

BM#10 "He Inviteth All to Come Unto Him" - 2 Nephi 26-30

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I. Introduction

Through prophetic vision, Nephi has seen our day. In each of these chapters, 26-30, he seeks to prepare us for these times with the hope that we will not "wander off and [become]...lost" (1 Nephi 8:23). He also details for us many of the tools, teachings, and tactics, Satan will use to deceive us. If we are spiritually in tune and walk by the light of the Christ, we will be able to avoid the traps Satan has for those who are unprepared.

Nephi begins these chapters by sharing his vision of the Savior's Ministry among his people following his resurrection. As he knew of the Savior's Second Coming during the latter days, he sought to spiritually prepare us for His coming. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon at this time was that through its teachings, we would be able to discern Satan false doctrine. He also quotes the words of Isaiah so that we might look forward with hope toward the days of the Millennium. If we have not prepared ourselves spiritually, we will find ourselves being destroyed with the wicked.

II. 2 Nephi 26: Nephi Prophecies of the Savior's Ministry Among the Nephites

2 Nephi 26:1

1 And after Christ shall have risen from the dead he shall show himself unto you, my children, and my beloved brethren; and the words which he shall speak unto you shall be the law which ye shall do.

In these simple words, Nephi bears his testimony that Christ, after suffering death, shall be resurrected. He

will then appear to those who are gathered in ancient America. By his death and resurrection, he will have fulfilled the Law of Moses which they are living and, therefore, he will give them a new law.

Bryan Richards states,

"The content of this chapter closely parallels the content of his vision of the history of the world contained in 1 Ne 12-15. He also uses Isaiah 29 in this chapter, thereby explaining the relationship between Isaiah's writings and his vision." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi26).

2 Nephi 25:3

3 And after the Messiah shall come there shall be signs given unto my people of his birth, and also of his death and resurrection; and great and terrible shall be that day be unto the wicked, for they shall perish; and they perish because they cast out the prophets, and the saints, and stone them, and slay them; wherefore the cry of the blood of the saints shall ascend up to God from the ground against them.

Five years before the appearance of Christ to those in ancient America, a Lamanite prophet named Samuel came to the Nephites. This occurred as a result of the wickedness that existed among the Nephites. From the top of the city wall, Samuel the Lamanite told them the signs that would precede the birth of Jesus Christ [See Helaman 14:2-6]. He also gave them signs regarding his death and resurrection [See Helaman 14:20-25]. After he had delivered his message, he escaped their efforts to kill him and was never heard from again (See Helaman 16:7-8).

Prior to the appearance of the resurrected Christ to those gathered in ancient America, the "face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thundering, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth" (3 Nephi 8:17). After the actions of nature had ceased, "there was darkness upon the face of the land" (3 Nephi 8:19). The complete darkness lasted for three days.

Bryan Richards states,

"We see that the destruction of the proud and wicked Nephites are a type...[of] the way the wicked will be

destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ. For this we learn that the signs in the heavens and the destructions upon the land were not subtle but catastrophic. We should expect nothing less than this with the Second Coming. As Malachi prophesied, "For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: And that day cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1; see also 2 Nephi 26:4). (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi26).

2 Nephi 26:7

7 O the pain, and the anguish of my soul for the loss of the slain of my people! For I, Nephi, have seen it, and it well nigh consumeth me before the presence of the Lord; but I must cry unto my God: Thy ways are just.

Nephi is emotionally affected by the wide spread destruction that occurs, and the pain and death of his people. The wicked had been warned by the voice of the prophets. Had they chosen to repent the awful consequence could have been avoided.

2 Nephi 26:8

8 But behold, the righteous that hearken unto the words of the prophets, and destroy them not, but look forward unto Christ with steadfastness for the signs which are given, notwithstanding all persecution— behold, they are they which shall not perish.

The righteous, despite the persecution they experienced from the hands of the wicked, will be spared.

2 Nephi 26:9

9 But the Son of righteousness shall appear unto them; and he shall heal them, and they shall have peace with him, until three generations shall have passed away, and many of the fourth generation shall have passed away in righteousness.

The period of peace between the Nephites and Lamites shall last for approximately 170 years. It will be a time of great happiness and righteousness.

