hundred years ago of the trials and turbulence that you would face. You all know the scripture. It is found in the 28th chapter of 2 Nephi: [2 Nephi 28:20–21]

“I believe this scripture is true. I believe the time is now. And I believe the target is you. For the most part, Satan has made great strides in establishing and

selling his value system, which is based upon the son of man, not the Son of God: ‘Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die’ (2 Nephi 28:7) and ‘There is no hell’ (2 Nephi 28:22). His is a value system based upon selfishness, self-indulgence, and immediate gratification. Thus we see devastating decisions constantly being made by those of your age. We see cultures infested with drugs, sex, alcohol, pornography, laziness, and many other spiritually devastating practices. But that does not have to be you.

“President Gordon B. Hinckley has warned us and pleaded with us: ‘I wish to say in the strongest language of which I am capable, stay away from moral iniquity. You know what is right and wrong. You cannot use ignorance as an excuse for unacceptable behavior. . . .’

“I beg of you, my dear young friends, to avoid such behavior. It will not be easy. It will require self-discipline. . . . You need the strength that comes of prayer’ (“To Men of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 58–59)” (“Becoming You” [CES fireside for young adults, Nov. 3, 2002], 4, www.ldsces.org).

“*They be stirred up to anger*” (2 Nephi 28:19). Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles identified the danger that comes from following Satan’s temptations to take advantage of each other:

“It should come as no surprise that one of the adversary’s tactics in the latter days is stirring up hatred among the children of men. He loves to see us criticize each other, make fun or take advantage of our neighbor’s known flaws, and generally pick on each other. The Book of Mormon is clear from where all anger, malice, greed, and hate come from.

“. . . By the looks of what we constantly see depicted in the news media, it appears that Satan is doing a pretty good job. In the name of reporting the news, we are besieged with sometimes graphic depictions—too often in living color—of greed, extortion, violent sexual crimes, and insults between business, athletic, or political opponents” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 24–25; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 19).

“*Pacify, and lull them away into carnal security*” (2 Nephi 28:21). Bishop Richard C. Edgley commented on the carnal desires so prevalent in today’s world:

“Nephi describes [Satan’s] sales techniques as pacifying, flattering, and lulling as he declares, ‘All is well’ (2 Nephi 28:21–22). Among other things Satan would have us put in our bags is immorality in all its forms, including pornography, language, dress, and behavior. But such evil deeds bring emotional distress, loss of spirituality, loss of self-respect, lost opportunity for a mission or temple marriage, and sometimes even unwanted pregnancy. Satan would enslave us by having us put drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other addictive behaviors into our bags” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 57; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 43).

“*There is no hell; and . . . I am no devil, for there is none*” (2 Nephi 28:22). One of the greatest lies perpetuated is that there is no devil. President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) of the First Presidency affirmed the reality of Satan with this testimony:

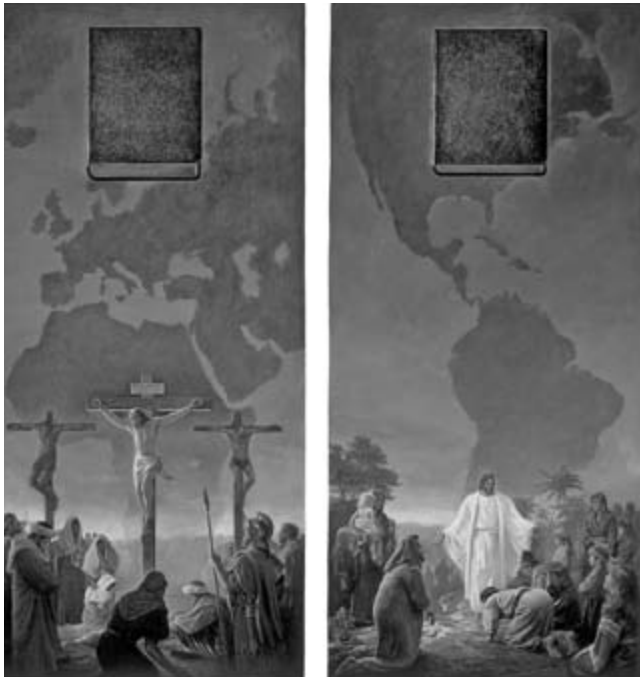
“A corollary to the pernicious falsehood that God is dead is the equally pernicious doctrine that there is no devil. Satan himself is the father of both of these lies. To believe them is to surrender to him. Such surrender has always led, is leading now, and will continue to lead men to destruction.

