

**Come Follow Me Lesson 25**  
**Alma 17-22 Jun 22-28**

**Alma 17**

This is backing up in time about 14 years to the missionary stories of the sons of Mosiah.

*An account of the sons of Mosiah, who rejected their rights to the kingdom for the word of God, and went up to the land of Nephi to preach to the Lamanites; their sufferings and deliverance—according to the record of Alma. (This was written by Mormon. He had access to a record written by Alma.)  
Comprising chapters 17 to 26 inclusive.*

*The sons of Mosiah have the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—They go their several ways to declare the word to the Lamanites—Ammon goes to the land of Ishmael and becomes the servant of King Lamoni—Ammon saves the king’s flocks and slays his enemies at the waters of Sebus. [From about 91 to 77 B.C.]*

1 AND now it came to pass that as Alma was journeying from the land of Gideon southward, away to the land of <sup>a</sup>Manti, behold, to his astonishment, he <sup>b</sup>met with the <sup>c</sup>sons of Mosiah journeying towards the land of Zarahemla.

**PREACH MY GOSPEL: WHAT ARE YOU DIRECTED TO TEACH? Mosiah 18:18-20; D&C 43:15-16; D&C 52:9. WHY MUST YOU STUDY THE DOCTRINES IN THE LESSONS? Alma 17:2-3; D&C 84:85 PREACH MY GOSPEL: OBSERVE THE LAW OF THE FAST: Omni 1:6; Alma 5:45-46; Alma 6:6; Alma 17:2-3; Moroni 6:5; D&C 59:12-16; D&C 88:76; Matthew 6:1-4, 16-18; Isaiah 58:6-11. CARING FOR THE POOR: Mosiah 4:16-27; Mosiah 18:8-10; Alma 4:12-13; Matthew 25:34-46; James 1:27; Isaiah 58:3-12. PREACH MY GOSPEL: KNOWLEDGE: HOW DOES KNOWLEDGE ASSIST IN DOING THE LORD’S WORK? Alma 17:2-3; D&C 88:77-80; HOW CAN YOU OBTAIN KNOWLEDGE? 2 Nephi 32:1-5; Moroni 10:5; D&C 42:61; D&C 76:5-10; D&C 88:118; Bible Dictionary “Knowledge”.**

2 Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel <sup>a</sup>first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had <sup>b</sup>searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. (Howard W. Hunter: “To understand requires more than casual reading or perusal—there must be concentrated study....Not only should we study each day, but there should be a regular time set aside when we can concentrate without interference...The important thing is to allow nothing else to ever interfere with our study....There are some who read to a schedule of a number of pages or a set number of chapters each day or week....It is better to have a set amount of time to give scriptural study each day than to have a set amount of chapters to read. Sometimes we find that the study of a single verse will occupy the whole time.” (Ensign, Nov. 1979, pp. 64-5 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, pp. 279-80) Joseph Smith: “Search the scriptures-search the revelations which we publish, and ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth unto you, and if you do it with an eye single to his glory nothing doubting, He will answer you by the power of His Holy Spirit. You will then know for yourselves and not for another. You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God; nor will there be any room for speculation. No; for when men receive their instruction from Him that made them, they know how He will save and learn what portion of them belongs to you.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 11) Thomas S. Monson: “May I suggest...a formula [in missionary work] that will ensure your success: Search the scriptures with diligence!...Your confidence will be directly related to your knowledge of God’s word. Oh...I am

sure you have heard of some missionaries who were lazy, less than effective, and anxious for their missions to conclude. A careful examination of such instances will reveal that the actual culprit is not laziness, nor disinterest, but is the foe known as fear. Our Father chastised such: ‘...with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man (DC 60:2).’” (*Conference Reports*, Oct. 1969, pp. 93-4 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 279) Ezra Taft Benson: “We should make daily study of the scriptures a lifetime pursuit...The most important [thing] you can do...is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently...Learn the doctrine. Master the principles...You must...see that...searching the scriptures is not a burden laid upon [us] by the Lord, but a marvelous blessing and opportunity.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 47 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 280))

3 But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and <sup>a</sup>fasting; (Their pleadings were earnest. Their requests to God were sincere. They demonstrated this through fasting. Fasting is a principle of power. As one fasts and as the body grows weaker, one becomes ever more aware of the need for physical and spiritual sustenance, for those things which both strengthen the body and enliven the soul. Fasting leads to a consciousness of victory over self, victory over the flesh, victory over the appetites, and thus to that quiet confidence which we know as spirituality. DCBM, 3:124 Spencer W. Kimball: failing to fast is a sin. In the 58th chapter of Isaiah, rich promises are made by the Lord to those who fast and assist the needy. Freedom from frustrations, freedom from thralldom, and the blessing of peace are promised. Inspiration and spiritual guidance will come with righteousness and closeness to our Heavenly Father. To omit to do this righteous act of fasting would deprive us of these blessings. Miracle of Forgiveness, 98. David O. McKay: All the principles associated with fasting seem to point to the fact that it produces (1) physical benefits; (2) intellectual activity; and (3) spiritual strength....The greatest of all benefits—the spiritual strength derived by the subjection of physical appetite to the will of the individual. "He who reigns within himself, and rules passions, desires, and fears, is more than a king." It was with the thought in mind of gaining spiritual strength that James, the psychologist, made this suggestion: "To do each day something which you do not like to do." If there were no other virtue in fasting but gaining strength of character, that alone would be sufficient justification for its universal acceptance. Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay, 209-210.) therefore they had the spirit of prophecy (how we work in the church. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.), and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with <sup>b</sup>power and authority of God.

4 And they had been teaching the word of God <sup>\*</sup>for the space of **fourteen years** among the Lamanites, having had much <sup>a</sup>success in bringing many to the <sup>b</sup>knowledge of the truth; yea, by the power of their words many were brought before the altar of God, to call on his name and <sup>c</sup>confess their sins before him.

5 Now these are the circumstances which attended them in their journeyings, for they had many afflictions; they did suffer much, both in body and in mind, such as hunger, thirst and fatigue, and also much <sup>a</sup>labor in the spirit.

6 Now these were their journeyings: Having <sup>a</sup>taken leave of their father, Mosiah, in the <sup>b</sup>first year (flashback) of the judges; having <sup>c</sup>refused the kingdom which their father was desirous to confer upon them, and also this was the minds of the people;

7 Nevertheless they departed out of the land of Zarahemla, and took their swords, and their spears, and their bows, and their arrows, and their slings; and this they did that they might <sup>a</sup>provide food for themselves while in the wilderness. (The weapons they carried were to obtain food.)

8 And thus they departed into the wilderness with their numbers which they had <sup>a</sup>selected, to go up to the land of Nephi, to preach the word of God unto the Lamanites.