2 Nephi 26:10

10 And when these things have passed away a speedy destruction cometh unto my people; for, notwithstanding the pains of my soul, I have seen it; wherefore, I know that it shall come to pass; and they sell themselves for naught; for, for the reward of their pride and their foolishness they shall reap destruction; for because they yield unto the devil and choose works of darkness rather than light, therefore they must go down to hell.

Nephi is mourning the destruction of his own people which he has seen in vision. He notes some of the reasons for their destruction. These include: Selling themselves for naught or surrendering their obedience to the commandments in order to meet their desire for immediate gratification; Receiving the reward of their pride or Seeking the honors and applause of the world which provides only passing joy; and, Yielding themselves to the devil and disregarding the commandments of God, thereby choosing acts of darkness rather than those of light and truth. As they become the servants of the devil and do his bidding, they choose hell as their abode.

2 Nephi 26:11

11 For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction, and this grieveth my soul.

It appears that the Spirit of the Lord to which Nephi is referring is the light of Christ, or known as the conscience. It is given to every individual who is born into the world that they may know the difference between good and evil.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:46

46 And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.

When we give heed to its promptings and chose good, the Spirit continues to guide our life. When however, we choose to ignore its promptings and choose evil, the Spirit begins to diminish within us. Eventually it may become only a faint whisper as the individual seeks "to do that which is evil continually" (Moroni 7:12).

Sterling W. Still states,

"Repentance is God's cure for every disease that plagues our lives. As repentance is postponed, the sinner become more willful, and any upward change becomes more difficult. If this Godly gift is not used, it may lapse into impotence, and the soul may be lost" (*Conference Report*, October 1964, 112).

Nephi continues his prophesying regarding the latter day and the destruction of his people. He also, like Isaiah, saw the fate of the Lamanites who would survive.

2 Nephi 26:15	Isaiah 29:3
<p>15 After my seed and the seed of my brethren shall have dwindled in unbelief, and shall have been smitten by the Gentiles; yea, after the Lord God shall have camped against them round about, and shall have laid siege against them with a mount, and raised forts against them; and after they shall have been brought down low in the dust, even that they are not, yet the words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten.</p>	<p>3 I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.</p>

Byran Richards states,

"Without Nephi's help it would be difficult to determine that this passage [in Isaiah] had reference to the

persecutions that the native American Indians [would] suffer at the hands of the Gentiles.”
(www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi26).

<p>2 Nephi 26:16</p> <p>16 For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit; for the Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground; and their speech shall whisper out of the dust.</p>	<p>Isaiah 29:4</p> <p>4 And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.</p>
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Bryan Richards states,

“Nephi references Isaiah 29 and his vision, (see 1 Ne 13:39.) The Book of Mormon is obviously the vehicle by which those who are dead will speak out of the ground. The phrase, their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit, could be interpreted to have a double meaning. First, in Isaiah’s day, a person with a familiar spirit was someone who claimed to be able to speak with the dead. The voices of the ancient prophets, then, are heard in the pages of the Book of Mormon. Second, the Book of Mormon has a ‘familiar spirit’ to all those filled with the Spirit of God. Through the light of Christ and the Holy Ghost, the righteous recognize the divine nature of the Book of Mormon. It is ‘familiar’ in the sense that it carries the same spirit of truth and righteousness that the Bible does.” (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi26).

2 Nephi 26:20-21

20 And the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that they have built up many churches; nevertheless, they put down the power and miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning,

that they may get gain and grind upon the face of the poor.

21 And there are many churches built up which cause envyings, and strives, and malice.

Whenever man seeks to build upon his own strength and intellect, ignoring the power of God in his life, he is doomed to fail. This is also true when churches are established that preach the philosophies of man mingled with scripture. They seek not to bless their own congregations, but instead to elevate and increase their own glory and honor, often at the neglect of the poor and needy among them.

2 Nephi 26:22

22 And there are also secret combinations, even as in the times of old, according to the combinations of the devil, for he is the founder of all these things; yea, the founder of murder, and works of darkness; yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever.

Bryan Richards states,

There is also a "parallel [seen in]...the 29th chapter of Isaiah...Isaiah was apparently [also] describing secret combinations when he described those 'that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?' (Isaiah 29:15). That these secret combinations are founded by the devil is well established in the Book of Mormon. See also 1 Nephi 14:9." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi26).

