

Perilous Times Ahead

A voice of warning has been given in the scriptures for our day:

[1 Timothy 4:1](#) “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that *in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*”

[3 Nephi 2:2](#) “Imagining up some vain thing in their hearts, that it was wrought by men and by the power of the devil, to lead away and deceive the hearts of the people; and thus did Satan get possession of the hearts of the people again, *insomuch that he did blind their eyes and lead them away to believe that the doctrine of Christ was a foolish and a vain thing.*”

[D&C 46:7](#) “But ye are commanded in all things to *ask* of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should *do* in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, *that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men;* for some are of men, and others of devils.”

How can otherwise sincere and good people let go and forget what they knew, be deceived and leave the church to follow these 'modern' ideas and ways, following '*doctrines of devils and commandments of men*'? Returned missionaries, formerly active church members, some having held important church positions. Once baptized and endowed and happily living the gospel, but now choosing to go their own way into strange and forbidden paths .. wanting to be of the church but not in the church .. some complaining that the church has changed and is not the same as it once was .. others wanting the church to change to accommodate or justify their own new pet doctrines or desires .. or others still thinking they don't even need the church at all .. loving to hear the sound of their own voices and opinions over that of their leaders ..

Hold to the Rod

Nephi inquired and was shown the same vision his father saw; the tree of life imagery that, in my view, foreshadows what will happen and what is happening in our time: [1 Nephi 8:23-28](#) “And it came to pass that there arose a *mist of darkness*; yea, even an exceedingly great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost. And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree. And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed. And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth. And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit. And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; *and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost.*”

This is not new in the history of His church. The sad story of individual apostasy has been the case from the beginning, and, sadly, it will likely continue on. Many have fallen away. Some even

attempting to create their own version of the church. Some have later repented and made their way back, but at what cost and loss to their posterity and loved ones? We are cautioned to 'take heed' and that 'even the elect' may be deceived. [Matthew 24:24](#) “For there shall arise false Christs, and *false prophets*, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, *they shall deceive the very elect*.” The detractors have articulated their amazing arguments, polished their pitches, reinforced their rhetoric, and prepared their wonderful presentations. Sin, specifically, the sin of pride, loving to have others listen to and approve of and accept your own opinions and theories, to be the focus and center of attention, whether at the pulpit or in print or even just on social media, in my humble opinion for many, is the root of it. As the proverb says; “Pride goeth before [..] a fall” ([Proverbs 16:18](#)).

Satan Lies

If our own current history were being summarized today by a prophet like Mormon, what do you suppose he might write about our time? .. how might it sound? Hopefully not something along the lines of [3 Nephi 2:1](#) “And it came to pass that thus passed away the [current] year also, and the people began to forget those signs and wonders which they had heard, and began to be less and less astonished at a sign or a wonder from heaven, insomuch that they began to be hard in their hearts, and blind in their minds, and began to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen—”

[2 Nephi 28:20-28](#) “For behold, at that day shall he [Satan] *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 [..] others he *flattereth* 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, [..] Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion! [..] that crieth: All is well! [..] that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost! [..] that saith: We have received, and we need no more!” Satan's misleading messages of deception and confusion are ever changing and varied. He will not stop to use truths and clever half-truths to promote his program. If one lie stops working on us, he simply fabricates another one to use. If he cannot get us to sin one way, perhaps he can get us to look past the mark and miss the boat completely, to become discouraged or confused or too busy or .. whatever works to stop us in our progression.

Follow the Prophet, He Knows the Way

Is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints His church? Yes! I testify that it is and it is led by His living prophets. As our stake president, President McMahan, taught us in his talk last stake conference (“Stay in the Boat” Nov 2014), the boat, the church, is the way of safety – we must 'stay in the boat'! Modern day detractors might ask; “Which is more important - to follow Christ or to follow the Prophet?” This would be just another of Satan's tricky misdirections. With this half-truth he hopes to separate us from Christ *by* leading us carefully past the true church. The whole truth? Yes, we must develop our own personal relationship with the Saviour and the Father through the Spirit. However, at the same time, by following the prophet we ARE following Christ. These questions always seem to me to hinge on having a mature testimony, in this case a full testimony of the restoration and of His authorized living prophets. It is always easier pick and choose to accept and follow the dead prophets, the ones who don't get in your face with current revelations and new rules, or to simply pretend to be your own 'prophet' and go your own way. Another tricky question; “Which is most important: Family