“Latter-day Saints know that there is a God. With like certainty, they know that Satan lives, that he is a powerful personage of spirit, the archenemy of God, of man, and of righteousness.

“The reality of the existence of both God and the devil is conclusively established by the scriptures and by human experience” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 22; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 35).

2 Nephi 28:28–30. “Wo Be unto Him That Shall Say . . . We Have Enough” Scripture

- Nephi indicated that when the Book of Mormon goes forth to confound the false doctrines and philosophies mentioned in 2 Nephi 28, many people would be “angry because of the truth of God” and will say “we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!” (vv. 28–29). Making such a claim seals the heavens, discounts the need for living prophets, and denies the power of the Holy Ghost. Nephi warned those who nurture this attitude: “From them shall be taken away even that which they have” (v. 30).



The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) explained the shortcomings of the Bible: “Much instruction has been given to man since the beginning which we do not possess now. . . . Some of our friends . . . are bold to say that we have everything written in the Bible which God ever spoke to man since the world began. . . . Does it remain for a people who never had faith enough to call down one scrap of revelation from heaven, and for all they have now are indebted to the faith of another people who lived hundreds and thousands of years before them, does it remain for them to say how much God has spoken and how much he has not spoken? . . . It is nowhere said in that volume by the mouth of God, that He would not, after giving, what is there contained, speak again” (*History of the Church*, 2:18).

- To say that the Lord “cannot speak” today as in days past would be to put limitations on God. President James E. Faust explained the need for modern revelation: “Does God love us less than those led by the ancient prophets? Do we need his guidance and instruction less? Reason suggests that this cannot be. Does he not care? Has he lost his voice? Has he gone on a permanent vacation? Does he sleep? The unreasonableness of each of these proposals is

self-evident” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 16; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 13).

2 Nephi 29:2. The Book of Mormon “Shall Hiss Forth”

- President Ezra Taft Benson proclaimed the need for members of the Church to actively declare the truths of the Restoration. By so doing, we become the “hissers” spoken of in 2 Nephi 29:2–3:

“Our main task is to declare the gospel and do it effectively. We are not obligated to answer every objection. Every man eventually is backed up to the wall of faith, and there he must make his stand. . . .

“The Book of Mormon is to be used ‘for a standard unto my people, which are of the house of Israel,’ the Lord says, and its words ‘shall hiss forth unto the ends of the earth.’ (2 Ne. 29:2.) We, the members of the Church, and particularly the missionaries, have to be the ‘hissers,’ or the tellers and testifiers, of the Book of Mormon unto the ends of the earth.

“The Book of Mormon is the great standard we are to use. . . . The Book of Mormon is the great finder of the golden contact. It does not contain things which are ‘pleasing unto the world’ (1 Ne. 6:5). . . . It is a great sieve” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 95–96; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 65).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley shared the following example of how the Book of Mormon changed a life forever:

“[The Book of Mormon] has touched for good the lives of millions who have prayerfully read it and pondered its language. May I tell you of one such I recently met in Europe.

“He was a businessman, successful in his undertakings. In the course of his travels he met two of our missionaries. They tried to set up an appointment to teach him. He put them off but finally agreed to listen. He somewhat perfunctorily accepted what they had to say. He became convinced in his mind that they spoke the truth, but he was not moved in his heart.

“He decided that he would read the Book of Mormon. He said that he had been a man of the world, never given to crying. But as he read the book, tears coursed

his cheeks. It did something to him. He read it again and felt the same emotions. What had been conversion of the mind became conversion of the heart.

“His way of life was altered, his perspective changed. He threw himself into the work of the Lord. Today he fills a high and holy calling in the cause he has come to love” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 70; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 52).