Bryan Richards continues,

"A flaxen cord is a soft cord, one that is easily broken. Often the soft flaxen cord is hardly noticed when first placed around the neck. However, with time the grip of Satan strengthens until one is bound with strong cords and led to eternal destruction. 'The safest road to Hell...is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without turnings, without milestones, without signposts.' (C.S. Lewis. *The Screwtape Letters*, xi). In other words, 'By small sins are great sins brought to pass.' (compare 1 Ne.16:29). (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi26).

This is certainly the case with the use of alcohol, drugs, and gambling. One is attracted to the allure of the experience. It is seen as innocent fun as "everyone is doing it." For many, the first time experimentation leads to yet further use and the desired high that accompanied the initial experience. Over time, the individual comes to realize that what initially began as a one-time experience, has now developed into a physical dependency. The thought of discontinuing its use, due to their dependency, is often met with denial as the individual is aware of how difficult it would be for them to stop. There are few who would have made their initial decision if they had understood the effects that would follow. The secondary effects of their initial decision also begin to mount up. This often comes in the form of financial cost, job effects, and the harm to loved ones. The soft flaxen cord that initially could be easily broken, has now become like a heavy chain around their neck.

2 Nephi 26:23, 25, 27

23 For behold my beloved brethren, I say unto you that the Lord God worketh not in darkness.

25 Behold, doth he cry unto any saying: Depart from me? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he saith: Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price.

27 Hath he commanded any that they should not partake of his salvation? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he hath given it free for all men; and he hath commanded his people that they should persuade all men to repentance.

Unlike Satan who uses the darkness to cover his acts of wickedness, the Lord seeks to do everything under the light of day. He invites all to come and partake of the goodness and happiness that he offers mankind without price. He denies no one entrance into his Church, which is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Marion G. Romney states,

"When earth life is over and things appear in their true perspective, we shall more clearly see and realize what the Lord and his prophets have repeatedly told us, that the

fruits of the gospel are the only objective worthy of life's full efforts. Their possessor obtains true wealth—wealth in the Lord's view of values..

"I conceive the blessings of the gospel to be of such inestimable worth that the price for them must be very exacting, and if I correctly understand what the Lord has said on the subject, it is. The price, however, is within the reach of us all, because it is not to be paid in money nor in any of this world's goods but in righteous living. What is required is whole-hearted devotion to the gospel and unreserved allegiance to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints...A halfhearted performance is not enough." (*Conference Report*, October 1949, 39).

2 Nephi 26:29-31

29 He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.

30 Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing. Wherefore, if they should have charity they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish.

31 But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish.

Alma 1:16

16 Nevertheless, this did not put an end to the spreading of priestcraft through the land; for there were many who loved the vain things of the world, and they went forth preaching false doctrines; and this they did for the sake of riches and honor.

Those who find themselves doing good for the purpose of bringing honor and adoration to themselves are no longer following the example of the Master. Jesus Christ gave little thought regarding his own needs. His focus was on others. During his ministry, he went about doing good, lifting up those around him, and healing both their physical and spiritual maladies. His life was one of

shared with Joseph Smith upon his return from his visit to New York. The "characters" he references are those given to him by Joseph Smith. The Lord had told Joseph to direct Martin Harris to take some of the "characters" from the Book of Mormon and their translation to the educated in New York City. He was to have them certified as being authentic. These "characters" were taken directly from the plates Joseph Smith had received from the Angel Moroni:

Martin Harris states,

"I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments [Professor Charles Anton is of Columbia College (later Columbia University)]. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyric, and Arabic; and he said that they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra [New York] that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

"He then said to me, 'Let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying, that there was no such thing now as ministering angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, "I cannot read a sealed book." I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation" (*History of the Church Vol.1*. Edited by B.H. Roberts. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969, Second Edition, Revised, 20).

The vision given to Isaiah regarding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as recorded in these verses was fulfilled by the words of educated Professor Anthon and

uneducated Joseph Smith.

