

D&C Lesson # 24
“Be Not Deceived, but Continue in Steadfastness”
(D&C 26, 28, 43, 50, 52)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration).

I. The doctrines of the Church presented a unique challenge.

A. The Lord revealed truths given anciently, **that all men had divine potential and could become like the Father.**

1. While initially Christ’s Church had a “lay ministry,” later a sharp division between priest and congregant was set up to obtain greater control over the members. Members without riches or prestige were viewed as lowly.

B. But the **Lord now bestowed great blessings upon the most humble of saints, showing them their Eternal worth.**

1. For one thing, He commanded that the church be **governed by “common consent”** (D&C 26:2).

C. **The challenge then** was to keep members, while in mortality, **from trying to assume too great power now**, thus upsetting the need to be guided through the Lord’s appointed leaders until they were ripened in those things which would allow them to stand as prophets over their own households in the Eternities.

1. One such challenge arose when Hiram Page claimed to be receiving revelation for the Church. Even Oliver Cowdrey was deceived (D&C 28).

2. The Lord stressed to Oliver [and us] that the regular saints *could* receive revelation directly from the Lord, but **they could use such only in terms of “wisdom” and not as “commandment” to others** (D&C 28:1-8, 11-13). Hiram Page later acknowledged he had been deceived by Satan.

D. In this mortal state, there would **remain only one Prophet who would be called to hold the priesthood keys and lead the Church.** He and only he would receive revelation to “command” the entire church (D&C 28:6-7; 43:1-7).

1. In spite of this guidance, more members were deceived. The Lord then told the members how to recognize false and true spirits. Among other things, **that which comes from God will always edify** (D&C 50:1-25).

E. As the church continued to grow, drawing into its net many kinds of people, various members continued to be deceived and fall into apostasy.

1. The Lord gave additional guidance on the matter. **Those who are meek and obedient, and who bring forth good fruits, can usually be determined to be “of the Lord”** (D&C 52:14-19).

II. However, the biggest source of apostasy in Kirtland came due to the failure of the bank established by Joseph designed to help the saints financially.

A. Due to a widespread economic collapse and the deliberate manipulations of an anti-Mormon, this bank failed along with a great number of others.

B. Many, who were themselves guilty of greedy speculation, blamed Joseph for the collapse and their losses.

C. Even some church leaders, suffering financial loss, turned against the prophet.

D. Sadly, many apostate and excommunicated members became some of the bitterest persecutors of the Church (See *Our Heritage*, p. 36).

III. It is not surprising that after the greatest spiritual outpouring in the history of mankind, Satan would do his best to destroy its effects. Thus due to tribulations, he obtained great hold on the hearts of many.

A. He might have succeeded in destroying the Church, except, as always, **the Lord had anticipated and prepared the way to preserve it.** And it is likely He prophesied of His work.

B. For there occurred a very significant Turning Point.

1. The Lord revealed to Joseph that he should send missionaries to the British Isles.

a. Keep in mind that when the gospel first went to the Jews, many of them rejected it, and it was then taken to the Gentiles. **The Lord had repeatedly prophesied that in the Last Days, the reverse would occur. The Gospel would first go to the Gentiles, and after its rejection, it would be taken to those of the House of Israel.**

2. The taking of the Gospel to the British Isles seems a major part of this prophesied Turning Point.

a. While many of those who joined the church at first likely had Israelite blood in them, [such as Joseph Smith himself], still it was basically considered a Gentile church.

b. This time of apostasy at Kirtland was a time of major rejection of the Church and its prophet.

c. But in a great turn of events, the Lord had prepared many in the British Isles, hungry to hear the Gospel. And missionary work there was a success.

3. **The realities are that Joseph Smith was inspired to send the Lord's most faithful servants to the British Isles where much of the blood of Israel, particularly of Ephraim, was residing. And many there of the House of Israel came!**

4. For details on the existence of Israel in the British Isles see "How Christianity Went to the British Isles," *Meridian Magazine*, March 17, 2011 by this author.

IV. The warning to be not deceived remains very pertinent for us today.

A. There are groups who *deliberately seek to deceive* others about the Church, twisting its doctrines and its history. We should constantly be on our alert, for ourselves, for our friends, and for our children. It is for this reason that it is wise to continually "Seek Learning by Study and Also by Faith" as counseled in Lesson # 23. The more we know the scriptures, fully understand Church Doctrine, and are familiar with the real truths about Church History, the less likely we are to be deceived. And we can help others from being deceived.

1. For example, I have been temporarily puzzled and bothered by some things, particularly some historical events, through my life. But I have found the more that I studied, with faith, the more my questions were answered. Not only did I find answers, but the answers I discovered actually strengthened my faith. And I have been able to share those answers with others who were in danger of being deceived.

B. Latter-day Saint Keith N. Hamilton, an African/American raised in the South, recorded how he avoided being deceived. Other members of his race tried to convince him the Mormon

Church itself was bigoted. Then, certain members of the Church hurled their false beliefs unkindly against him. His membership in a predominately white church often caused a feeling of great aloneness, which, coupled with such accusations, could have sunk him. **But he remained steadfast due to his testimony, prayer, the guidance of the Spirit, and the sincere love of some key individuals.** He persevered to become the first black to graduate from BYU Law School, and to become a lawyer, church leader, and prominent spokesman for people of his race and his faith. (See *Last Laborer: Thoughts and Reflections of A Black Mormon*).

- V. **We can also be deceived by putting too much trust in all things taught by scientists.**
- A. **While most scientists have brought forth great gains in knowledge,** recent studies show that some of those at the most respected scientific institutions have deliberately suppressed information they did not agree with.
 - B. Interestingly, some of the material suppressed supports the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.
 - a. Prominent scientists at prestigious universities, have recently revealed that there was a deliberate suppression of information showing the ancestors of Native Americans built remarkable structures comparable to or even greater than those in other parts of the world.
 - i. See *Hidden Cities*, by Roger Kennedy of Harvard [a non Latter-day Saint, recently deceased].
 - ii. Or see *Lost American Antiquities*, by S. Edgar Smoot, who shows this suppression was deliberately linked to anti-Mormon and even anti-God beliefs.
 - b. The most flagrant example of suppression was when the U.S. Corps of Engineers was sent in the 1800's to **deliberately destroy an earthen Native American mound which was shaped like a middle-eastern oil lamp. Inside that mound was another mound shaped like a menorah.** We would not know of the existence of these structures today if they had not been drawn with hundreds of other earthen mounds or monuments by surveyors E.G Squier and E.H. Davis. One may still see this particular surveyed structure in *Ancient Monuments of The Mississippi Valley*, p. 95. This collection contains surveys of hundreds of other amazing cities and mounds. The collection was published in 1847.
 - c. There still remains a suppression of evidence supporting the pre-Columbian immigration to the Americas from various sources, while clinging to the theory all Native Americans came across the Bering Straits.
 - C. **Latter-day Saints would be advised to be very cautious when scientific studies seem to discredit revealed knowledge coming from the Lord. Repeatedly, in time, the revealed doctrines of the Church have been shown to be true.** Fortunately in most cases, science and religion are found to be compatible.