9 And it came to pass that they journeyed many days in the wilderness, and they fasted much and <sup>a</sup>prayed much that the Lord would grant unto them a portion of his Spirit to go with them, and abide with them, that they might be an <sup>b</sup>instrument in the hands of God (At the conference in which he was

sustained as the tenth president of the Church, President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “I desire to say that no man of himself can lead this church. It is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ; he is at the head. The Church bears his name, has his priesthood, administers his gospel, preaches his doctrine, and does his work. He chooses men and calls them to be instruments in his hands to accomplish his purposes, and he guides and directs them in their labors. But men are only instruments in the Lord’s hands and the honor and glory for all that his servants accomplish is and should be ascribed unto him forever. If this were the work of a man, it would fail, but it is the work of the Lord, and he does not fail. And we have the assurance that if we keep the commandments and are valiant in the testimony of Jesus and are true to every trust, the Lord will guide and direct us and his church in the paths of righteousness, for the accomplishment of all his purposes. CR, Apr 1970, p. 113) to bring, if it were possible, their brethren, the Lamanites, to the knowledge of the truth (They fasted and prayed for a specific purpose.), to the knowledge of the baseness of the ‘traditions of their fathers, which were not correct. (It may be that more people have rejected the restored gospel – or, having accepted it, have subsequently refused the counsel of living prophets – because of the effects of false traditions than for any other reason. DCBM, 3:127)

10 And it came to pass that the Lord did <sup>a</sup>visit them with his <sup>b</sup>Spirit, and said unto them: Be <sup>c</sup>comforted. And they were comforted. (Where the Spirit of the Lord is, the spirit of peace, comfort, and assurance is found. This heaven-sent Spirit brings with it a sense of confidence; it lifts and encourages. The Spirit of the Lord is wholly incompatible with such spirits as despondency or despair. DCBM, 3:127)

11 And the Lord said unto them also: Go forth among the Lamanites, thy brethren, and establish my word; yet ye shall be <sup>a</sup>patient in long-suffering (To be "long-suffering" is to have the patience to allow events to develop at their own pace. Brant Gardner.) and afflictions, that ye may show forth good <sup>b</sup>examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls.

12 And it came to pass that the hearts of the sons of Mosiah, and also those who were with them, took courage to go forth unto the Lamanites to declare unto them the word of God.

13 And it came to pass when they had arrived in the borders of the land of the Lamanites, that they <sup>a</sup>separated themselves and departed one from another, trusting in the Lord that they should meet again at the close of their <sup>b</sup>harvest; for they supposed that great was the work which they had undertaken.

14 And assuredly it was great, for they had undertaken to preach the word of God to a <sup>a</sup>wild and a hardened and a ferocious people; a people who delighted in murdering the Nephites, and robbing and plundering them; and their hearts were set upon riches, or upon gold and silver, and precious stones; yet they sought to obtain these things by murdering and plundering, that they might not labor for them with their own hands.

15 Thus they were a very indolent people, many of whom did worship idols, and the <sup>a</sup>curse of God had fallen upon them because of the <sup>b</sup>traditions of their fathers; notwithstanding the promises of the Lord were extended unto them on the conditions of repentance.

16 Therefore, this was the <sup>a</sup>cause for which the sons of Mosiah had undertaken the work, that perhaps they might bring them unto repentance; that perhaps they might bring them to know of the plan of redemption.

17 Therefore they separated themselves one from another, and went forth among them, every man alone, according to the word and power of God which was given unto him.

18 Now Ammon being the chief among them, or rather he did administer unto them, and he departed from them, after having <sup>a</sup>blessed them according to their several stations (set apart), having imparted the word of God unto them, or administered unto them before his departure; and thus they took their several journeys throughout the land.

19 And Ammon went to the land of <sup>a</sup>Ishmael, (The land of Ishmael is a hereditary holding of the Ishmaelite clan. Sorenson suggests the area around Chimaltenango, Guatemala, as a plausible location for the land of Ishmael (Sorenson 1985, p. 225). the land being called after the sons of <sup>b</sup>Ishmael, who

also became Lamanites.

20 And as Ammon entered the land of Ishmael, the Lamanites took him and <sup>a</sup>bound him, as was their custom to bind all the Nephites (They probably knew Ammon was a Nephite by his clothes.) who fell into their hands, and carry them before the king; and thus it was left to the pleasure of the king to slay them, or to retain them in captivity, or to cast them into prison, or to cast them out of his land, according to his will and pleasure.

21 And thus Ammon was carried before the king who was over the land of Ishmael; and his name was Lamoni; and he was a descendant of Ishmael. (Lamoni was probably a direct descendant from Ishmael which entitled him to be king. This is the same Ishmael who went with Lehi and his family. The daughters of Ishmael were among the first to defect from Lehi and Nephi and become Lamanites.)

22 And the king inquired of Ammon if it were his desire to dwell in the land among the Lamanites, or among his people. (“It is interesting to note Ammon’s straightforward approach to sharing the gospel with the Lamanites. It appears that Ammon wanted to win the king’s confidence through first serving him. What do you suppose might have happened if Ammon had immediately called the king to repentance? . . . under the direction of the Spirit, Ammon did not let his anxiety to begin teaching rush him into teaching his listeners prematurely. When Lamoni asked Ammon why he was there, many would have been tempted to launch immediately into a gospel discussion. Ammon wisely waited for the right time to teach. Note his reaction to what appeared to be total disaster. (See Alma 17:29) He was overjoyed at this opportunity to show these people how a true Christian lives, even in a time of crisis. Talk about waiting for the right teaching moment!” (*Book of Mormon Student Manual*, 1981, p. 246))

23 And Ammon said unto him: Yea, I desire to <sup>a</sup>dwell among this people for a time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die.

24 And it came to pass that king Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon, and caused that his bands should be loosed; and he would that Ammon should take one of his daughters to wife. (There are two ways to look at the offer given to Ammon. The first is that king Lamoni was so impressed with him and his commitment to dwell among the Lamanites that he wanted to honor him with the marriage of his daughter. The second is that the king’s daughter was so beastly to look at, that there were no Lamanites in the entire kingdom that would have her hand in marriage. Under this interpretation, King Lamoni was trying to pawn off his homely daughter on the first Nephite he could find. The reader is left to choose which of these interpretations is correct, but the author favors the latter. Offering his daughter in marriage was how the king proposed to bind Ammon to his people.)

25 But Ammon said unto him: Nay, but I will be thy servant. Therefore Ammon became a <sup>a</sup>servant to king Lamoni. And it came to pass that he was set among other servants to watch the flocks (We are not told what kind of animals were in the flocks. They did not have sheep in America. The animals had to be fast enough to easily run away and would also not stay together in a group.) of Lamoni, according to the custom of the Lamanites.