<p>2 Nephi 27:25-26</p> <p>25 Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men—</p> <p>26 Therefore, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, yea, a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise and learned shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid.</p>	<p>Isaiah 29:13-14</p> <p>13 <u>Wherefore the Lord said,</u> Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men;</p> <p>14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.</p>
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These verses were fulfilled in the Spring of 1820, when Joseph Smith upon reading James 1:5-6, went to a grove of trees near his home, and knelt in sacred prayer. His purpose was to know which of all the churches were true. Being filled with the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, Joseph Smith received a visitation from God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. When Joseph was able to speak, he asked his question, "Which of all the churches is true?" He was told that he should join none of them. The Lord Jesus Christ then stated the words found in 2 Nephi 27:25 and Isaiah 29:13. He was then told that if he lived worthy, through him, the Church of Jesus Christ would be restored upon the earth. It is believed that the "marvelous work and wonder" which is referenced in the preceding verse, is the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints upon the earth that occurred on April 6, 1830. It may also refer to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

2 Nephi 27:29

29 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.

How is it possible that the deaf shall hear and the eyes of the blind can see? As the sincere individual, seeking spiritual guidance and direction, reads the Book of Mormon, they will find the Spirit of the Lord within its pages. They will be able to hear the voice of the Lord and to see the marvelous works that he has brought about to bless the children of men. His love and concern is found within its covers. As they continue to read, the Spirit of the Lord will enlighten them as to its truthfulness.

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is power in the book that will begin to flow into your life the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path." ("The Book of Mormon—Keystone to Our Religion," in *Ensign*, November 1986, 7).

2 Nephi 27:35

35 They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"The marvelous work and a wonder which is the Restoration shall sweep away theological cobwebs, the abomination of man-made creeds, and mistaken notions concerning God, man, and the purpose of existence." (*Doctrinal Commentary of the Book of Mormon, Vol.1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987, [11th Printing, 1999], 327).

IV. 2 Nephi 28: Nephi Prophecies that Satan Will Spread False Doctrine in the Last Days

2 Nephi 28:2

2 And the things which shall be written out of the book shall be of great worth unto the children of men, and especially unto our seed, which is a remnant of the house of Israel.

Bryan Richards states,

"Can one estimate the importance of the Book of Mormon to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Joseph Smith exclaimed that it was the keystone of our religion but it is more than that. It is the voice from the dust, the proof of the Bible's divinity, the best of all missionary tools, the only extant history of the early Americas, the doctrinal peacemaker, and the secret weapon in the fight against the powers of Satan in the last days. AS Nephi exclaimed it shall be of great worth unto the children of men. Those who are seeking to come unto Christ are they ones who will recognize the priceless gift of the Book of Mormon, for 'a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.' (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 194)." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi28).

2 Nephi 28:3

3 For it shall come to pass in that day that the church which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other: Behold, I, I am the Lord's; and the others shall say: I, I am the Lord's; and thus shall ever one say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord--

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"This prophecy was fulfilled with exactness in the early years of the nineteenth century.

"Joseph Smith wrote:

"There was in the place where we lived, an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in the region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, 'Lo, here!' and others 'Lo there!' Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist's (Joseph Smith History 1:5).

"That is, 'upon inquiring [about] the plan of salvation, I found that there was a great clash in religious sentiment; if I went to one society they referred me to one plan, and another to another, each one pointing to his own particular creed as the summum bonum of perfectons.' (Joseph Smith History, 4:536).

"Most religious orders in our modern day are prone to take a moderate stance toward a single true church; many claim that 'all roads lead to Rome,' that all churches teach the truth, and that because God is so merciful everyone will eventually inherit heaven's blessings. Doctrines are thus diluted and witnesses watered down such that (at least in the minds of a surprising number of modernists) all notions of 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism' (Ephesians 4:5), are nullified through an indiscriminating ecumenism."

(*Doctrinal Commentary of the Book of Mormon, Vol.1.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987, [11th Printing, 1999], 329).

2 Nephi 28:5

5 And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and they say unto the people: Harken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men;

Joseph Smith states,

"Respecting the Melchizedek Priesthood, the sectarians never professed to have it, consequently they never could save any one, and would all be damned together. There was an Episcopal priest who said he had the priesthood of Aaron, but had not the priesthood of Melchizedek: and I bear testimony that I never found the man who claimed the Priesthood of Melchizedek. The power of the Melchizedek Priesthood is to have the power of 'endless lives'; for the everlasting covenant cannot be broken." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.* Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 322).

