

## **LAST DAYS FORETOLD**

(2 Nephi 11:89-115)

**V89-115** Nephi addresses all of the sins the "religious" Gentiles engage in, and indicates that they are in fact part of the church of the Devil, cp. 1 Nephi 14. In doing so, Nephi reveals the reason these Gentiles reject the sealed book when it is manifest to them.

After speaking in the rhetoric of Isaiah, Nephi states plainly that the Gentiles are the ones who have smitten his people (v. 89). The Gentiles have usurped the Church and because of their pride they have broken it into many factions, filled with contention and greed (v. 90-92). These splinter churches harbor secret combinations, which are of the devil (v. 93-95). Unlike the Lord, who's intent is inclusivity and selflessness; these Gentile churches are exclusive and selfish (v. 96-105). The Gentile churches flagrantly ignore the Lord's commands regarding how they ought to behave by practicing priestcraft (v. 106-109) and breaking all of the most fundamental commandments (v. 110). None of these things are of the Lord because he is good and they are evil. He welcomes all and rejects none who come to him, regardless of any superficial worldly differences (v. 111-115).

In 1 Nephi 3:201-256, Nephi talked about the same subject, but there the treatment was more a matter of ideological opposites. Here, Nephi goes into detail and explicitly identifies what it is these Gentile churches are doing that is what. This isn't a philosophical discussion about opposites; it is a list of indictments.

Also, Nephi's definitions of who is and who isn't the church of the devil is a lot more ambiguous. There he paints with a broad brush to create two binary opposites, you are either in one church or the other. His definition there was ambiguous enough to take in any apostate religion as well as anything secular which wasn't part of the Church of the Lamb. Here, Nephi is being a lot more concrete and he is specifically addressing apostate religionists. He states what the Gentile church is, what it represents, who its leader is, and how it blatantly contradicts the Lord's teachings.

**V89** repeats the first few lines on v. 81, and in so doing closes off a tightly structured parallelism centered on the middle of v. 84-85. But, it also returns us back to the simple language and concrete ideas Nephi favors after his use of the rhetoric of Isaiah. It sets the stage for the plain message regarding the state of religion among the Gentiles.

**V98-99** Nephi paraphrases Isaiah. 55:1 to show how far off the Gentile churches have diverged from the Lord's way of doing things.