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16

The Enemies of Christ: 2 Nephi 28

Dennis L. Largey

Several years ago when two professional football teams met in an important playoff game, the odds were heavily in favor of one particular team. But during the contest the other team intercepted two key passes and returned the ball each time for touchdowns and won the game. Afterwards, it was discovered that an assistant coach, with the aid of binoculars, had decoded the signals being sent in to the opposing quarterback indicating his primary passing target. With a walkie talkie the assistant had radioed the information to the defensive backfield coach, who then informed his players on the field through substitution. Knowing the specific plans of the opposition enabled the defense to become the offense and win the game. Today, football teams go to great effort to protect their game plans. Practice sessions are closed, fences are covered to prevent observation, decoys are used when sending in signals, and players are heavily fined when they lose a playbook. Obviously, knowing the strategy of an adversary gives one an advantage.

Through the Book of Mormon, our Heavenly Father has righteously opened to us his children the unholy playbook of those identified as his enemies. In the April 1975 general

conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Ezra Taft Benson, speaking about the Book of Mormon, said:

Is the Book of Mormon true?—Yes. Who is it for?—Us. What is its purpose?—To bring men to Christ. How does it do this?—By testifying of Christ and *revealing his enemies* (65; emphasis added).

Second Nephi chapter 28 is a prophetic writing opening to full view important truths concerning several of the chief enemies of Jesus Christ and the restored gospel as follows: (1) false doctrines, identified as the precepts of men; (2) false teachers; (3) pride; and (4) Satan himself. The objective of this study is to show how, as President Benson taught, the Book of Mormon *reveals* the enemies of Christ.

The Context of 2 Nephi 28

To help understand what is taught in 2 Nephi chapter 28, it is important to review its context. In chapter 27, Nephi quotes a prophecy from the brass plates of Laban that corresponds with Isaiah 29 of the Bible. Its time period is the latter days; its subjects are: (1) apostasy, characterized by empty souls who drink but remain faint, who are drunken and stagger, but not with strong drink and (2) restoration, particularly the coming forth of a book through an unlearned man, which would cause the wisdom of the wise to perish, the blind to see, the deaf to hear and those who have erred or murmured to learn doctrine. In essence, 2 Nephi 27 (Isaiah 29) is a detailed prophecy about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Chapter 29 is also a prophetic chapter concerning the Book of Mormon. In it Nephi included a revelation he received from the Lord showing the reaction of many latter-day gentiles to the addition of another book of scripture. Chapter 28 is consistent with both the time period and subjects of chapters 27 and 29. The first two verses of chapter 28 clearly indicate that what

follows refers to the day when the Book of Mormon will be introduced to the Christian world.

False Doctrines—the Precepts of Men

The first enemies of Christ revealed by Nephi are false doctrines generated through the teachings of men, false, vain and foolish doctrines that originate and proceed forth from churches which are “built up, and not unto the Lord” (2 Nephi 28:3). Then he describes the religious contention that motivated Joseph Smith to “ask of God” regarding which church he should join. Nephi said of latter-day churches, “they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance” (v. 4). The key here is in Nephi’s contrast. It is not that false churches deny the existence or witness of the Holy Ghost, but that the scholarship of men would supplant the spirit of revelation as the theological basis of determining truth. Therefore, consistent with the disharmony inherent in the learning of men, these churches are characterized by their strifes of words, contests of opinions and contention among the clergy (JS- H 1:6).

[Nephi then identifies several of the false precepts that would be taught at the time of the restoration and have continued to the present: they shall (1) deny the power of God, (2) say there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, (3) claim he hath given his power unto men (v. 5), and (4) argue that this day he is not a God of miracles (v.6). Each of these precepts specifies what God cannot do. The key phrase is “the Redeemer hath done his work” (v. 5). It is possible that Nephi chose to specify and thus expose these particular precepts because they are enemies to the doctrine of restoration. For example, if there were no miracles, there would have been no first vision of Joseph Smith; if there were no power of God, there would have been no restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood; if there were no work today, there would be no

proselyting church with prophets receiving continuous revelation. These ideas are remarkably similar to those the Methodist minister said to Joseph Smith a short time after his first vision:

I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were *no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them* (JS-H 1:21; emphasis added).

While Satan sought to bind the tongue of Joseph Smith before his first vision, the precepts of men have since multiplied to bind his message.