2 Nephi 28:7-8

7 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.

8 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 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.

Neal A. Maxwell states,

“Denying the doctrine of the premortal existence of man shrinks man’s perspective. He begins to think, mistakenly, that this life is all there is; that the insignificant ‘me’ of a tiny ‘now’ is not only all there is, but all there ever was. The adversary is quick to use the ‘what if’ there is no purpose to life in order to induce some to act ‘as if’ such were the case. The resultant misbehavior only deepens the despair (see Moroni 10:22).

“Naturally, such a view tends to be accompanied by a diminished belief or a pronounced unbelief in the resurrection and a perpetuation of personality, which pushes a person’s hope for the future down to nil. This ‘no-answer’ attitude equates with a ‘no-answerability’ concept that too often leads to the ‘eat, drink, and be merry’ outlook. Thus one-dimensional mortality relentlessly promotes a one-dimensional morality!” (*But For a Small Moment*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986, 89).

2 Nephi 28:20-22

20 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.

21 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.

22 And behold, others he fattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith 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.

From these words of Nephi, we learn that the devil is willing to custom design, according to the individual venerability, the desired program that will bring them into his power. If it is activity the individual desires, he will direct their energy into destroying that which is good and true; if it is freedom they desire, he will lull them into believing their attendance and activity in the church is not really necessary in order for the kingdom of God to continue to grow. He knows that the further the individual removes themselves from activity in the church, the more vulnerable they become to his influence regarding temptation. If it is personal discomfort around others that causes the individual to reduce their attendance at church, the devil whispers that their attendance is not necessary as there is no hell and there is no devil. They are now free to spend their Sundays doing anything they desire to make them happy as there is also no punishment. In each of these instances the sole desire of the devil is to "grasp them with his awful chains, for whence there is no deliverance" (2 Nephi 28:22).

Nephi now list "Seven Wo's plus Another" (2 Nephi 28:24-32), that contain strong warnings to each of us that require our immediate attention. These are:

1. Wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion! [24]
2. Wo unto him that crieth: All is Well! [25]
3. Wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost! [26]
4. Wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more! [27]
5. Wo unto all those who tremble and are angry because of the truth of God! [28]
6. Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough! [29]
7. Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precept of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost [31]
8. Wo be unto the Gentiles, ...For not withstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, they will deny me; [32]

These "Seven Wo's plus Another," have been given by the spirit of revelation. Their purpose is that those of the

latter day who are seeking to learn as well as obey gospel truths may be forewarned regarding the efforts of the devil to lead them away from the word of the Lord.

**Chart 1. Summary of Satan's Tools, Teachings, and Tactics
as Noted in 2 Nephi 28:3-31**

1. Builds up false churches [3]
2. Creates contention [4]
3. Relies on learning, not on the Spirit [4]
4. Denies the power and existence of God [5]
5. Denies miracles [6]
6. Teaches that there is no life beyond mortality [7]
7. Says God will allow some sin [8]
8. Says God will save everyone [8]
9. Tempts people to sin now, repent later [8]
10. Encourages Pride [9, 12]
11. Robs the poor [13]
12. Persecuted the meek [13]
13. Promotes whoredoms, immorality [14]
14. Emphasizes riches [15]
15. Twists the truth [15]
16. Hates that which is good [16]
17. Promotes anger [19]
18. Pacifies people, everything is fine [21]
19. Uses flattery [22]
20. Teaches that there is no hell nor devil [22]
21. Says there is no need for more scripture [29]
22. Says to trust in man, not in God [31]

Reference: (Brian D. Garner. *Search These Things Diligently*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2003, 99).

This obviously is not a complete list of the tools that the devil uses in order to win souls to his cause. They are, however, tactics that Nephi knew the devil would use in the latter-days. His desire was to forewarn us so that we may recognize the source of the devil's subtle temptations.

**V. 2 Nephi 29-30: Nephi Teaches About the Importance of the
Book of Mormon**

2 Nephi 29:2

2 And also, that I may remember the promises which I have made unto thee, Nephi, and also unto thy father, that I would remember your seed; and that the words of

your seed should proceed forth out of my mouth unto your seed; and my words shall hiss forth unto the ends of the earth, for a standard unto my people, which are of the house of Israel.

