

Come Follow Me Podcast
Elo Viz Production
Week 15
Jacob 5-7

There is a fascinating story in chapter seven that we don't hear much about. I have found some really important principles contained in this short story that may be able to help us in our lives. I'll recap the story briefly in case you are not familiar with it and then we can dive into what it can teach us.

It begins just after Nephi dies and Jacob, his brother, is desperately trying to keep his people on the right path. But, pride has begun to grip their hearts. There is a division between classes and persecutions heaped on the true believers of Christ. The timing is perfect for Satan to send in one of his tools to try and perpetuate his evil design.

A man by the name of Sherem strolls into town. It leads us to believe that he is not a Nephite, because it tells us "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." (Jacob 7:4).

And he targets Jacob. He tries again and again to get to him, to try and persuade him not to believe in Christ. Now, why do you think that is? Well, history has taught us that a wicked ruler or king will usually influence the people to also become wicked. Look at examples like King Noah, or Nehor. Whereas a righteous ruler or King will usually encourage the people to also be righteous, We see this in examples like King Benjamin. There are of course exceptions but in general this is usually the pattern history shows us.

So Sherem's goal is to get to the big guy, Jacob. And eventually they meet and this is what Sherem says to him:

"Brother Jacob, I have sought much opportunity that I might speak unto you; for I have heard and also know that thou goest about much, preaching that which ye call the **gospel**, or the doctrine of Christ. And ye have led away much of this people that they pervert the right way of God, and **keep** not the law of Moses which is the right way; and convert the law of Moses into the worship of a being which ye say shall come many hundred years hence. And now behold, I, Sherem, declare unto you that this is **blasphemy**; for no man knoweth of such things; for he cannot **tell** of things to come. And after this manner did Sherem contend against me." (Jacob 7:6-7)

Before we move on with the story, I just want to pause. Did you notice what he said? This is so important to understand because this is one of the greatest tactics of the adversary. He will take something that we believe and twist it into a lie. Here, he takes the law of Moses, which before

Christ was the law that all believers looked to as the standard and twists it by saying that Jacob is teaching them of Christ which is not in the Law of Moses. He also exploits that natural human belief system that questions whether someone can know of things to come before they happen. He is like a hydra. In Greek mythology a hydra is a snake with multiple heads. And he attacks you from all sides. This is how he works. It is rapid fire deceit and lies all coming at you at once. Once we begin to notice this it is easy to spot when it happens.

In a minute we will get to how Jacob defends against these kinds of attacks and how we also should approach them, but for now let's get back to the store:

After Jacob bears a powerful testimony of the truth, Sherem says something that one should be very careful about. Sherem says "Show me a [sign](#) by this power of the Holy Ghost, in the which ye know so much." (Jacob 7:13) You can hear the condescension in his voice even while reading it. It is evidence of the pride that gripped his heart. But we are about to see what God does to those who refuse to humble themselves.

Jacob responds by saying: "What am I that I should [tempt](#) God to show unto thee a sign in the thing which thou knowest to be [true](#)? Yet thou wilt deny it, because thou art of the [devil](#). Nevertheless, not my will be done; but if God shall smite thee, let that be a [sign](#) unto thee that he has power, both in heaven and in earth; and also, that Christ shall come. And thy will, O Lord, be done, and not mine." (Jacob 7:14)

"And it came to pass that when I, Jacob, had spoken these words, the power of the Lord came upon him, insomuch that he fell to the earth. And it came to pass that he was nourished for the space of many days.

he said unto the people: Gather together on the morrow, for I shall die; wherefore, I desire to speak unto the people before I shall die.

[and when they were gathered together] he [spoke] plainly unto them and denied the things which he had taught them, and confessed the Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost, and the ministering of angels.

And he [spoke] plainly unto them, that he had been [deceived](#) by the power of the [devil](#). And he [spoke] of hell, and of [eternity](#), and of eternal [punishment](#).

And he said: I [fear](#) lest I have committed the [unpardonable sin](#), for I have lied unto God; for I denied the Christ, and said that I believed the scriptures; and they truly testify of him. And because I have thus lied unto God I greatly fear lest my case shall be [awful](#); but I confess unto God.