- Refer to the chart “The Stick of Judah and the Stick of Joseph” in the appendix (p. 412).

2 Nephi 29:3. The Coming Forth of Additional Scripture

- Satan seeks to discredit the Book of Mormon by getting people to reject it on the grounds that all truth is contained in the Bible alone. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles commented on those who reject the Book of Mormon: “Strange as it may seem to present day enemies of the truth, their very opposition to the receipt of more of the word of the Lord by way of the Book of Mormon is one of the signs of the times. Their opposition, summarized in the canting chant, ‘A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible,’ brings forth this severe rebuke from the Lord: ‘Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. . . . Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word?’ (2 Ne. 29.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 719).

2 NEPHI 29:6–9

What do we learn about Father in Heaven and His purposes?

2 Nephi 29:7–14. The Testimony of Two Nations

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) identified the two nations referred to in 2 Nephi 29:7–8: “This was spoken by prophecy to the gentiles of the present day. It should be remembered also, that the law given to Israel was that ‘the testimony of two men is

true,’ providing they are honorable witnesses. Here the Lord applies the law to nations. Why should it not be so?”



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“If the word of the Lord is to be established by two chosen witnesses, then we may well look for two chosen nations to stand as witnesses for Jesus Christ. One such nation was Israel in Palestine, the other was Israel in America, Judah speaking from the Old World and Joseph from the

New. Today these two testimonies for God and his truth have run together” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:278).

2 Nephi 29:12–13. Additional Records Yet to Come Forth

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell testified that other records yet to come forth will testify of Jesus Christ: “Lost books are among the treasures yet to come forth. Over twenty of these are mentioned in the existing scriptures. Perhaps most startling and voluminous will be the records of the lost tribes of Israel (see 2 Nephi 29:13). We would not even know of the impending third witness for Christ except through the precious Book of Mormon, the second witness for Christ! This third set of sacred records will thus complete a triad of truth. Then, just as the Perfect Shepherd has said, ‘My word also shall be gathered in one’ (v. 14). There will be ‘one fold and one shepherd’ (1 Nephi 22:25) in a welding together of all the Christian dispensations of human history (see D&C 128:18)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 70; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 52).

- The coming together of sacred records is a major theme of the Book of Mormon. This concept is taught in 2 Nephi 29:12–13. Later examples in the Book of Mormon include King Limhi and Ammon returning with the Jaredite record (see Mosiah 28:12, 14), King Limhi and Ammon returning with their own records (see Mosiah 7:1–2, 17–33; 8:1, 3–4), and Alma’s colony returning with their records (see Mosiah 22:16; 25:1–6).

2 Nephi 30:7–8. “Jews . . . Shall Begin to Believe in Christ”

• Elder Bruce R. McConkie discussed the prophesied conversion of the Jews following the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

“‘And it shall come to pass that the Jews which are scattered also shall *begin* to believe in Christ; and they shall begin to gather in upon the face of the land.’ (2 Ne. 30:7.) Much of the old Jewish bitterness against Christ has ceased; many now accept him as a great Rabbi, though not the Son of God. A few have accepted him in the full sense, coming into the true Church along with the gathered remnants of Ephraim and his fellows.

“But the great conversion of the Jews, their return to the truth as a nation, is destined to follow the Second Coming of their Messiah.

Those able to abide that day, in their extremity and mourning, will ask: ‘What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?’

Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which

I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am



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the Son of God.’ (D. & C. 45:51–52; Zech. 12:8–14; 13:6.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 722–23).

2 NEPHI 30:11–18
What are some of the conditions of the Millennium?

Points to Ponder

- After reading 2 Nephi 28, what false doctrines and teachings of Satan are you now more aware of?
- How has additional scripture increased your knowledge of the doctrines of the restored gospel?
- In what ways does the Book of Mormon testify that the Lord is God over the whole earth?

Suggested Assignments

- List as many false doctrines and beliefs as you can as explained in 2 Nephi 28:2–14. Counter the false doctrines by listing true doctrines next to them. Identify a scripture reference that affirms each true doctrine.
- Explain in a family home evening setting what is wrong with the claim of accepting the Bible as the word of God while rejecting the Book of Mormon.