This verse reminds us that the Lord has restored his gospel truths upon the earth as He shall do "a marvelous work among them." (2 Nephi 29:1). The restored Church of Jesus Christ is to be a "standard unto my people" where eternal truths are taught by his ordained Prophets and Apostles. Speaking under the direction of the Holy Ghost, their words of revealed truth with members of the house of Israel as well as to all Gentiles. All may know that now there is a prophet in Israel.

The word of the restored gospel will "hiss forth unto the ends of the earth" as the missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ go forth, with the Bible and Book of Mormon in hand, to share the truths of the Lord.

2 Nephi 29:3

3 And because my words shall hiss forth—many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible.

2 Nephi 28:29

29 Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!

This concern is often expressed in order to refute the value of the Book of Mormon. It is based on the false assumption that the heavens are closed and that God no longer reveals his word to his prophets on the earth. In fact, many falsely conclude that there is no need for a prophet today, because we have the Bible.

John Taylor states,

"...from the time that Adam first received a communication from God to the time that John, on the Isle of Patmos, received his communication, or Joseph Smith had the heavens opened to him, it always required new revelation, adapted to the peculiar circumstances in which the churches or individuals were placed. Adam's revelation did not instruct

Noah to build his ark; nor did Noah's revelation tell Lot to forsake Sodom; nor did either of these speak of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. These all had revelations for themselves...And so must we, or we shall make a shipwreck." (*The Gospel Kingdom*. Selected, Arranged, and Annotated with an Introduction by G. Homer Durham. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1943, 34).

The truth is that God has always spoken to his prophets in accordance with the times and circumstances of his people. Just as he spoke to the prophets of the past as recorded in the Bible and Book of Mormon, he speaks to his prophet today. If ever there was a time in the history of the world that we needed the guidance and direction of God, it is now. Just as God cared about those who lived during the time of the prophets, he also cares about us. He can speak and he does. The question each of us must answer is, "Who is God's Prophet today? And what has he said regarding our times?"

2 Nephi 29:9-11

9 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.
10 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.
11 For I command all men, both in the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them;...

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"One of the attributes of God is indicated here. He is not subject to changes as we are. He works in accordance with eternal laws, or rules. If he has caused inspired writings to be given to men at any time, he will do so again, when necessary for their guidance. We may expect 'bibles' in different ages and localities." (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.1*. Edited and Arranged by Philip C. Reynolds. Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1955, [1976], 412).

2 Nephi 29:12

12 For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak to the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all the nations of the earth and they shall write it.

The record of the Jews has reference to the Bible and the lost books with that will come forth. The record of the Nephites is the Book of Mormon and when we are ready, we will receive that portion of the plates that Joseph Smith was commanded not to translate. The records of the "other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away," have reference to the "Lost Ten Tribes." Upon their return, they will also bring their scriptural records with them.

2 Nephi 29:14

14 And it shall come to pass that my people, which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions; and my word also shall be gathered in one. And I will show unto them that fight against my word and against my people, who are of the house of Israel, that I am God, and that I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever.

The words that God has spoken through his holy prophets to these three groups of people--The Jews, The Nephites, and The other tribes of the house of Israel--will be gathered into one. They will then be made available for all to know the word of God to his chosen people.

2 Nephi 30:2

2 For behold, I say unto you that as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord; and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off; for the Lord' covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel.

You will recall the words John the Baptist spoke to the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to observe him baptizing. They came, but saw no need themselves to be baptized. As a result of their pride, they had concluded, "within themselves, We have Abraham...[as] our father" (Matthew 3:9). The meaning was that as children of Abraham, they had no need of John's baptism. Their salvation was guaranteed by reason of their ancestry! Based entirely on their chosen status, no further action was required on their part.

John's response to them, and to all who so believe, said, "I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matthew 3:9). His meaning is that salvation is not determined by ancestry, but by individual obedience to the commandments. Unrepentant Jews, for instance, will be cast off along with baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ, if they chose not to accept Jesus as the Christ and to be obedient to His commandments throughout their lives. Nor are those who are not of the house of Israel, but are Gentiles, who are righteous, excluded from receiving eternal salvation. Through sacred ordinances, they may be adopted into the house of Israel.