And it came to pass that when he had said these words he could say no more, and he [gave](#) up the [ghost](#)." (Jacob 7:15-20)

Quoting from Alma who also had a confrontation with an anti-Christ “thus we see the end of him who [perverteth](#) the ways of the Lord; and thus we see that the devil will not [support](#) his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to [hell](#).” (Alma 30:60)

I know this is a subject that many don't wish to talk about. When I was child I was taught not to even speak the name of the devil because it is calling his attention to you. But here is the truth. If you are striving to follow God and His gospel plan then you already have his attention and he is already seeking to destroy you. And this is something we all have to deal with, so then why not speak about it openly. Elder Faust gave a talk in General Conference back in 1987. This is what he said:

“Who has not heard and felt the enticings of the devil? His voice often sounds so reasonable and his message so easy to justify. It is an enticing, intriguing voice with dulcet tones. It is neither hard nor discordant. No one would listen to Satan’s voice if it sounded harsh or mean. If the devil’s voice were unpleasant, it would not entice people to listen to it.

Some of Satan’s most appealing lines are “Everyone does it”; “If it doesn’t hurt anybody else, it’s all right”; “If you feel all right about it, it’s OK”; or “It’s the ‘in’ thing to do.” These subtle entreaties make Satan the great imitator, the master deceiver, the arch counterfeiter, and the great forger.

The First Presidency described Satan: “He is working under such perfect disguise that many do not recognize either him or his methods. There is no crime he would not commit, no debauchery he would not set up, no plague he would not send, no heart he would not break, no life he would not take, no soul he would not destroy. He comes as a thief in the night; he is a wolf in sheep’s clothing” (*Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75, 6:179).

We just recently heard President Ernest LeRoy Hatch of the Guatemala City Temple say, “The devil is not smart because he is the devil; he is smart because he is old.” Indeed, the devil is old, and he was not always the devil. Initially, he was not the perpetrator of evil. He was with the hosts of heaven in the beginning. He was “an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God” ([D&C 76:25](#)).

Satan became the devil by seeking glory, power, and dominion by force (see [Moses 4:3–4](#)).”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1987/10/the-great-imitator?lang=eng>

I believe we will all come face to face in a confrontation with the devil or one of his angels at many times in our lives. It is his mission to destroy all the souls of men. If you think that you are exempt from the aim of his fire darts then you are highly mistaken. In fact the more righteous you strive to be, the more of a target you become. But... and that is a very big but. If we truly understand the power of God the less and less we fear or need to fear the devil.

“C. S. Lewis also wrote: “A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. ... You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down” (*Mere Christianity*, New York: Macmillan, 1960, p. 124).”

I love Jacob's response when he finds out that Sherem was seeking to speak with him. This is so powerful and can teach us a lot. He said:

“And he had hope to shake me from the faith, notwithstanding the many **revelations** and the many things which I had seen concerning these things; for I truly had seen **angels**, and they had ministered unto me. And also, I had **heard** the voice of the Lord speaking unto me in very word, from time to time; wherefore, I could not be shaken.” (Jacob 7:5)

That is it... that's the key. What Jacob is telling us is that the more we seek God, the closer we get to Him, hear His voice and have those spiritual experiences the less shakable we become. There is wisdom in the childhood song of the foolish man that built his house upon the sand and the wise man that built his house upon a rock. That rock that we should all build our houses is the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate rock of our salvation.

This is exactly what Heleman taught his sons, when he said:

“And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the **rock** of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your **foundation**; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty **storm** shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall.” (Helaman 5:12)

Sisters and brothers, if you are truly seeking to know God and Jesus Christ, there will come a time in your life when the devil will blatantly try and tempt your resolve. And by the power of the Holy Spirit you will recognize this event in the moment it happens and spiritually turn to face that coward of all cowards and being filled with the Holy spirit you will cast him out with not a drop of fear or trembling. You will see him for who he is, and for who you have now become. That you all may have this experience is my earnest prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.