False Systems of Salvation

Nephi next uncovers two evil, anti-Christ philosophies. One is a modification of the other and both offer an alternate system of salvation that is contrary to the revealed word of God. In verse 7 we read, “Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us.” This teaching emphasizes both the humanistic and the hedonistic. It argues that individuals are free to gratify their own carnal desires, to set their own standards of morality, to live for the pleasure of the moment and to do all this without guilt, for “tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us.” This evil teaching totally denies the justice of God. It embraces the teachings of the noted anti-Christ Nehor and Korihor. For example, Nehor taught that “all mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice; for the Lord had created all men, and had also redeemed all men; and, in the end, all men should have eternal life” (Alma 1:4).

Precepts such as this spawn numerous abominations among the children of men and pave the way for false teachers to echo the various voices that promote evil, destroy souls and

pervert the truth. One example of this is a 2 November 1983 article in the *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, entitled "She Teaches Women How to Cheat." It reports on the work of psychologist Cynthia Silverman, who conducts workshops "for married women who are having, or thinking of having extramarital affairs." The following excerpt from that article reveals its teachings:

"This is not advice on free love. . . . Men and women both have affairs and the frequency of women having affairs is now almost as great as the men. The goal is to educate women to make a meaningful decision. Let's see they don't do it moronically or hurt themselves or their families." To that end, workshop participants are given practical advice such as remembering to cover absences with excuses a husband cannot check, and to resist the temptation to confess because "a white lie is better than a black truth." . . .

The [1 hour and 45 minute] workshops . . . stress enjoyment without guilt. "I was a basket case when I went in there," says one wife . . . "I still feel a little bit (guilty), but not to the same degree. . . ." The workshop, she added, "helped me set my priorities differently. I always made sure that my family came first, especially my children, but now I realize I have a right to happiness also" (4).

In order to sin without feeling guilt, one must lower his moral standard to correspond with his behavior. This is an exactly opposite teaching from the true gospel principle that to remove guilt one must lift his behavior to his moral standard through appropriate repentance. Seeking to reverse the process, some modern clinicians, with their false teachings, seek to strip mankind of the gift of conscience. The disarming of this divine alarm system enables the enemy to enter and move freely about.

Eating, drinking, and being merry is not synonymous with being happy. Samuel the Lamanite told the Nephites,

for ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head (Hel. 13:38).

In his next verse, Nephi notes a similar teaching, but the variance appeals to perhaps another audience:

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; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; 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).

Instead of rejecting any consequence for eating, drinking and being merry, this doctrine acknowledges God but still limits his power to exercise justice and punish the sinner. In this framework, mercy would rob justice. Man's perception of God's mercy allows him to expand the parameters of disobedience and still reach heaven. Thus verses 7 and 8 are examples of salvation based on a disproportionate relationship between justice and mercy. Alma's youngest son, Corianton, was struggling with this very doctrine:

And now, my son, I perceive there is somewhat more which doth worry your mind, which ye cannot understand—which is concerning the justice of God in the punishment of the sinner; for ye do try to suppose that it is injustice that the sinner should be consigned to a state of misery (Alma 42:1).

Alma then teaches Corianton the true relationship between God's mercy and justice, clarifying that mercy cannot rob justice, but through the atonement of Jesus Christ mercy can appease justice if the sinner repents. Anyone who is deceived into believing that people can be saved "in their sins" would do well to hearken to Alma's final counsel to Corianton:

O my son, I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the justice of God; but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his longsuffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility (Alma 42:30).

This example illustrates the Book of Mormon as being true to its two-fold commission to (1) confound false doctrine (2 Nephi 3:12); and (2) to restore plain and precious truths lost from the biblical text (1 Nephi 13).

A key phrase used by those who advocate sin is “there is no harm in this” (2 Nephi 28:8). This devilish whisper invites good men and women to compromise and be selective in their personal righteousness. Nephi labeled this a vain doctrine. Perhaps the vanity of the doctrine is in its self-centeredness. The lying, the digging of the pit, the taking advantage of a neighbor all elevates one at the expense of another. The “live for today” consciousness exalts the “me first” attitude prevalent in today’s world. The world teaches that life is short and tomorrow we die, and we prosper according to our genius and conquer according to our strength (Alma 30:17).

False Teachers—How Can They Be Recognized?

The next enemies Nephi identifies are false teachers who will minister in latter-day churches built up unto themselves, but “not unto the Lord” (2 Nephi 28:3). They teach the doctrines just discussed which are both anti-restoration and anti-Christ. Nephi, as does Moroni in Mormon 8, exposes the characteristics, activities and motivation of these enemies. They are the antithesis of the righteous and humble saints who preceded them, and in their false, vain and foolish actions they seek to counteract or undo the worthy work of their righteous predecessors. Thus Nephi wrote, “the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them” (2 Nephi 28:10).