26 And after he had been in the service of the king three days, as he was with the Lamanitish servants going forth with their flocks to the place of <sup>a</sup>water, which was called the water of Sebus, and all the Lamanites drive their flocks hither, that they may have water—

27 Therefore, as Ammon and the servants of the king were driving forth their flocks to this place of water, behold, a certain number of the Lamanites, who had been with their flocks to water, stood and <sup>a</sup>scattered the flocks of Ammon and the servants of the king, and they scattered them insomuch that they fled many ways.

28 Now the servants of the king began to murmur, saying: Now the king will slay us, (Since the servants were derelict in their duties, the king had to do something to set a proper example.) as he has our brethren because their flocks were scattered by the wickedness of these men. And they began to weep exceedingly, saying: Behold, our flocks are scattered already. (Hugh Nibley: “After the flocks of the king ‘scattered . . . and fled many ways,’ the servants lamented that as a matter of course, ‘now the king will slay us, as he has our brethren’ (Alma 17:28). And they began to weep. What insanity is this, the



king kills his own servants for losing a contest that had been acted out before? In fact, 'it was the practice of these Lamanites to stand by the waters of Sebus and scatter the flocks of the people,' keeping what they could for themselves, 'it being a practice of plunder among them' (Alma 18:7). So it was no secret to anyone; this was not an ambush but something to be expected. But the king's own flocks? Didn't he have enough men to protect them if this happened regularly? Well, for one thing the Lamanites played the game for sport; it was more than meat that they were after, for 'they delighted in the destruction of their brethren; and for this cause they stood to scatter the flocks of the king' (Alma 17:35). The fun of it was their main interest, but Ammon spoiled the fun when he 'stood forth and began to cast stones at them with his sling.' They were outraged." (*The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, pp. 539-40))

29 Now they wept because of the fear of being slain. Now when Ammon saw this his heart was swollen within him with joy; for, said he, I will show forth my power unto these my fellow-servants, or the power which is in me, in restoring these flocks unto the king, that I may win the hearts of these my fellow-servants, that I may lead them to <sup>a</sup>believe in my words.

30 And now, these were the thoughts of Ammon, when he saw the afflictions of those whom he termed to be his brethren.

31 And it came to pass that he flattered them by his words, saying: My brethren, be of good cheer (Robert D. Hales: "What did Ammon say? 'Be of good cheer' (Alma 17:31). Now, we may read this as a story about some shepherd trying to round up some missing sheep, but the message is much more powerful and significant than that....Ammon not only led the force to recapture the sheep, he drove away the evil men who caused the problems; and his heroic efforts persuaded the king to follow him and to follow the Savior. Ammon teaches us that no matter our circumstances, we can be an example to others, we can lift them, we can inspire them to seek righteousness, and we can bear testimony to all of the power of Jesus Christ." (*Ensign*, May 1997, p. 82 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 283)) and let us go in search of the flocks, and we will gather them together and bring them back unto the place of water; and thus we will preserve the flocks unto the king and he will not slay us. (He gave them a pep talk.)

32 And it came to pass that they went in search of the flocks, and they did follow Ammon, and they rushed forth with much swiftness and did head the flocks of the king, and did gather them together again to the place of water.

33 And those men again stood to scatter their flocks; but Ammon said unto his brethren: Encircle the flocks round about that they flee not; and I go and contend with these men who do scatter our flocks.

34 Therefore, they did as Ammon commanded them, and he went forth and stood to contend with those who stood by the waters of Sebus; and they were in number not a few.

35 Therefore they did not fear Ammon, for they supposed that one of their men could slay him according to their pleasure, for they knew not that the Lord had promised Mosiah that he would <sup>a</sup>deliver his sons out of their hands; neither did they know anything concerning the Lord; therefore they delighted in the destruction of their brethren; and for this cause they stood to scatter the flocks of the king.

36 But <sup>a</sup>Ammon stood forth and began to cast stones at them with his sling; yea, with mighty power he did sling stones amongst them; and thus he slew a <sup>b</sup>certain number (6) of them insomuch that they began to be astonished at his power; nevertheless they were angry because of the slain of their brethren, and they were determined that he should fall; therefore, seeing that they <sup>c</sup>could not hit him with their stones, they came forth with clubs to slay him.

37 But behold, every man that lifted his club to smite Ammon, he smote off their arms with his sword; for he did withstand their blows by smiting their arms with the edge of his sword, insomuch that they began to be astonished, and began to flee before him; yea, and they were not few in number; and he caused them to flee by the strength of his arm.

38 Now six of them had fallen by the sling, but he <sup>a</sup>slew none save it were their leader with his sword; and he smote off as many of their arms as were lifted against him, and they were not a few.

39 And when he had driven them afar off, he returned and they watered their flocks and returned them to the pasture of the king, and then went in unto the king, bearing the arms which had been smitten off by the sword of Ammon, of those who sought to slay him; and they were carried in unto the king for a testimony of the things which they had done.

\* Verse 4 [From about 91 to 77 B.C.]

## Alma 18

*King Lamoni supposes that Ammon is the Great Spirit—Ammon teaches the king of the creation, of God's dealings with men, and of the redemption that comes through Christ—Lamoni believes and falls to the earth as if dead. [About 90 B.C.]*

1 AND it came to pass that king Lamoni caused that his <sup>a</sup>servants should stand forth and testify to all the things which they had seen concerning the matter.

2 And when they had all testified to the things which they had seen, and he had learned of the faithfulness of Ammon in preserving his flocks, and also of his <sup>a</sup>great power in contending against those who sought to slay him, he was astonished exceedingly, and said: Surely, this is more than a man. Behold, is not this the Great Spirit who doth send such great punishments (Ammon hadn't punished anyone. Just the opposite.) upon this people, because of their murders? (Murders here may be referring to the servants Lamoni has killed because they have not done well in keeping the king's flocks, or it may refer to human sacrifices they have performed.)

3 And they answered the king, and said: Whether he be the Great Spirit or a man, we know not; but this much we do know, that he <sup>a</sup>cannot be slain by the enemies of the king; neither can they <sup>b</sup>scatter the king's flocks when he is with us, because of his expertness and <sup>c</sup>great strength; therefore, we know that he is a friend to the king. And now, O king, we do not believe that a man has such great power, for we know he cannot be slain.

4 And now, when the king heard these words, he said unto them: Now I know that it is the Great Spirit; and he has come down at this time to preserve your lives, that I might not <sup>a</sup>slay you as I did your brethren. Now this is the Great Spirit of whom our fathers have spoken.

5 Now this was the <sup>a</sup>tradition of Lamoni, which he had received from his father, that there was a <sup>b</sup>Great Spirit. Notwithstanding they believed in a Great Spirit, they supposed that <sup>c</sup>whatsoever they did was right; nevertheless, Lamoni began to fear exceedingly, with fear lest he had done wrong in slaying his servants; (President Marion G. Romney said: "No person is, nor can he be, justified in rejecting these teachings and commandments which have been revealed by the Lord, on the basis that he does not know they are true, because everything the Lord does or says has within itself the evidence of its own authenticity, and every person is divinely endowed with the means to discover that evidence and know for himself that it is true." CR, Apr 1976, p. 120-21.)