2 Nephi 30:3

3 And now, I would prophesy somewhat concerning the Jews and the Gentiles. For after the book of which I have spoken shall come forth, and be written unto the Gentiles, and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed.

The words of the book have direct reference to the Book of Mormon. A portion of the words of Nephi and others, abridged by Mormon, was published to the world in 1830 as the Book of Mormon. The remainder of the record was sealed and Joseph Smith was commanded not to translate it at that time. Surely that is part of the scriptural record that will come forth at a later date. As the Book of Mormon has become available, many thousands of individuals have read it and come to know personally, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that the record is true. As the Book of Mormon has gone forth throughout the world, it's truths have also been taught to those who today are among the remnant of Nephi's seed.

Three groups—The Gentiles [2 Nephi 30:3]; the Nephites or the Posterity of Lehi [2 Nephi 30:3-6]; and the Jews [2 Nephi 30:7] will each respond in a positive manner to the writings of the Book of Mormon. Many will receive its truths, believe in Christ, accept His ordinances and keep His commandments. As a result of their conversion, the scales of darkness that resulted from their false traditions and teachings will be removed. They will then find joy and happiness in their lives through their membership in the Church of Jesus Christ.

2 Nephi 30:8

8 And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth.

A major World-Wide missionary effort will commence prior to the Lord's Second Coming. It will be orchestrated by the Lord himself. The missionaries will be granted access to all the nations of the earth. The prophet Jeremiah saw a vision of this latter-day missionary effort.

Jeremiah 16:16

16 Behold, I will send for many fishers, said the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.

Following this major missionary effort in which all who desire to follow the Lord are gathered into his Church, the cleansing of unrepentant from the earth will begin.

2 Nephi 30:10

10 For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire.

The separation of the wicked from the righteous by the Lord will occur at the commencement of the Millennium. This division will be based upon the decision by the people of the

earth. It will be determined either by their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer and his teachings or to remain in their wickedness and join forces with the devil and his servants. In the final analysis, no one will be neutral.

2 Nephi 30:11-15 [See also Isaiah 11:5-9]

11 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

12 And then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

13 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

14 And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.

15 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

These verses from Isaiah, Chapter 11 were previously included in Nephi's writings when, as 2 Nephi 21, he included all of Isaiah, Chapter 11. One may wonder why are they repeated as part of 2 Nephi 30. While many reasons may be given, I offer the following. The period leading up to the Millennium will be years of great missionary work as the righteous are gathered for the last time. It will also be a time of great wickedness. Not all the members of Christ's Church will be valiant. Some will succumb to the wills of Satan and his servants. These verses serve to remind the faithful that during the last days, the way for the righteous will be difficult, but continue in faith. With the beginning of the Millennium, peace and righteousness will again return to the earth, and it will be a day of great happiness for the righteous. Nephi may have also wanted to remove any doubt by the reader, that these words of Isaiah had direct application to the conditions during the Millennium.

In these verses, Nephi quotes Isaiah's description of the harmonious conditions that will exist during the Millennium. This will also include the animals that today are natural enemies. This condition of peaceful co-

existence will also exist between young children and currently poisonous reptiles. The underlying reason for this change is "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:" (2 Nephi 30:9). In other words, those inhabitants (animal or human) who live upon the earth during the time of the millennium will, through the Spirit of Christ, overcome any inclination or disposition they may have previously had to harm animals, even in order to obtain food. This alteration also applies to members of the animal kingdom and their altered diet, i.e. "lion shall eat straw like the ox" (2 Nephi 30:7).

William Phelps states,

"When these days come, every thing will be in its place. The beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, instead of feeding upon flesh, will feed upon the herb and the grain, as was given them in the beginning. Then man will not shed the blood of his fellow man, nor beast the blood of its fellow beast, nor fowl the blood of its fellow fowl; but the Spirit of the Lord will be poured out upon all flesh, the curse be taken from off the earth, when it will become an inheritance for the poor and the meek, when there will be peace thereon and good will toward man." (*The Evening and Morning Star*, vol.2, no.13. June 1833, 102).