Nephi and Moroni saw that the false teachers would have high heads and stiff necks (v. 14) and would love their money and their substance more than their poor (Mormon 8:37). In their quest for praise and personal gain, they would rob the poor and persecute the meek (2 Nephi 28:13; Mormon 8:33-38). This robbery would occur as the poor fall prey to priestcraft, sacrificing to build fine sanctuaries and supplying their false teachers with costly apparel.

Nephi wrote that these teachers would “seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark” (2 Nephi 28:9). Moroni saw that many would say, “Do this, or do that, and it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day” (Mormon 8:31). In this case the gentile populace who would be deceived by this type of preaching are like the Nephites just prior to the birth of Christ. The prophet of that time said to a gathering of wicked Nephites:

Behold ye are worse than they; for as the Lord liveth, if a prophet come among you and declareth unto you the word of the Lord, which testifieth of your sins and iniquities, ye are angry with him, and cast him out and seek all manner of ways to destroy him; yea, you will say that he is a false prophet. . . .

But behold, if a man shall come among you and shall say: Do this, and there is no iniquity; do that and ye shall not suffer; yea, he will say: Walk after the pride of your own hearts; yea, walk after the pride of your eyes, and do whatsoever your heart desireth—and if a man shall come among you and say this, ye will receive him, and say that he is a prophet.

Yea, ye will lift him up, and ye will give unto him of your substance; ye will give unto him of your gold, and of your silver, and ye will clothe him with costly apparel; and because he speaketh flattering words unto you, and he saith that all is well, then ye will not find fault with him (Hel. 13:26-28).

In the April 1971 general conference, President Spencer W. Kimball spoke about the many and varied voices in the world that expound the everchanging precepts of men:

Certainly, some blame can be attached to the voices from lecture platforms, editorial rooms, or broadcasting stands, and even from the pulpit.

Such voices may have to answer for their perpetuating falsehood and their failure to give true leadership in combating evil. . . . From among the discordant voices we are shocked at those of many priests who encourage the defilement of men and wink at the eroding trends and who deny the omniscience of God. Certainly these men should be holding firm, yet some yield to popular clamor.

I give some quotes from the press:

“Many churchmen are reluctant to give a definite yes or no to marijuana.” . . .

Other religious leaders are saying: “. . . precise rules of Christian conduct should not necessarily apply to problems of sexuality.” . . .

Only this month the press quoted the retired head of a populous church proposing “revival of old-style betrothals which would permit young unmarried couples to sleep together with the church’s blessing,” and “it would not be regarded in the moral sense as fornication” (18).

Nehor is a good example of this type of easy preachment. The formula is to soothe the conscience of the congregation and enjoy their forthcoming popularity and praise. This is classic priestcraft, identified and condemned in the Book of Mormon. It is the opposite of the statement of John the Baptist regarding the Messiah, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

Pride as an Enemy of Christ

The foundation sin which spawns all of these abominations is pride. Pride is an enemy of Christ that laid claim to victory over the entire Nephite civilization (1 Nephi 12:19). If one is climbing a ladder of sin, pride is the bottom rung. From there one ascends to greater heights of wickedness. As it did in the Nephite society, pride can lead to swelling and boasting, then to envy and strife, then to malice and persecution, and finally, if unchecked, to the grievous sin of murder (Hel. 13:22).

Pride separates people as some lift themselves away from their neighbors in supposed superiority. False teachers in their vanity and with their stiff necks cannot look to the left or to the right and, like the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan, they go their way, passing the injured stranger (Luke 10:30-37). Questioning those he condemned for this sin, Moroni asked: “Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?” (Mormon 8:39).

With the enemy now clearly in sight, Latter-day Saints must be careful to guard against wolves in sheep’s clothing: those

who deride the standards of the Church, denounce its doctrines, teach an easy road or a multidirectional highway to heaven, and emphasize the drabness of being a Latter-day Saint as opposed to eating and drinking and being merry. Nephi explained that “because of pride, and wickedness, and abominations, and whoredoms, they have all gone astray save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men” (2 Nephi 28:14). Could it be that those Nephi refers to are, in part, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who have erred because of the persistent encroachment of the world? Because of pride some members are tempted to seek the praise and gain of Babylon, at the expense of their commitment to Zion. President Joseph F. Smith foresaw three temptations that the Church would face in the twentieth century: “There are at least three dangers that threaten the Church within, and the authorities need to awaken to the fact that the people should be warned unceasingly against them. As I see these, they are flattery of prominent men in the world, false educational ideas, and sexual impurity” (312-13).