6 For he had slain many of them because their brethren had scattered their flocks at the place of water; and thus, because they had had their flocks scattered they were slain.

7 Now it was the practice (This was a game) of these Lamanites to stand by the <sup>a</sup>waters of Sebus to scatter the flocks of the people, that thereby they might drive away many that were scattered unto their own land, it being a practice of plunder among them.

8 And it came to pass that king Lamoni inquired of his servants, saying: Where is this man that has such great power?

9 And they said unto him: Behold, he is feeding thy <sup>a</sup>horses. Now the king had commanded his servants, previous to the time of the watering of their flocks, that they should prepare his horses and chariots, (They didn't ride horses, they used them to pull carts and chariots.) and conduct him forth to the land of Nephi; for there had been a <sup>b</sup>great <sup>c</sup>feast appointed at the land of Nephi, by the father of Lamoni, who was king over all the land.

10 Now when king Lamoni heard that Ammon was preparing his horses and his <sup>a</sup>chariots he was more astonished, because of the faithfulness of Ammon, saying: Surely there has not been any servant among all my servants that has been so faithful as this man; for even he doth remember all my commandments to execute them.

11 Now I surely know that this is the Great Spirit, and I would desire him that he come in unto me, but I durst not.

12 And it came to pass that when Ammon had made ready the horses and the chariots for the king and his servants, he went in unto the king, and he saw that the <sup>a</sup>countenance of the king was changed; therefore he was about to return out of his presence.

13 And one of the king's servants said unto him, <sup>a</sup>Rabbanah, which is, being interpreted, powerful or great king, considering their kings to be powerful; and thus he said unto him: Rabbanah, (The Lamanite word "Rabbanah" obviously has the same derivation and meaning as the Hebrew word, Rabboni (Jn 20:16) or Rabbi. "*Rabbanah* is a wonderful word. Translated, it means *powerful, or great king*. In applying that name to Ammon, the servants of Lamoni did not know that in reality he was a prince, the son of the mighty king of the Nephites. But after Ammon's miraculous exploits at the Waters of Sebus, they regarded him, as did their master, *something more than a man*." (Reynolds and Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 265)) the king desireth thee to stay.

14 Therefore Ammon turned himself unto the king, and said unto him: What wilt thou that I should do for thee, O king? And the king answered him not for the space of an <sup>a</sup>hour, according to their time, for he knew not what he should say unto him.

15 And it came to pass that Ammon said unto him again: What desirest thou of me? But the king answered him not.

16 And it came to pass that Ammon, being filled with the <sup>a</sup>Spirit of God, therefore he perceived the <sup>b</sup>thoughts of the king. And he said unto him: Is it because thou hast heard that I defended thy servants and thy flocks, and slew <sup>c</sup>seven of their brethren (Ammon killed 6 with the sling and the leader with the sword.) with the sling and with the sword, and smote off the arms of others, in order to defend thy flocks and thy servants; behold, is it this that causeth thy marvelings?

17 I say unto you, what is it, that thy marvelings are so great? Behold, I am a <sup>a</sup>man, and am thy servant; therefore, whatsoever thou desirest which is right, that will I do.

18 Now when the king had heard these words, he marveled again, for he beheld that Ammon could <sup>a</sup>discern his thoughts; (Boyd K. Packer: "(having quoted Alma 18:18) This power of discernment is a very real spiritual gift. It is often conferred as a blessing upon men ordained as bishops, stake presidents, and so forth. Many can bear witness to the fact that they do not have to hear or to see all that they know, that they can discern thoughts when the purpose of their office is served. I have often thought, as members of the Church come to us as General Authorities for counsel, that they are not aware that sometimes their words are in one avenue and their thoughts are in another, and yet it is important that we learn that we cannot hide our thoughts. You can't hide them. Sooner or later, they will be known; they will express themselves in actions. 'As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he.' (Proverbs 23:7.) As a man thinketh in his heart, so he does." (*That All May Be Edified*, p. 35)) but notwithstanding this, king Lamoni did open his mouth, and said unto him: Who art thou? Art thou that Great Spirit, who <sup>b</sup>knows all things?

19 Ammon answered and said unto him: I am not.

20 And the king said: How knowest thou the thoughts of my heart? Thou mayest speak boldly, and tell me concerning these things; and also tell me by what power ye slew and smote off the arms of my brethren that scattered my flocks—

21 And now, <sup>a</sup>if thou wilt tell me concerning these things, whatsoever thou desirest I will give unto thee; and if it were needed, I would guard thee with my armies; but I know that thou art more powerful than all they; nevertheless, whatsoever thou desirest of me I will grant it unto thee.

22 Now Ammon being <sup>a</sup>wise, yet harmless, he said unto Lamoni: Wilt thou hearken unto my words, if I

tell thee by what power I do these things? And this is the thing that I desire of thee.

23 And the king answered him, and said: Yea, I <sup>a</sup>will believe all thy words. And thus he was caught with <sup>b</sup>guile. (A strategy)

24 And Ammon began to speak unto him with <sup>a</sup>boldness, (Timidity or uncertainty are not companions of the Spirit. DCBM, 3:136) and said unto him: Believest thou that there is a God?

25 And he answered, and said unto him: I do not know what that meaneth.

26 And then Ammon said: Believest thou that there is a <sup>a</sup>Great Spirit?

27 And he said, Yea.

28 And Ammon said: This is God. And Ammon said unto him again: Believest thou that this Great Spirit, who is God, created all things which are in heaven and in the earth? (Creation) (Bruce R. McConkie: “The three greatest events that ever have occurred or ever will occur in all eternity are these: “1. The creation of the heavens and the earth, of man, and of all forms of life; “2. The fall of man, of all forms of life, and of the earth itself from their primeval and paradisiacal state to their present mortal state; and “3. The infinite and eternal atonement, which ransoms man, all living things, and the earth also from their fallen state so that the salvation of the earth and of all living things may be completed. “These three divine events—the three pillars of eternity—are inseparably woven together into one grand tapestry known as the eternal plan of salvation” (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, 81).)

29 And he said: Yea, I believe that he created all things which are in the earth; but I do not know the heavens.

30 And Ammon said unto him: The heavens is a place where God dwells and all his holy angels.

31 And king Lamoni said: Is it above the earth?

32 And Ammon said: Yea, and he looketh down upon all the children of men; and he <sup>a</sup>knows all the thoughts and <sup>b</sup>intents of the heart; for by his hand were they all created from the beginning.