or Church”? Parents are responsible for their own children. Home should be a heaven on earth and it is there families learn to pray, develop faith, feel love. But can you really raise your children properly outside of the church? The priesthood keys necessary for baptism and confirmation, priesthood ordinations, all leading to temple endowment and temple marriage, these are all held within the church. That is the way He organized it. The real answer is, it is not one or the other, we need both at the same time. They build and support each other. By attending to church duties we ARE building our families. The Lord's gospel is not a party tray, where you get to pick and choose only this concept or that principle you wish to believe – thinking to enjoy the spirit but without having to work or to accept and follow the words of the holy living prophets that He has sent to us today – wanting priesthood power from the church without having to actually be part of the church, thinking that 'following the spirit' away from the church is really following the correct 'spirit'. If you accept the Book of Mormon as the word of God to us in our day, you must accept the church that provided it to you as His church, the only way back to him. If you accept that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God, that He truly saw and received commandments from the Father and the Son, the fruit of his work, the restored church, is their church, the only true church on the earth and the Prophet of our day, [President Monson](#), and all the other church leaders 'as presently constituted' as the ones holding the keys to whom we must look to for direction and guidance in our lives today. From the restored Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we receive the blessings available to us for our day: modern day prophets and scripture, priesthood authority and power, baptism and the gift of the holy ghost, temple blessings and eternal marriage. Without the restored Church we cut ourselves off from these blessings and are unable to participate in the great work of salvation for ourselves and for our extended family members past, present, and future.

Joseph recorded it himself this way: [Joseph Smith History 1:18-19](#) “My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a *form of godliness*, but they deny the power thereof.'”

The restoration of the church was and is a necessary prerequisite for the start of the great work in the last days, for without it, as ([D&C 138:48](#)) teaches, we would be unable to complete “[..] the great work to be done in the temples of the Lord in the dispensation of the fulness of times, for the redemption of the dead, and the sealing of the children to their parents, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse and utterly wasted at his coming.”

Book of Mormon Detractors

The Book of Mormon, written for us in our day, documents several that fought against the true church. Sherem in Jacob 7 tried to convince Jacob and the people to return to the Law of Moses (as he understood and taught it) and denied that anyone could know that a Christ would come. [Jacob 7:4-5](#) tells us; “And he was learned, that he had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people; wherefore, he could use much *flattery*, and much *power of speech*, according to the power of the devil. And he had hope to shake me from the faith, notwithstanding the many revelations and the many things

which I [Jacob] had seen concerning these things ..”. And thus we see: One of Satan's methods of deception is to try to convince us to abandon the truth for something else that sounds much like the truth. Sherem demanded a sign, was struck down by the power of the Lord, and confessed on his deathbed that “he had been deceived by the power of the devil” ([Jacob 7:18-20](#)).

A second documented detractor, Korihor in Alma 30 tried to teach the people that there was no Christ or God and therefore no sin, that the leaders were seeking power for themselves, controlling and preventing the people from otherwise enjoying their lives. He also demanded a sign, was struck dumb and then confessed in writing; “[that] the devil had deceived [him]; for he appeared [..] in the form of an angel [and ..] taught [him] the words that [he] should say [.. words that] were pleasing unto the carnal mind” (Alma 30:53).

A third Book of Mormon detractor, Nehor in Alma 1 started his own church preaching that everyone would be saved no matter what they did and introducing 'priestcraft to the people'; ie asking the people to 'support him and give him money'. Although he was executed early on for his murder of Gideon, after first confessing “that what he had taught to the people was contrary to the word of God” (Alma 1:15), his ideas “the order and faith of Nehor” continued to be popular with those who followed Satan, who desired power, control and wealth.

The Path of Safety

These detractors were included in our scriptures as a voice of warning to us today. The power of the devil is in '*flattery*, and much *power of speech*', trying to convince us that good things are bad and that bad things are better, or at least 'ok'. His methods are many and varied, are pleasing to hear, but in the end they each attempt to convince us to choose a path away from the prophet, from the church, and from the 'iron rod' and from God. For some, he preaches 'all is well – no need to worry or rush, you can do it later', to others he whispers 'you are imperfect, you will never make it – it is best not even try', to some 'that sin is good or there is no sin and no devil', and to even others 'that the church has gone astray – you need to follow more modern ideas and a new path'. The intended effect of each of these many varied assaults is simply to halt us in our progress – to keep us from completing our part in His work. Modern scripture ([D&C 10:62-68](#)) teaches us, in the words of Christ, that “Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them [..] Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church [and] Whosoever declareth *more or less* than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church.” As Mosiah taught in his final sermon ([Mosiah 4:29](#)) “.. I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them”. There is, however, one path of safety for thriving, happy families, that path is His way, His prophets, His restored church, His temple. That we might avoid being deceived and continue on our way in joy and safety is my prayer.

In the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen.