



AVOIDING SPIRITUAL DANGERS

“If you will listen to the counsel of your parents and your teachers and your leaders when you are young, you can learn how to follow the best guide of all—the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. That is individual revelation. There is a process through which we can be alerted to spiritual dangers.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Spiritual Crocodiles,” *New Era*, Jan.–Feb. 1981, 61.



Watch the video “Spiritual Crocodiles” at lds.org/go/72A.

Beware the WOLVES

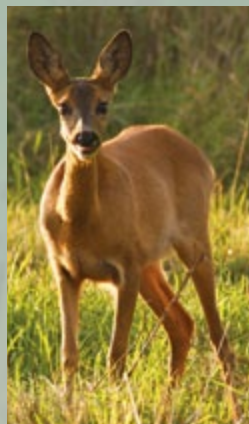
Wolves were a huge problem for the pioneer handcart Saints. The Saints were continually aware of their howls at night and their lurking presence. The wolves followed the buffalo on the plains, but many times the buffalo moved on (almost overnight) and left many soon-to-be-hungry wolves in their tracks. Those wolves also followed the pioneer Saints across the plains.

Many pioneer Saints journaled about the wolves, their aggressiveness, and their continual threat. Plus, many Saints were from England, where wolves had been hunted to extinction almost 200 years earlier. So to these Saints, a wolf was a mysterious, frightening animal they had never seen.

Mesmerized Deer on the Film Set

While working on the pioneer film *17 Miracles*, my team and I created several scenes to convey this threat of wolves. We brought in a wolf trainer, and one day he left his wolves in a trailer while we looked for some good places to shoot scenes in the heavily wooded outdoor studio. Even though they are “trained” wolves, they are still wolves and can be very aggressive. They have natural instincts to attack and kill.

Why would the deer move closer to the very wolves that could destroy them?



By T.C. Christensen

We returned a couple of hours later and were amazed to see a deer standing less than 15 feet from the trailer. Her ears were out, her eyes alert, and she was staring at the trailer. She seemed mesmerized.

Normally when you see a deer in that wooded area, the deer sees you, bounds off, and disappears within seconds. This time, not so. The deer was so focused on that wolf-harboring trailer that she didn't even notice us until we were about 15 feet away. She finally noticed our presence and then seemed to come out of her trance and ran off. I asked the trainer if he'd ever seen anything like that before. He hadn't, and he couldn't explain it.

The next morning when the trainer approached his trailer to begin the day's work, to his astonishment he saw close to 15 deer standing in a circle, all the way around the trailer. Like the first deer, they too were transfixed and stared intently at the trailer. Their circle grew smaller and smaller as they each continued to move closer to the trailer. The trainer could hear the wolves inside, pawing and clawing away as they seemed to be saying in wolf language, “Let me at 'em!”

Again the trainer moved very close to the deer before they became aware of him and ran into the nearby woods.

The Unseen Dangers—for the Deer and for Us

I saw a great lesson in that experience. Why would an animal be attracted to and try to get closer to the very thing that would kill it? It seems to go against all reason. With only the trainer's quick flip of the latch to open the trailer, the wolves would have reached the deer before they could take more than a few steps.

There are many times when we could have a similar experience. There are dangerous things in our world. At some point, we may face something that we know is not good for us, and yet we may be attracted to it for an unexplained reason. We may want to get closer to it, even though our parents, leaders, and the Spirit keep telling us to run. We may be curious and want to figure it out and learn what secrets are behind its doors, just like the deer did.

There will be times in life when it's best for us to run from the danger of spiritual wolves. There will also be times when it's best to send the wolves running away from us.

Two Ways to Stay Safe

When moments like those happen in our lives, we must heed the warnings and promptings to get out of the situation. We cannot allow ourselves to get closer to anything that can spiritually kill us. To stay in such a situation is dangerous and can lead only to heartache.

There will be times in life when it's best for *us* to run from the danger of spiritual wolves. There will also be times when it's best to send the *wolves* running away.

That's what pioneer Levi Savage learned to do in the movie *17 Miracles*. His character is uneasy about wolves. Whenever he tries to confront them, they chase him and he chooses to retreat. Then as the film ends, Levi finally overcomes his wolves. He does not run from them. He stands up to them and scares *them* off, yelling, "Never come back!"

Whenever you hear, see, or face the threat of spiritual wolves, run away from them or make them run from you! Beware the wolves. Do not get close. **NE**

T.C. Christensen has helped create many films, including Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration (see lds.org/go/72B), 17 Miracles, and Finding Faith in Christ (see lds.org/go/72C).

