

**3 Nephi 2: 1-2***Disbelief of signs*

1 How quickly [Satan] moves in even where people have had special spiritual experiences, seeking to get people who have seen signs “*to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen.*” (3 Nephi 2:1-2.) The adversary has a better chance to persuade us that what we believe is foolish if we worry about looking foolish in front of our fellowmen.

Neal A, Maxwell, *Things as They Really Are* [1978], 41.

**3 Nephi 2: 1-4**

## 2 Why Were the Wicked Nephites Given Signs?

Occasionally the Lord has given signs to a wicked and perverse people. A study of the elements which are common in each of these rare occurrences is instructive. From these common elements we find the following:

1. The people are generally sign seekers not because they would believe, but because they do not wish to do so. They taunt the ministers of the Lord, demanding a sign as proof of their authority. (See John 2:18; 6:30 for examples of this tactic used on the Savior.) One is reminded of the five men who went to check on the accuracy of a prophetic comment by Nephi, son of Helaman, concerning the murder of the chief judge. They went, not because they believed or even wanted to, for the records states, “They had not believed the words which Nephi had spoken.” (Helaman 9:4.) In other words, they wanted to prove him wrong. When they did find his prophecy correct on every point, they were shocked senseless—literally overcome with amazement.
2. The people are adulterous. The Savior stated, “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.” (Matthew 12:30.) This seems to be universally the case. Elder Bruce R. McConkie has explained thus:

“some sins cannot be separated; they are inseparably welded together. There never was a sign seeker who was not an adulterer, just as there never was an adulterer who was not also a liar. Once Lucifer gets a firm hold over one human weakness, he also applies his power to kindred weaknesses.

“When I was preaching in Philadelphia,” the Prophet said, “a Quaker called out for a sign. I told him to be still. After the sermon, he again asked for a sign. I told the congregation the man was an adulterer; that a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and that the Lord had said to me in a revelation, that any man who wanted a sign was an adulterous person. “It is true,” cried one, “for I caught him in the very act,” which the man afterwards confessed when he was baptized.”

(Teachings p. 278) (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:277-78.)

3. When signs are given under these conditions, they are used to vindicate the prophets. The Book of Mormon illustrates the point. Abinadi prophesied against the people of Noah, telling them what would befall them because of their iniquities. When these things happened, the people were forced to admit he was right. (See Mosiah 20:21.) The sign

given to Nephi, son of Helaman, concerning the death of the chief judge vindicated him. And so it goes.

4. Signs leave the wicked both without excuse for not believing and totally responsible for what happens thereafter. The Lord has stated, “He that seeketh signs shall see signs, but not unto salvation.” (D&C 63:7.) And again, he “sheweth no signs, only in wrath unto their condemnation.” (D&C 63:11; see also Alma 32:17, 18.)

*BYU BOM Student Manual*, p. 382-3.

### **3 Nephi 2: 5-8**

#### 3 *Nephite Calendar Systems*

The Nephites used three systems of reckoning time:

- (1) The first method was to determine the number of years since father Lehi left Jerusalem, this system was used from 600 B.C. to 92 B.C., (Mosiah 29:44-47; Alma 1:1.)
- (2) The second method was to calculate the number of years from the beginning of the reign of the judges; this system was used for about 100 years, from 91 B.C. to A.D. 9. (3 Nephi 2: 5-7.)
- (3) The last method was “to reckon their time from this period when the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ” (3 Nephi 2:7-8); this system was used for the remainder of their record.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. 1976], 254.

### **3 Nephi 2: 12, 14-16**

#### 5 *Curse*

The dark skin was a sign of a curse. The curse was the withdrawal of the Spirit of the Lord. The dark skin ... is no longer considered a sign of the curse. Many of these converts are delightful and have the Spirit of the Lord.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 3:123-124.