33 And king Lamoni said: I believe all these things which thou hast spoken. Art thou <sup>a</sup>sent from God?

34 Ammon said unto him: I am a <sup>a</sup>man; and man in the beginning was created after the image of God, and I am called by his Holy <sup>b</sup>Spirit to teach these things unto this people, that they may be brought to a knowledge of that which is just and true; (That which is just is that which is right. Thus the justified are those who have done that which is right and proper in the eyes of God, or whose lives have been made right through the mediation of a greater power. That which is true is that which is faithful or trustworthy. To be brought to a knowledge of that which is just and true is to come to that knowledge which marks a straight course, one which can be followed with full confidence and trust. DCBM, 3:136)

35 And a portion of that <sup>a</sup>Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me <sup>b</sup>knowledge, and also power according to my faith and desires which are in God.

36 Now when Ammon had said these words, he began at the creation of the world, and also the creation of Adam, and told him all the things concerning the fall of man, (Fall) and <sup>a</sup>rehearsed and laid before him the <sup>b</sup>records and the holy scriptures of the people, (The sons of Mosiah had their own copies of the scriptures) which had been spoken by the <sup>c</sup>prophets, even down to the time that their father, Lehi, left Jerusalem.

37 And he also rehearsed unto them (for it was unto the king and to his servants) all the journeyings of their fathers in the wilderness, and all their sufferings with hunger and thirst, and their travail, and so forth.

38 And he also rehearsed unto them concerning the <sup>a</sup>rebellions of Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael, yea, all their rebellions did he relate unto them; and he expounded unto them all the <sup>b</sup>records and scriptures from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem down to the present time. (Ammon's teaching methods were not elaborate or excessive. He started on Lamoni's level with questions about very basic gospel principles. He then explained the doctrines of the plan of salvation the Creation and the Fall--expounded the scriptures of ancient history, and finished with the plan of redemption. He used the scriptures from both the Old and New Worlds as his basic source (Alma 18:36-39). Ammon's straightforward doctrinal approach calls to mind President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.'s comment about how not



to teach our spiritually alert youth, 'There is no need for gradual approaches, for 'bed-time' stories, for coddling, for patronizing, or for any of the other childish devices'. If Ammon could teach doctrine from the scriptures to a wicked Lamanite who barely knew God existed, surely students in modern Zion deserve to be taught in the same way." (*Book of Mormon Symposium Series, "Alma, the Test of the Word,"* edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 269) What do you teach a person who has no knowledge of God or the gospel and yet has consented to listen and believe? Where do you start? What principles do you emphasize? The way in which Ammon taught King Lamoni constitutes a classic response to such questions. Ammon taught him what we have come to know as the three pillars of eternity—the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. These three doctrines, which are inseparably associated one with the other, constitute the foundation upon which all other gospel principles must rest. Indeed, any principle that cannot comfortably rest on the foundation of these doctrines (or be tied to it) has no place in the teachings of God's kingdom. To testify that Jesus of Nazareth is our Savior raises the question (particularly to one such as Lamoni), From what do we need to be saved? The answer of course is the fall of Adam. This in turn raises the question, From what did Adam fall? The answer is the paradisiacal state in which all things were originally created. Thus the creation becomes parent to the Fall, and the Fall parent to the Atonement." (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 135) Joseph Smith: "When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 348.)

39 But this is not all; for he <sup>a</sup>expounded unto them the <sup>b</sup>plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world; and he also made known unto them concerning the coming of Christ, (Atonement) and all the works of the Lord did he make known unto them.

40 And it came to pass that after he had said all these things, and expounded them to the king, that the king <sup>a</sup>believed all his words.

41 And he began to cry unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, have mercy; according to thy abundant <sup>a</sup>mercy which thou hast had upon the people of Nephi, have upon me, and my people.

42 And now, when he had said this, he <sup>a</sup>fell unto the earth, <sup>b</sup>as if he were dead. The death of the natural man. His being in this state for three days is similar to Alma, Paul, and Jonah's being in the belly of the fish. All of these are similar to the three days Jesus would be in the tomb prior to his resurrection.)

43 And it came to pass that his <sup>a</sup>servants took him and carried him in unto his wife, and laid him upon a bed; and he lay as if he were dead for the space of two days and two nights; and his wife, and his sons, and his daughters mourned over him, after the manner of the Lamanites, greatly lamenting his loss.

## Alma 19

*Lamoni receives the light of everlasting life and sees the Redeemer—His household fall into a trance, and some see angels—Ammon is preserved miraculously—He baptizes many and establishes a church among them. [About 90 B.C.]*

1 AND it came to pass that after two days and two nights they were about to take his <sup>a</sup>body and lay it in a sepulchre, which they had made for the purpose of burying their dead.

2 Now the queen having heard of the fame of Ammon, therefore she sent and desired that he should come in unto her.

3 And it came to pass that Ammon did as he was commanded, and went in unto the queen, and desired to know what she would that he should do.

4 And she said unto him: The <sup>a</sup>servants of my husband have made it known unto me that thou art a <sup>b</sup>prophet of a holy God, and that thou hast <sup>c</sup>power to do many mighty works in his name;

5 Therefore, if this is the case, I would that ye should go in and see my husband, for he has been laid

upon his bed for the space of two days and two nights; and some say that he is not dead, but others say that he is dead and that he <sup>a</sup>stinketh, and that he ought to be placed in the sepulchre; but as for myself, to me he doth not stink.

6 Now, this was what Ammon desired, for he knew that king Lamoni was under the power of God; he knew that the dark <sup>a</sup>veil of <sup>b</sup>unbelief was being cast away from his mind, and the <sup>c</sup>light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness— yea, this light had infused such joy into his soul, the cloud of darkness having been dispelled, and that the light of everlasting life was lit up in his soul, yea, he knew that this had <sup>d</sup>overcome his natural frame, and he was carried away in God— (Bruce R. McConkie: “Those who heed the enticements and submit to the strivings of the Holy Spirit (which is the light of Christ) are enabled to receive the Holy Spirit (which is the Holy Ghost). “We have no better illustration of the full operation of the light of Christ upon an investigator of the gospel than what happened to King Lamoni” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 261).)

7 Therefore, what the queen desired of him was his only desire. Therefore, he went in to see the king according as the queen had desired him; and he saw the king, and he knew that he was not dead.

8 And he said unto the queen: He is not dead, but he sleepeth in God, and on the morrow he shall rise again; therefore bury him not.

9 And Ammon said unto her: <sup>a</sup>Believest thou this? And she said unto him: I have had no witness save thy word, and the word of our servants; nevertheless I <sup>b</sup>believe that it shall be according as thou hast said.

10 And Ammon said unto her: Blessed art thou because of thy exceeding faith; I say unto thee, woman, there has not been such great faith among all the people of the <sup>a</sup>Nephites.

11 And it came to pass that she watched over the bed of her husband, from that time even until that time on the morrow which Ammon had appointed that he should rise.

12 And it came to pass that he arose, according to the words of Ammon; and as he arose, he stretched forth his hand unto the woman, and said: Blessed be the name of God, and blessed art thou.