Although Nephi identifies characteristics of false teachers outside the Church, members thus warned should seek to avoid shades of these characteristics within their own individual worship. Church members should guard against all forms of priestcraft. Service in the Church should be motivated by a desire to build Zion, not for praise or a position. The Book of Mormon also condemns church activity devoid of charity for those served. Amulek, speaking to the Zoramites, warned:

For after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith (Alma 34:28).

Satan, the Chief Enemy of Christ

The Book of Mormon is a witness of the reality of Satan. He is proclaimed the enemy of all righteousness (Moroni 9:6) who desires “that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27). Nephi gives his readers a close look at how Satan carries out his work to destroy souls:

For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he sayeth unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance (28:20-22)

A closer look at some of the key words used in this passage is helpful to broaden our understanding of how Satan operates: First, he *pacifies*, which means he appeases or placates. Second, he *cheats*, swindles, misleads, fools, or practices fraud upon, which means he deceives by trickery. Third, he *flatters*, which means he compliments excessively and insincerely, especially to win favor, to feed vanity, or to persuade that what one wants to believe is the case. Fourth, he *leads* the way by going in advance, by conducting, escorting, or directing, by causing one to follow a certain course of action or line of thought. All of this—the pacifying, the cheating, the flattering, and the leading—is done carefully, which is synonymous with thoroughly, painstakingly, and conscientiously.

Satan thus customizes his dishonesty according to the susceptibility of his target. His favorite approach is whatever works. In the pride of his heart, he does not drive from the rear but leads from the front. Knowing only a few would follow him if his true identity and design were manifested, he carefully draws people into the false conclusion of supposing they are winning

when, in fact, they are slowly, but nevertheless effectively being destroyed.

Some individuals he stirs to anger against that which is good (28:20). In line with this and in context with the subject of the chapter, many people are stirred to anger against the work of the restoration and particularly the Book of Mormon. This anger blinds their eyes and closes their hearts to its message. Satan of course is pleased. It does not matter to him whether people proclaim Christ or denounce him, if in their religious creeds they are blindly riveted to false doctrines and the traditions of men. Anti-Mormon streamers have been drawn behind airplanes at conference time, people have chained themselves to temple gates in protest, thousands of signatures have been gathered in the hope to persuade Mormon leaders to admit that they are not Christian, and presses have continued from the days of Joseph Smith to pour out reams of literature designed to demean and discredit the Church. Nephi wrote to those who would fight against the restoration: "Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught and revile against that which is good, and say it is of no worth! . . . And in fine wo unto all those who tremble and are angry because of the truth of God!" (2 Nephi 28:16, 28).

While many accept the Book of Mormon as the "truth of God," many others "revile" against it, proclaiming it to be of "no worth." "Many of the Gentiles . . . say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible" (2 Nephi 29:3). Speaking of this anger over the Book of Mormon, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote the following:

Millions of sincere and devout people now living believe, in the depths of their souls and with all the fire and fervor of a Peter or a Paul, that the Book of Mormon is true. . . . This of itself presents no special problem. . . .

The issue centers in nonbelievers. Why should they become exercised in mind and disturbed in spirit because their neighbors and friends and relations choose to believe in any religious system, as long as such does not destroy the rights of others? Religion is a personal matter, and all men are entitled to worship any God of their own

choosing, in any way that suits them, as long as their course is decent and does not destroy the rights and freedoms of others.

But, almost strangely, there are other millions of sincere and devout persons who disbelieve, oppose, and openly fight the Book of Mormon. We suppose that the book has more enemies than friends. Why is this so? What is it about some words on a printed page—all of which are clean and uplifting and pertain to historical and doctrinal matters—that arouses such violent antagonisms?

Men ordinarily do not rise up to fight the Bible; they do not organize mobs and incite them to shed the blood of others because such persons believe in the scripture of the Old World. Why should they do so with reference to a companion volume of holy writ based on New World peoples and prophets? There are those who disbelieve the Bible, of course, but this does not cause them to put to death others who do believe. Neither the atheists nor the communists have any use for the Bible, but they wage no open warfare against the book *per se*; they do not wear out their lives trying to show that it is false. Even those in Islam, whose whole religion is Koran-based, find no especial fault with the Bible. It is true that they pointedly deny the divinity of Christ and rank him as a prophet like Moses or Abraham, but they do not devote their lives to belittling the book that speaks of Jesus and his ministry. Liberal theologians manage to spiritualize away the plain meaning of many biblical passages, but their assaults are intellectual, and they simply view with contempt and disdain those who are so unlearned as to believe the biblical fables, as they assume the scriptural recitations to be. Many Christians are prone to view the Bible as one-sided history or great literature, but not as inspired writing. Again there is no open warfare on their part against the people who think otherwise.

