
2 Nephi 28 — False Churches in the Latter Days — The Lull of Carnal Security, the Few Stripes, the Line upon Line

Nephi diagnoses latter-day false-churches, universalist error, Satan's lull-and-pacify, the line-upon-line revelation, the cursed-arm-of-flesh, c. 559–545 BC.

The BoM's most-concentrated diagnostic-prophecy of the latter-day-religious-landscape. JS—H 1:18–19 — *they were all corrupt; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof* — is the verse-by-verse application of this chapter to the 1820 religious-landscape. Five movements: (1) latter-day-false-churches' contention (vv. 3–6); (2) cheap-grace universalist-error — *eat, drink, and be merry* (vv. 7–9); (3) priestcraft + arm-of-flesh + denial-of-revelation pathology (vv. 11–17), culminating in v. 31's *cursed is he that putteth his trust in man*; (4) Satan's three-fold strategy — anger, lull, flatter (vv. 19–22), pitched in the *all-is-well-in-Zion* complacency of vv. 24–25; (5) closed-canon error — *we have received, and we need no more* (v. 27) — answered by the *line upon line* cure (v. 30).

Ten Insights

1. **Many churches contend (vv. 3–4).** Latter-day-religious-fragmentation. Joseph Smith's pre-First-Vision-confusion fulfills the prophecy.
2. **Deny power of God (v. 5).** Practical deism — *he has done his work and given his power unto men*. Cessationist-error. The Restoration's continuing-revelation corrects.
3. **Believe no miracle (v. 6).** Dogmatic-anti-miraculism. Refuted by Mosiah 27 (Alma's conversion); Moroni 7:35–38; Morm. 9:7–11.
4. **Eat, drink, be merry (vv. 7–9).** Cheap-grace universalism — *God will beat us with a few stripes; we shall be saved*. The diminutive-of-sin and diminutive-of-consequence.
5. **All have gone astray (v. 11).** Direct echo of Ps. 14:3 / Rom. 3:12; Joseph Smith's JS—H 1:19 — *they were all corrupt*.
6. **Robbing the poor (v. 13).** Ecclesiastical-pride has measurable economic-cost. Restoration's fast-offerings and welfare-system are the inverse.
7. **Satan stirs to anger (v. 20).** First satanic-strategy — anger against the good. Modern political-discourse weaponizes this routinely.
8. **Satan lulls to security (v. 21).** Second strategy — *all is well in Zion* complacency. Modern Conference-talks regularly cite this as personal-warning.
9. **Satan flatters away (v. 22).** Third strategy — *I am no devil, for there is none*. Pre-Baudelairean articulation of the doctrine that Satan's-best-strategy is invisibility.
10. **Line upon line (v. 30).** Restoration's revelation-method axiom. Isa. 28:10 cited. *To him that receiveth I will give more*.