Brigham Young adds,

"The millennium consist in this, every heart in the Church and kingdom of God being united in one...All things else will be as they are now, we shall eat, drink, and wear clothing. Let the people be holy...and filled with the Spirit of God, and every animal and creeping thing will be filled with peace; the soil of the earth will bring forth in its strength, and the fruits thereof will be meat for man." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol.1. London: Latter-day Saint' Book Depot, 1854, 203).

2 Nephi 30:18

18 Wherefore, all things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed; and Satan shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time. And now, my beloved brethren, I make an end of my sayings.

The bad news is that all our unrepentant thoughts and actions will be made known. Therefore, now may be a good time for each of us to take personal inventory of our thoughts and actions and do the necessary housecleaning. The good news is that Satan shall not have power over the hearts of the children of men "for a long time" (2 Nephi 30:18). Within the Church of Jesus Christ, her members will be of "One Heart and One Mind, and dwell in righteousness:..." (PGP, Moses 7:18).

VI. Conclusions

As we conclude this lesson, we will note important concepts that were addressed.

In 2 Nephi, Chapter 26, we noted Nephi's personal witness regarding Christ's death and resurrection. We observed that his description of the destruction of the wicked prior to Christ's appearance to the Nephites is a type of the destruction that will occur at the time of Christ's Second Coming.

We learned of the period of peace and tranquility that will follow Christ's appearance to the Nephites. It will continue for approximately 170 years. We came to understand that the destruction which Nephi saw in vision was a direct result of the pride and foolishness of his people in not following the admonitions of their Prophets. We were taught that the Spirit or Light of Christ is given to each one of us at our birth. It will not always abide with us if we choose evil. This light from Christ is separate from the gift of the Holy Ghost that each receives after their baptism into the Church of Jesus Christ.

We were taught that there will be churches established in the latter days that rather than being based on truth will teach instead the philosophies of man mingled with scripture. They will be established for the purpose of seeking the honors of man and will neglect the care of the poor and needy. We were warned regarding the contrast between the devil's approach to gaining converts as opposed to the manner by which Christ invites all to come unto Him and to partake of the truth.

In 2 Nephi, Chapter 27, we learned of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. We noted the fulfillment of Isaiah's words as Martin Harris made a visit to New York City. We

were informed that one of the purposes of the Book of Mormon is to open the ears and eyes of the spiritually deaf and blind that they may learn the words of truth.

In 2 Nephi, Chapter 28, we came to understand the value of the Book of Mormon in helping us to recognize the false doctrine that Satan will spread during the latter days. Nephi gives us "7 Wo's plus Another," that we need to address in order not to be misled by Satan's efforts. We were also given a list of tools, and tactics that Satan will use in order to bring us into his grasp.

In 2 Nephi, Chapters 29-30, we noted the importance that the Book of Mormon will have in the lives of many individuals. We were informed of three groups of people who have spiritual records. They include the Jews [the Bible]; the Posterity of Lehi [the Book of Mormon]; and the other tribes of Israel referencing the "Lost Ten Tribes." They too will have prepared spiritual records which they will bring with them when they return.

We were further enlightened regarding the latter days when there will be increased missionary work to all the world and an increase in wickedness among the people of the world. We were told regarding the peace and happiness that the righteous will enjoy as they remain faithful as the time of the Millennium is ushered in. It will be time of sadness for the wicked and a day of joy for the righteous.

Nephi upon seeing the perilous times to which we will be exposed, has given us his words within the Book of Mormon to warn and prepare us. As he states, "Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to bring forth the words of the book [The Book of Mormon]; and in the mouth of as many witnesses as seemeth him good will he establish his word; and wo be unto him that rejecteth the word of God!" (2 Nephi 27:14).

We have again heard the voice of warning. Nephi's words of truth have spoken to our heart. The choice will ever be ours: To reject and experience great pain and sorrow to our everlasting disappointment or to accept and to live daily these truths and thereby enjoy the great happiness that will only come to those who truly are obedient.

During our next lesson [BM#11], we will continue to increase our understanding of the doctrine of Christ. We will seek to develop within us, a greater desire to press

forward as we feast on His words found in the Book of Mormon.