There is, however, one great difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon that shows why some people can disbelieve the Bible and let the matter drop, but disbelieving the Book of Mormon, they find themselves compelled to arise in wrath and defame the Nephite record. It is that people who believe the Bible, as they suppose, can also believe any creed of their choice and belong to any church that suits them. But belief in the Book of Mormon presupposes the acceptance of Joseph Smith as a prophet as well as membership in the church organized by him. . . .

In truth and in fact, the violent opposition to the Book of Mormon is one of the great evidences of its divinity. If it were not of God, Lucifer would not overly concern himself with it. What is one other book about religion to him, unless it teaches the truth and leads men to love and serve Christ and to prepare for an eternal inheritance with him in the kingdom of his Father? (459-60, 462).

While 2 Nephi 28:20 describes the work of an enemy *outside* the Church, verse 21 identifies an enemy *within* the Church—apathy. Many parents express gratitude for the

invention of the pacifier. Fix the pacifier in the baby's mouth and as the sucking motion intensifies the eyes begin to shut. Those in Zion who have the propensity to relax in their discipleship, Satan pacifies, causing them to believe that "all is well in Zion." When people become too secure in their righteousness, they can develop a blind side in their own spirituality, which opens a door for Satan to then lead them carefully and almost imperceptibly away from the spiritual nourishment that comes from "being alive in Christ." A quick pace turns to a lethargic plod, and the member is no longer the watchful disciple. As did the good man of the house, they fall asleep, and the property (in this case, their souls), is open for the thief to come in and plunder (Matt. 24:43).

How is it that some who dwell in an apathetic state in Zion are able to say "all is well?" Perhaps it is that they allow the world to become their standard of judgment in matters of personal righteousness. In their pacified condition, although not in stride, yet still on the same track and going in the same direction, these saints are slowly moving with the times, instead of being fastened securely to the rock. By following the world they are slowly being choked by the tares and pierced by the thorns of worldly measures. For example, the standard of acceptance of certain material presented on the movie screen has degenerated until today some people view films without any measured reaction which would have shocked them a few years ago. Should parents in Zion allow the world with its steady decline in moral values to decide what is or is not acceptable viewing at a certain age? The Lord said: "Behold, I the Lord, have made my church in these last days like unto a judge sitting on a hill, or in a high place, to judge the nations. For it shall come to pass that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion" (D&C 64:37-38). True spiritual wellness comes through the continual upward reach toward obedience to laws, principles and ordinances which are absolute, eternal and unchanging, taught by apostles and prophets and clearly defined in the standard works of the Church.

Still another approach Satan uses, perhaps even more so with the intellectually inclined, is to argue that “there is no hell; and . . . I am no devil, for there is none” (2 Nephi 28:22). Without a devil there is no evil, except as defined by individual societies. Making moral truth relative has dethroned God and elevated man to become the measure of right and wrong. Satan again is pleased, as philosophies multiply and the pride of men in their wisdom carries them swiftly away from God.

In 1929 George Herbut Betts published the results of a fifty-seven doctrinal question survey he sent out to 500 ministers and 500 theological students. The questions were structured to gain either “yes,” “no” or “uncertain” answers. Two of the questions were: “Do you believe that hell exists as an actual place or location?” and “Do you believe that the devil exists as an actual being?” Concerning the existence of hell, 53% of the ministers said “yes,” 34% “no,” and 13% were “uncertain.” The theological students’ responses were: 11% “yes,” 76% “no” (they did not accept the reality of hell), and 13% were “uncertain.” Regarding the existence of the devil, 60% of the ministers surveyed said “yes,” 38% “no,” and 7% were uncertain. Only 9% of the theological students said they believed in the reality of Satan, while 82% denied his existence, and 9% were uncertain (*Guide to Religions* 237). These statistics show Satan’s success. With the passing of time, younger theologians are listening to the flattery and whispers, “there is no hell,” and “I am no devil, for there is none” (2 Nephi 28:22).