Cross-References

Deut. 30:15–20 (life and death); Job 12:5 (lamp despised); Ps. 1:1 (counsel of ungodly); Ps. 12:1–2 (vanity speak); Ps. 14:1–3 (no God — direct background v. 11); Ps. 49 (rich man's death); Ps. 73 (prosperity of wicked); Ps. 118:8–9 (better to trust in Lord); Prov. 3:5–6 (trust in the Lord); Prov. 14:12 (way that seemeth right); Prov. 16:25 (way of death); Prov. 28:26 (trust in own heart is fool); Eccl. 8:15 (eat and drink); Isa. 5:8–25 (six woes); Isa. 22:13 (cited — let us eat and drink); Isa. 28:10, 13 (cited — line upon line); Isa. 29 (Marvelous Work — direct context); Isa. 30:9–10 (prophesy smooth things); Isa. 56:10–12 (watchmen blind); Isa. 65:2 (spread hands all day — direct echo v. 32); Jer. 5:31 (prophets prophesy falsely); Jer. 6:13–14 (peace, peace, when there is no peace — direct echo v. 25); Jer. 17:5–8 (cursed and blessed — direct citation v. 31); Jer. 23:16–32 (false prophets); Ezek. 13:10–16 (untempered mortar); Hos. 4:6 (people destroyed for lack of knowledge); Amos 5:18–20 (Day of the Lord); Amos 6:1 (woe to them at ease in Zion — direct citation v. 24); Mic. 3:5 (prophets bite with teeth); Zeph. 1:12 (men settled on their lees); Zech. 11 (worthless shepherds); Mal. 2:8 (depart from way); Mal. 3:13–18 (vain to serve God); Matt. 6:24 (cannot serve two masters); Matt. 7:13–14 (strait and narrow); Matt. 7:15–23 (false prophets); Matt. 23 (woes to Pharisees); Matt. 24:24 (false christs); Lk. 6:24 (woe to rich); Lk. 12:19–21 (rich fool); Lk. 18:9–14 (Pharisee and publican); Jn. 5:39 (search scriptures); Jn. 8:44 (devil father of lies); Jn. 10:1–13 (shepherd and hireling); Acts 20:29–30 (grievous wolves); Rom. 1:18–32 (refused God); Rom. 3:11–12 (cited Ps. 14); Rom. 10:21 (stretched hands — direct echo v. 32); 1 Cor. 15:32 (cited — eat and drink); 2 Cor. 4:4 (god of this world); 2 Cor. 11:14 (Satan as angel of light); Gal. 1:6–9 (cursed if angel preach another gospel); Eph. 5:6 (deceive with vain words); Eph. 6:11–18 (whole armor); Phil. 3:18–19 (god is their belly); 1 Tim. 4:1–3 (depart from faith); 1 Tim. 6:9–10 (love of money); 2 Tim. 3:1–9 (perilous times); 2 Tim. 4:3–4 (heap teachers); Tit. 1:11 (filthy lucre); 2 Pet. 2 (false teachers); 2 Pet. 3:3–4 (scoffers in last days); 1 Jn. 2:18–22 (antichrist); Jude 1:4–19 (false teachers); Rev. 3:14–22 (Laodicea — direct parallel vv. 21, 24); Rev. 13 (beast); Rev. 17–18 (Babylon); Rev. 20:10–15 (lake of fire); 1 Ne. 8 (Lehi's dream); 1 Ne. 11 (Mary, condescension); 1 Ne. 13–14 (great-and-abominable); 1 Ne. 22:13–17 (Babylon falls); 2 Ne. 2:25–27 (free agency); 2 Ne. 9:28–29 (cunning plan of evil one); 2 Ne. 9:30–38 (woes upon classes); 2 Ne. 9:51 (do not buy without value); 2 Ne. 25 (plainness, Jesus, grace); 2 Ne. 26 (universal invitation, priestcraft); 2 Ne. 27 (sealed book — direct context); 2 Ne. 29 (Bible and Book of Mormon); 2 Ne. 31 (doctrine of Christ); 2 Ne. 32 (Holy Ghost teaches); 2 Ne. 33 (Nephi's farewell); Jacob 4:13–14 (looking beyond the mark); Mosiah 3:19 (natural man enemy to God); Mosiah 27:24–37 (Alma's conversion — direct refutation of v. 6); Alma 1:12 (Nehor as priestcraft archetype); Alma 5:14–32 (searching questions); Alma 30 (Korihor); Alma 32 (faith); Alma 41 (wickedness never was happiness); Hel. 12 (Nephite pride); Hel. 13–14 (Samuel warns); 4 Ne. 1:24–46 (dwindling); Morm. 7 (latter-day exhortation); Morm. 8:35–41 (latter-day pride — direct application vv. 11–15); Morm. 9:7–11 (miracles ceased? — direct refutation vv. 5–6); Eth. 8:15–26 (secret combinations); Moroni 7:11–17 (good comes from God); Moroni 7:33–37 (miracles — direct refutation v. 6); Moroni 8:8–24 (children innocent); Moroni 10:4–5 (Holy Ghost confirms); D&C 1:8–17 (Lord's wrath); D&C 1:30 (only true and living church); D&C 1:33 (Spirit not always strive); D&C 4:7 (ask, knock); D&C 9:7–9 (study it out); D&C 19:5–12 (eternal punishment); D&C 19:15–20 (chastening); D&C 20 (church); D&C 38:30 (if ye are prepared); D&C 42:14 (Spirit by prayer); D&C 46:7–12 (gifts); D&C 50:1–9 (false spirits); D&C 50:24 (light groweth brighter — direct parallel v. 30); D&C 84:54–58 (vanity and unbelief); D&C 88:121 (cease light speeches); D&C 89 (Word of Wisdom); D&C 93:1 (forsaketh sins); D&C 109 (Kirtland Temple); D&C 121 (Liberty Jail); D&C 124:46 (sanctified by Holy Spirit); D&C 130:18–19 (intelligence); D&C 130:22 (Father and Son have bodies); D&C 131 (eternal marriage); D&C 138 (vision of dead); JS—H 1:5–10 (religious confusion of upstate New York); JS—H 1:18–19 (all corrupt — direct fulfillment vv. 11–14); JS—H 1:34 (BoM described); Articles of Faith 4, 7, 9 (continuous revelation — direct refutation v. 27).