13 For as sure as thou livest, behold, I have <sup>a</sup>seen my Redeemer; and he shall come forth, and be <sup>b</sup>born of a <sup>c</sup>woman, and he shall redeem all mankind who believe on his name. Now, when he had said these words, his heart was swollen within him, and he sunk again with joy; and the queen also sunk down, being overpowered by the Spirit. (“From what we can deduce from scriptural writ, it appears that a trance is a state in which the body and its functions become quiescent in order that the full powers of the Spirit may be centered on the revelations of heaven. Freed from the fetters of a mortal body, man's spirit can be ushered into the divine presence; it can hear what otherwise could not be heard and see what otherwise could not be seen—even the visions of eternity and even the Almighty himself. Yet the trance, like all other spiritual experiences, is subject to counterfeiting. The test of the legitimacy of the religious trance, like that of tongues, is the efficacy of its purpose. Its genuineness must be ascertained by the same standards that determine the verity of revelation in all other forms – that is, by the asking of such questions as: Does it teach faith in Christ, repentance, sacrifice, obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, and loyalty to the Lord's current and constituted Church and his anointed servants?” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 140) Elder David B. Haight, similarly, had an out of body experience which occurred while he was very ill. He related the story during the Oct. 1989 General Conference. From the *Church News*: “Elder David B. Haight expressed deep gratitude Sunday morning for the faith and prayers of countless people in his behalf, and for the divine intervention that spared his life from a serious illness...He recounted his experience the evening of his health crisis, as he pled with his Heavenly Father to spare his life a little longer to have more time to do His work, if it was His will. 'While still praying,' he recalled, 'I began to lose consciousness. . . . I was now in a calm, peaceful setting; all was serene and quiet. I was conscious of two persons in the distance on a hillside. . . . Detailed features were not discernable. I heard no voices but was conscious of being in a holy presence and atmosphere.' “During the days that followed, Elder

Haight said he was shown a panoramic view of Christ's earthly ministry. He saw the Savior and His apostles on the eve of His betrayal, where the Lord instructed and prepared the sacrament as a remembrance of His coming sacrifice. 'It was so impressively portrayed to me - the overwhelming love of the Savior for each,' Elder Haight said. 'I witnessed His thoughtful concern for significant details - the washing of the dusty feet of each apostle; His breaking and blessing of the loaf of dark bread and blessing of the wine; then His dreadful disclosure that one would betray Him.' "He said he saw Christ in Gethsemane, where 'in some manner beyond our comprehension,' the Savior took upon Himself the sins of mankind. As he witnessed these events during his days of unconsciousness, Elder Haight said the Holy Ghost blessed him with 'a more perfect knowledge' of the Lord's mission.' My soul was taught over and over again,' he said solemnly. 'I witnessed His struggling up the hill in His weakened condition carrying the cross, and His being stretched upon it...I cannot begin to convey to you the deep impact that these scenes have confirmed upon my soul," (Church News, Oct. 7, 1989))

14 Now Ammon seeing the Spirit of the Lord poured out according to his <sup>a</sup>prayers upon the Lamanites, his brethren, who had been the cause of so much mourning among the Nephites, or among all the people of God because of their iniquities and their <sup>b</sup>traditions, he fell upon his knees, and began to pour out his soul in prayer and thanksgiving to God for what he had done for his brethren; and he was also overpowered with <sup>c</sup>joy; and thus they all three had <sup>d</sup>sunk to the earth. (Hugh Nibley "Of course, the hardest thing to contain is joy. Anybody can contain all sorts of pain. It's amazing what you can put up with when you have to put up with pain. How astonishing it is-there's just no limit. But joy is a thing that scares the daylight out of you. You can't contain it and don't know what to do with it. In the Moscow Art Theatre they say, 'Suffer, suffer, suffer; that's the way you become an artist.' Well, we love to suffer; there's no limit to how much we can suffer. But joy is so much harder to take. You don't know what to do with it, do you? And yet that's the purpose of our existence-we 'are that we might have joy.' So we are learning to control joy and control ourselves when we have it. We can't contain it, you see. It's a hard thing to contain. What do you do? Do you shout and holler and run around? Do you make a fool of yourself, etc.? How can you contain that in yourself? Well, they are all sinking down here and passing out, and that's the best thing. After all, when pain becomes too great you black out automatically. So that takes care of that. It's the same thing with joy if you can't contain it. When you don't know how to handle a problem psychologically, what do you do? You black out. This is your defense." (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 52, pp. 386-7))

15 Now, when the servants of the king had seen that they had fallen, they also began to cry unto God, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them also, for it was <sup>a</sup>they who had stood before the king and testified unto him concerning the great power of Ammon.

16 And it came to pass that they did call on the name of the Lord, in their might, even until they had all fallen to the earth, save it were one of the Lamanitish <sup>a</sup>women, whose name was Abish, (Abish is one of the very few named women in the Book of Mormon. That her name is present here is even more remarkable because she was a servant, and the records of the world typically record the names of royalty, but not the names of servants. The presence of her name, and the details of this little aside, suggest that Abish was more important in the original record than we see her in Mormon's account. While the description of her conversion provides an explanation of why she did not fall down, nevertheless, it would not be anything that would require that she be recorded by name when other women, such as the queen, are not named. This contrast between the named servant and the unnamed queen hint at a much more important role for Abish in the establishment of the gospel through Ammon than we have in our records. Brant Gardner.) she having been converted unto the Lord for many years, on account of a remarkable vision of her father— (Abish had not succumbed to the influence of the Spirit, because it was not a new experience for her like the king and the people around him.)

17 Thus, having been converted to the Lord, and never having made it <sup>a</sup>known, therefore, when she saw that all the servants of Lamoni had <sup>b</sup>fallen to the earth, and also her mistress, the queen, and the king, and Ammon lay <sup>c</sup>prostrate upon the earth, she knew that it was the power of God; and supposing that

this opportunity, by making known unto the people what had happened among them, that by beholding this scene it would <sup>d</sup>cause them to believe in the power of God, therefore she ran forth from house to house, making it known unto the people. (She had a good idea, not everyone will share her view.)

18 And they began to assemble themselves together unto the house of the king. And there came a multitude, and to their astonishment, they beheld the king, and the queen, and their servants prostrate upon the earth, and they all lay there as though they were dead; and they also saw Ammon, and behold, he was a Nephite. (They may have known him by reputation as a Nephite, or his clothing indicated that he was Nephite.)

19 And now the people began to murmur among themselves; some saying that it was a great evil that had come upon them, or upon the king and his house, because he had suffered that the Nephite should <sup>a</sup>remain in the land.

20 But others rebuked them, saying: The king hath brought this evil upon his house, because he slew his servants who had had their flocks scattered at the <sup>a</sup>waters of Sebus.