Again, Satan’s favorite tool is the one that works. Fishermen use a variety of lures to attract the fish to take the bait. The story is told of an eskimo who was losing his meat to one particularly crafty wolf. One day the eskimo took his razor-sharp knife and placed it blade up in the snow. He then put a big piece of meat on top of the blade, so that all the wolf would see was the meat. The wolf came and began enjoying the easy meal. The meat was so delicious that he didn’t notice that as he was licking and biting, he was cutting his own tongue on the knife. The wolf

was literally drinking his own blood, which went on until he became so weak that he froze to death.

As in the story of the eskimo, Satan tempts us with alluring distractions, attitudes, and circumstances, which appear on the surface to be harmless; but as one partakes of them, the spirit slowly suffers, creating a weakened condition which can produce eventual alienation from God. Jesus told his disciples in ancient America to “watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (3 Nephi 18:18).

Warnings

From the context of his prophetic view, Nephi included four successive warnings in chapter 28: first, to false teachers (vv. 15-16); second, to those in Zion who think “all is well” (vv. 24-25); third, to those who hearken to the precepts of men (v. 26); and, finally, to those in the latter days who are angered by the work of the restoration and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (vv. 27, 29).

Every day, missionaries and members throughout the world engage in conversations similar to the following I recorded in my journal:

It was a typical day in the Hawaiian ocean. The surf was good, the crowd was sparse and the sun was shining. Between waves I made friends with another surfer who liked to sit in the same area as I did to catch waves. He would catch a wave and then it would be my turn. Paddling back after a ride he looked over his shoulder and asked me where I worked. I told him BYU-Hawaii. His countenance changed and his response was: “So you’re a Mormon, huh?” I could read anti-Mormon literature all over his facial expression. I said, “You don’t believe everything you read, do you?” Our exchanges between waves stopped until he said: “You’re the guys that add to the Bible.” I responded, “I think you’re referring to our belief in the Book of Mormon.” He replied, “That’s weird stuff—you can’t add to God’s word.” After a while I asked him if he believed that God loved everybody. He said, “Yes, I believe that.” I then asked him what made up the Bible. We agreed that the Bible was the word of God given to prophets. My next question was the clincher. If God had

another group of people who lived in another area of the world unknown to the people of the Bible lands, could God, because of his love for them, speak to them also? He said, "I guess so." "That is exactly what the Book of Mormon is!—it is God's word through prophets who lived on the American continent." I then told him I was a Mormon bishop. That must have really shocked him—he was surfing with a Mormon bishop.

My new friend seemed to settle down through this new understanding, and we again took turns on the waves. Before departing and between sets I looked at him and said that I knew that Jesus Christ is my Savior and that salvation comes through no other name, that he died on the cross, was resurrected and lives today, and that one day we will all stand before him and be judged according to our works. I believe this startled him. In the literature he had read, Mormons don't say things like that. We departed later, but I doubt he will soon forget his conversation while surfing with a Mormon bishop.

The prophet Nephi gave the Lord's response to the latter-day Gentiles who would murmur because of the coming forth of additional scripture:

Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?

Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also.

And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that I speak forth my words according to mine own pleasure. And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever.

Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written (2 Nephi 29:7-10).

Summary

Nephi begins chapter 28 by saying that he had spoken as the spirit had constrained him (v. 1). He bore his testimony of

the truth of his words. He knew the worth of the record because he knew and understood the need for it. False churches, false teachers, false doctrines and pride are enemies of Christ. As a result of apostasy, the poor are exploited, the meek are persecuted and the humble err. Nephi also revealed important truths concerning Satan. With his raging, pacifying and flattering, he wages war both within and without the Church. Knowing the plight of latter-day Christendom, Nephi issued a series of warnings that the sincere and serious could hold on to and not be deceived.

In 2 Nephi 31, he gave his readers the antidote to avoid all the enemies of Christ. First, one must have faith, then pass through the gate of repentance and baptism, and receive the Holy Ghost (v. 17), who according to Nephi “will show [us] all things [that we] should do” (32:5). Then one must “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.” Nephi then promised, “Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (31:20).

This is the true doctrine of Christ. Just as Satan fled the sacred grove at the first appearance of the light, the enemies of Christ will flee from his disciples as they live the principles and standards taught by true teachers in the “only true and living Church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30).

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon [is] the most correct of any book on earth, . . . and a man [can] get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (Introduction, Book of Mormon). By reading and hearkening to the message of 2 Nephi 28 Church members can get “nearer” to God by recognizing and avoiding his enemies.

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