Apocryphal Correlations

Wisdom of Solomon 2:1–9. *Let us therefore enjoy the good things that are present* — direct cheap-grace hedonism parallel to vv. 7–9.

Sirach 5:1–8. *Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath happened* — direct cheap-grace warning parallel to v. 8.

Sirach 11:24–26. *Say not, what need is there of my labour* — direct complacency warning parallel to vv. 24–25.

1 Enoch 94:6–11. *Wo to those who acquire silver and gold in unrighteousness* — direct rich-and-corrupt parallel to vv. 12–15.

1 Enoch 102:9–11. *Wo to you, ye sinners, who say: Eat and drink* — direct citation parallel to v. 7.

4 Ezra 8:55–62. *Many have been created, but few shall be saved* — direct universalist-rebuttal parallel.

Damascus Document (CD) 1:13–17. *They sought smooth things and chose illusions* — direct *chalaq*-deception parallel to vv. 7–9.

1QS (Qumran Community Rule) 4:9–11. *Catalog of Spirit-of-Darkness' works* — greed, deceit, pride — direct three-fold-strategy parallel.

Hebrew Word Studies

chataah ketannah / makkot me'atim (חַטָּאת קְטַנָּה / מַכּוֹת מְעַטִּים, **a little sin / a few stripes**) — v. 8. Master-warning against cheap-grace universalism. The diminutive that justifies offense and minimizes consequence.

shalom b'Tziyon / hasheket b'vetach (שְׁלוֹם בְּצִיּוֹן / חֶשֶׁק בְּבִטְחָן, **peace in Zion / lull in security**) — v. 21. Most-cited verse on Satan's-second-strategy. True peace (Holy One in midst, 2 Ne. 22:6) vs. false peace (institutional-prosperity).

arur ha-gever asher yivtach ba-adam (אָרוּר הַגֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בָּאָדָם, **cursed is the man that trusts in man**) — v. 31 (citing Jer. 17:5). Trust-in-humanity-as-substitute-for-trust-in-the-Lord is cursed.

tsav latsav, qav laqav (צַו לְצַו, קָו לְקָו, **command upon command, line upon line**) — v. 30 (cf. Isa. 28:10, 13). Lord's revelation-method is incremental. *To him that receiveth I will give more.*

kohanut sheker (כֹּהֲנֻת שֶׁקֶר, **false priesthood / priestcraft**) — vv. 12–14, 31. Religion-for-personal-gain. Restoration's lay-clergy is structural cure.

tzav ha-Adon (צַו הָאֲדוֹן, **command of the Lord**) — Implicit in v. 30. Each tsav (command) builds on the previous; cumulative-revelation produces comprehensive doctrine.

Personal Application

Three practices. First, audit your own susceptibility to Satan's three-fold strategy. Each evening, ask: which strategy was Satan deploying today? Anger-against-the-good captured me? Complacency lulled me? Flattery seduced me into denying spiritual realities? Second, practice line-upon-line as the disciple's revelation-method. Each day, seek one small line — a verse, an impression, a question pursued. The cumulative effect over years is what produces full spiritual-life. Third, honor v. 31 by anchoring trust in the Lord, not in mediators. Receive prophetic-revelation as Lord-mediated; do not transfer ultimate trust to the prophet-as-such. Prophets are conduits; the Lord is the source.