21 And they were also rebuked by those men who had stood at the waters of Sebus and <sup>a</sup>scattered the flocks which belonged to the king, for they were angry with Ammon because of the number which he had slain of their brethren at the waters of Sebus, while defending the flocks of the king.

22 Now, one of them, whose brother had been <sup>a</sup>slain with the sword of Ammon, being exceedingly angry with Ammon, drew his sword and went forth that he might let it fall upon Ammon, to slay him; and as he lifted the sword to smite him, behold, he fell dead. (Joseph Smith saw an angel of the Lord in vision protecting Brigham Young. Joseph Smith: "I saw Elder Brigham Young standing in a strange land, in the far south and west, in a desert place, upon a rock in the midst of about a dozen men of color, who appeared hostile. He was preaching to them in their own tongue, and the angel of God standing above his head, with a drawn sword in his hand, protecting him, but he did not see it." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 108) Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever. D&C 122:9)

23 Now we see that Ammon could not be slain, for the <sup>a</sup>Lord had said unto Mosiah, his father: I will spare him, and it shall be unto him according to thy faith—therefore, Mosiah <sup>b</sup>trusted him unto the Lord.

24 And it came to pass that when the multitude beheld that the man had fallen dead, who lifted the sword to slay Ammon, <sup>a</sup>fear came upon them all, and they durst not put forth their hands to touch him or any of those who had fallen; and they began to marvel again among themselves what could be the cause of this great power, or what all these things could mean.

25 And it came to pass that there were many among them who said that Ammon was the <sup>a</sup>Great Spirit, and others said he was sent by the Great Spirit;

26 But others rebuked them all, saying that he was a <sup>a</sup>monster, who had been sent from the Nephites to torment them. (It is obvious from this account that many perceive the doings and handiwork of God and understand his ways; others are absolutely oblivious to what is divine and can neither recognize nor believe a heavenly manifestation. DCBM, 3:144)

27 And there were some who said that Ammon was sent by the Great Spirit to afflict them because of their iniquities; and that it was the Great Spirit that had always attended the Nephites, who had ever delivered them out of their hands; and they said that it was this Great Spirit who had destroyed so many of their brethren, the Lamanites.

28 And thus the contention began to be exceedingly sharp among them. And while they were thus contending, the <sup>a</sup>woman servant who had caused the multitude to be gathered together came, and when she saw the contention which was among the multitude she was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto tears. (Neal A. Maxwell: "Another special challenge we face from time to time is having good motives and good intentions—and even good actions misfire. Abish, the 'Lamanitish woman' (Alma 19:16-17), was not the first nor the last Church member to think an opportunity to be present and, therefore, to act on the impulse to do good. Confusion and contention followed her deed, as did tears from conscientious Abish. Vindication was nearly immediate in her case, but it is much slower coming at other times. If our



motives and actions are good, we should be able to endure some misunderstanding, but the pain and frustration of it will be real because we really care. Time and truth can cause lower courts of opinion to reverse themselves, hopefully soon. But if not, we will come to that final gate where Jesus Christ is the gatekeeper and ‘he employeth no servant there.’ The gospel guarantees ultimate, not proximate, justice.” (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, p. 115))

29 And it came to pass that she went and took the queen (It may not have been permissible for Abish to touch the king, so she first touches the queen.) by the <sup>a</sup>hand, that perhaps she might raise her from the ground; and as soon as she touched her hand she arose and stood upon her feet, and cried with a loud voice, saying: O blessed Jesus, who has saved me from an <sup>b</sup>awful hell! O blessed God, have <sup>c</sup>mercy on this people!

30 And when she had said this, she clasped her hands, being filled with joy, speaking many words which were not understood; and when she had done this, she took the king, Lamoni, by the hand, and behold he arose and stood upon his feet.

31 And he, immediately, seeing the contention among his people, went forth and began to rebuke them, and to teach them the <sup>a</sup>words which he had heard from the mouth of Ammon; and as many as heard his words believed, and were converted unto the Lord.

32 But there were <sup>a</sup>many among them who would not hear his words; therefore they went their way.

33 And it came to pass that when Ammon arose he also administered unto them, and also did all the servants of Lamoni; and they did all declare unto the people the selfsame thing—that their hearts had been <sup>a</sup>changed; that they had no more desire to do <sup>b</sup>evil. (Delbert L. Stapley: “When the light of Christ is in one's soul there can be no darkness which leads to temptation and sin. You cannot take darkness into a lighted room any more than one can create doubt in the heart of a person where true faith and testimony exist.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *That My Family Should Partake*, p. 88) Of his own conversion, President Joseph F. Smith said: “The feeling that came upon me was that of pure peace, of love and of light. I felt in my soul that if I had sinned – and surely I was not without sin – that it had been forgiven me; that I was indeed cleansed from sin; my heart was touched, and I felt that I would not injure the smallest insect beneath my feet. I felt as if I wanted to do good everywhere to everybody and to everything. I felt a newness of life, a newness of desire to do that which was right. There was not one particle of desire for evil left in my soul. Gospel Doctrine, p. 96)

34 And behold, many did declare unto the people that they had seen <sup>a</sup>angels and had conversed with them; and thus they had told them things of God, and of his righteousness.

35 And it came to pass that there were many that did <sup>a</sup>believe in their words; and as many as did believe were baptized; and they became a righteous people, and they did establish a church among them.

36 And thus the work of the Lord did commence among the Lamanites; thus the Lord did begin to pour out his <sup>a</sup>Spirit upon them; and we see that his arm is extended to <sup>b</sup>all people who will repent and believe on his name. (Here we reach a critical point in the Book of Mormon history. From this time on the Lamanites start going up in virtue, and the Nephites start going down. Hugh Nibley, TBM, 2:389)

## Alma 20

*The Lord sends Ammon to Middoni to deliver his imprisoned brethren—Ammon and Lamoni meet Lamoni's father, who is king over all the land—Ammon compels the old king to approve the release of his brethren. [About 90 B.C.]*

1 AND it came to pass that when they had established a church in that <sup>a</sup>land, that king Lamoni desired that Ammon should go with him to the land of Nephi, that he might show him unto his father.

2 And the voice of the Lord came to Ammon, saying: Thou shalt not go up to the land of Nephi, for behold, the king will seek thy life (However in verse 8 he meets up with the king, but because he is not in his palace, Ammon's life is spared.); but thou shalt go to the land of <sup>a</sup>Middoni; for behold, thy brother

Aaron, and also Muloki and Ammah are in prison.

3 Now it came to pass that when Ammon had heard this, he said unto Lamoni: Behold, my brother and brethren are in prison at Middoni, and I go that I may deliver them.

4 Now Lamoni said unto Ammon: I know, in the <sup>a</sup>strength of the Lord thou canst do all things. But behold, I will go with thee to the land of Middoni; for the king of the land of Middoni, whose name is Antiomno, is a friend (an ally) unto me; therefore I go to the land of Middoni, that I may flatter the king of the land, and he will cast thy brethren out of <sup>b</sup>prison. Now Lamoni said unto him: Who told thee that thy brethren were in prison?

