

D & C Lesson 24

“BE NOT DECEIVED, BUT CONTINUE IN STEADFASTNESS”

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, July 2001

“Today’s lesson discusses how to avoid individual apostasy.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 134] *Definitions*: “The forsaking or abandonment of what one has professed or adhered to, as faith, principles, or party.” [*Webster’s*] “Abandonment of a former loyalty.” [*Merriam-Webster’s*]

1. Satan seeks to deceive us

A. *2 Ne. 2:17-18*: “An angel of God . . . had fallen from heaven; wherefore, he became a devil, having sought that which was evil before God. And because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable forever, he sought also the misery of all mankind.” [v. 27] “Men are free . . . to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.”

B. *D&C 50:2-3*: “Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he may overthrow you.”

C. *D&C 82:5*: “Watch, for the adversary spreadeth his dominions, and darkness reigneth.”

2. We should recognize the deceptions of Satan that can lead us into apostasy

A. **Pride**: “*A pint of cream*”- the fall of Thomas B. Marsh, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve. [See George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, pp. 283-284; Gordon B. Hinckley, in *Ensign*, May 1984, p. 83]

“After 19 years of darkness and bitterness, Thomas B. Marsh painfully made his way to the Salt Lake Valley and asked Brigham Young to forgive him and permit his rebaptism into the Church. He wrote to Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor in the First Presidency: ‘I began to awake to a sense of my situation; . . . I know that I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight.’ He then described the lesson he had learned: ‘The Lord could get along very well without me and He has lost nothing by my falling out of the ranks; But O what have I lost?! Riches, greater riches than all this world or many planets like this could afford’”(Quoted by James E. Faust in *Ensign*, May 1996, p. 7) [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, pp. 135-136]

1. Humility overcomes pride. See *D&C 112:2-3, 10; Eth. 12:27*.

B. **Being offended**: “*No seat at the Kirtland Temple dedication*” The fall of Frazier Eaton, who had contributed \$700 to the building of the temple. [See George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, p. 9]

1. Forgiveness overcomes being offended. See *D&C 64:8-11; 82:1*.

C. **Being critical of leaders’ imperfections**: “A misspelled name” - The fall of Simonds Ryder. [See *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 261]

D. **Accepting the false teachings of the world**: “Examples: . . . the commandments of God are too restrictive, . . . immorality is acceptable, and . . . material possessions are more important than spiritual things.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 137]

E. **Rationalizing disobedience**: “Rationalizing is excusing or defending unacceptable behavior. It is looking for a way to ease our consciences for doing something we know is wrong.” [*Ibid.*]

F. **Not recognizing the prophet as the source of revelation for the Church**: “*The unauthorized seer stone*” - Hiram Page was led astray, but had the courage to renounce his error and its source. [See *History of the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 110-115.]

3. We can remain valiant in our testimonies and avoid deception

A. **We should study the scriptures and the doctrines of the Church**:

D&C 1:37; 33:16. “We can better discern the truthfulness of ideas by comparing them with the truths we learn from the scriptures and our current leaders.” [*Gospel Doctrine Instructor’s Manual*, 1999, p. 138]

B. **We should recognize that the things of God will always edify us:**

Moro. 7:10-17; D&C 50:23; 52:16; 1 Cor. 14:26; Al. 5:40; Eth. 4:12.

C. **We should apply the Lord's pattern for protecting ourselves from being deceived:**

D&C 52:14-19: "I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived."

D. **We can know clearly whom the Lord has called to lead the Church:**

D&C 28:2 (1-13); 43:1-7: "receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations [to the Church] or commandments [to the Church]."

4. **Recognizing and avoiding "priestcraft"** {See Paul's views on Christian liberty: *1 Cor. 9:6-14.*

A. **Defined** - *2 Ne. 26:29-30: "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. Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing."*

B. **Characteristics of Priestcraft:**

1. **Actions:** (A) "Men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world" [*2 Ne. 26:29*]; (B) "bearing down against the Church" [*Al. 1:3*]; (C) "declaring . . . that every priest and teacher ought to become popular" [*Al. 1:3*]; (D) "declaring . . . they ought to be supported by the people" so "they began to support him and give him money" [*Al. 1:3,5*] (E) {Nehor} began to be lifted up in pride, . . . and to wear costly apparel" [*Al. 1:6*]; (F) {Nehor} "began to establish a church after the manner of his preaching" [*Al. 1:6*]; (G) "began to persecute those that did belong to the church of God" [*Al. 1:19*]; (H){Nehor committed murder} "to enforce [his priestcraft]" [*Al. 1:9,12*]; (I) "preaching false doctrines;" . . . and "pretended to preach according to their belief" [*Al. 1:16-17*]; (J) Calling their false doctrines "the word of God" [*Al. 1:3*]; Cast out the poor because of their poverty [*Al. 32:5*].

2. **Motives:** (A) "that they may get gain and praise" [*2 Ne. 26:29*]; (B) "they seek not the welfare of Zion" [*2 Ne. 26:29*]; (C) "loved the vain things of the world" [*Al. 1:16*]; (D) "preaching false doctrines . . . for the sake of riches and honor" [*Al. 1:16*].

3. **Examples of the false doctrines of priestcraft:** (A) "All mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, . . . in the end, all men should have eternal life" [*Al. 1:4*]; "thou hast elected us that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be cast by thy wrath down to hell" [*Al. 31:17*]; "they did persecute them . . . because they were not proud in their own eyes, and because they did impart the word of God, . . . without money and without price" [*Al. 1:20*]; "wo unto him that shall deny the Christ and his works; . . . deny the revelations of the Lord," the spiritual gifts, and shall say "to get gain, . . . that there can be no miracle wrought by Jesus Christ" [*3 Ne. 29:5-7*].

5. **The problem of corrupt and apostate churches in Biblical times**

A. It's impossible to understand the prophetic section of the **Old Testament** [from Isaiah to Malachi] without recognizing that following the time of Solomon, the churches of Israel were corrupt and filled with priestcraft. The prophets were *outside* of the churches, warning of their corrupt nature: *1 Ki. 12:25-33; 2 Ki. 17:24-41; 23:5; Jer. 2:8; 5:24-31; 6:11-15; 10:21; 23:9-16, 21-22, 25-40; 27:9-10, 14-18; 29:8-9; Mic. 2:11; 3:5; 8-11; Is. 29:9-10, 13-14; Ezek. 13:2-4, 9, 23; 34:2-4, 6-11; Zeph. 3:4; Hos. 6:9; Mal. 2:7-9; etc.*

B. The **New Testament** church of Jesus' day also was corrupt. John the Baptist and Jesus held themselves aloof from it's hierarchy because of their priestcrafts: *Mt. 3:7-12; Jn. 1:19-28; Jn. 2:13-21; Mk. 2:16-28; 3:1-6; Jn. 5:10-16, 17-47; Lk. 7:29-35; Mt. 12:24-45; Mk. 7:1-13; Jn. 7:11-13, 32-36, 45-49; Jn. 8:2-11, 12-59; 9:13-34; 10:1-21; Lk. 11:14-26; Jn. 10:23-39; Lk. 13:31-35; Jn. 11:46-53;*

Lk. 17:20-21; Mt. 19:3-9; Jn. 11:55-57; Lk. 19:39-40; Mk. 11:15-18; Mt. 21:23-23:49; etc.

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