5 And Ammon said unto him: No one hath told me, save it be God; and he said unto me—Go and deliver thy brethren, for they are in prison in the land of Middoni.

6 Now when Lamoni had heard this he caused that his servants should make ready his <sup>a</sup>horses and his chariots.

7 And he said unto Ammon: Come, I will go with thee down to the land of Middoni, and there I will plead with the king that he will cast thy brethren out of prison.

8 And it came to pass that as Ammon and Lamoni were journeying thither, they met the father of Lamoni, who was king <sup>a</sup>over all the land. (As Ammon and Lamoni are traveling, they meet Lamoni's father. This is the same father that Lamoni was going to take Ammon to see, and of whom the Lord suggested that he would seek Ammon's life. We have the very interesting situation where the Lord told Ammon not to go Lamoni's father, but that is the very man they meet while on their way to the other mission given them by the Lord. In this case, we must assume that the Lord knew very well that they would meet Lamoni's father on the road. As we will see, the intent to kill will still be there, but meeting the king on the road has probably placed Ammon in a different situation where he will be able to act in ways where he would have been constrained had he been before the king in his palace. For instance, it will be clear as this story continues that Ammon is armed, and that makes a great difference in the ending of this tale. Had Ammon appeared before the king in his court, it is unlikely that he would have been allowed (as a Nephite) to enter the presence of the king armed. Brant Gardner.)

9 And behold, the father of Lamoni (We don't know his name.) said unto him: Why did ye <sup>a</sup>not come to the <sup>b</sup>feast on that great day when I made a feast unto my sons, and unto my people? (Attendance at the feast was mandatory.)

10 And he also said: Whither art thou going with this Nephite, who is one of the children of a <sup>a</sup>liar? (Prejudice)

11 And it came to pass that Lamoni rehearsed unto him whither he was going, for he feared to offend him.

12 And he also told him all the cause of his tarrying in his own kingdom, that he did not go unto his father to the feast which he had prepared.

13 And now when Lamoni had rehearsed unto him all these things, behold, to his astonishment, his father was angry with him, and said: Lamoni, thou art going to deliver these Nephites, who are sons of a liar. Behold, he robbed our fathers; and now his children are also come amongst us that they may, by their cunning and their lyings, deceive us, that they again may rob us of our property. (The tradition among the Lamanites was that the Nephites stole the birthright from Laman and all the important relics as well.)

14 Now the father of Lamoni commanded him that he should slay Ammon with the sword. And he also commanded him that he should not go to the land of Middoni, but that he should return with him to the land of <sup>a</sup>Ishmael. (This is a test to Lamoni of his loyalty to the king. He is also jeopardizing the safety of his own people by severing alliances with his father's kingdom.)

15 But Lamoni said unto him: I will not slay Ammon, (To defy the king was treason.) neither will I return to the land of Ishmael, but I go to the land of Middoni that I may release the brethren of Ammon, for I know that they are just men and holy prophets of the true God.

16 Now when his father had heard these words, he was angry with him, and he drew his sword that he

might smite him to the earth.

17 But Ammon stood forth and said unto him: Behold, thou shalt not slay thy son; nevertheless, it were <sup>a</sup>better that he should fall than thee, for behold, he has <sup>b</sup>repented of his sins; but if thou shouldst fall at this time, in thine anger, thy soul could not be saved. (Ammon's statement implies that the king would have been guilty of murder. Joseph Smith taught that one guilty of murder, one that sheds innocent blood cannot have forgiveness. Teachings, p. 339. Such a one would be guilty of the unforgivable sin, one for which the atonement of Christ cannot bring remission of sins. The guilty person will suffer for his or her own sin. Murder, the unlawful killing of another human being with malice aforethought, is the second most serious sin. It is an abomination in the sight of God because it, like unchastity, involves the unlawful tampering with human life. It is a sin unto death, an offense which is called the unforgivable sin. The call to repentance and baptism which includes murderers has reference to those who took life while engaged in unrighteous wars, as did the Lamanites, because they were compelled to do so, and not because they in their hearts sought the blood of their fellow men. On the other hand, the Jews on whose hands the blood of Christ was found were not invited to repent and be baptized. (Acts 3:19-21). MD, p. 520, TPJS, p. 188, 339, DCBM, 3:148, 290)

18 And again, it is expedient that thou shouldst forbear; for if thou shouldst <sup>a</sup>slay thy son, he being an innocent man, his blood would cry from the ground (The earth is the mother of life and is the womb of the resurrection also. From the earth we are resurrected and out from the earth we are born. She is Mother Earth. She is the mother of life and the womb of the resurrection. The destruction of life in any form is the reversal and perversion of existence itself, as we learn in Ether 8:19 in the Book of Mormon. It's an unspeakably horrendous calamity deliberately to reverse the process for which the earth was created. If the earth accepts their blood, it will cry from the ground and demand vengeance, as it does in the book of Moses. Hugh Nibley, TBM, 2:393) to the Lord his God, for vengeance to come upon thee; and perhaps thou wouldst lose thy <sup>b</sup>soul.

19 Now when Ammon had said these words unto him, he answered him, saying: I know that if I should slay my son, that I should shed innocent blood; for it is thou that hast sought to destroy him.

20 And he stretched forth his hand to slay Ammon. But Ammon withstood his blows, and also smote his arm that he could not use it.

21 Now when the king saw that Ammon could slay him, he began to plead with Ammon that he would spare his life.

22 But Ammon raised his sword, and said unto him: Behold, I will smite thee except thou wilt grant unto me that my brethren may be <sup>a</sup>cast out of prison.

23 Now the king, fearing he should lose his life, said: If thou wilt spare me I will grant unto thee whatsoever thou wilt ask, even to half of the kingdom. (This was the correct political thing to do. To keep from losing his life, it was common to give away half the kingdom to be able to continue to be king.)

24 Now when Ammon saw that he had wrought upon the old king according to his desire, he said unto him: If thou wilt grant that my brethren may be cast out of prison, and also that Lamoni may retain his kingdom, and that ye be not displeased with him, but grant that he may do according to his own desires in <sup>a</sup>whatsoever thing he thinketh, then will I spare thee; otherwise I will smite thee to the earth. (If Ammon had not won this fight, Lamoni would also have died.)

25 Now when Ammon had said these words, the king began to rejoice because of his life. (In refusing the half of the kingdom and in sparing the king's life, the king had no expectation of that outcome.)

26 And when he saw that Ammon had no desire to destroy him, and when he also saw the great <sup>a</sup>love he had for his son Lamoni, he was astonished exceedingly, and said: Because this is all that thou hast desired, that I would <sup>b</sup>release thy brethren, and suffer that my son Lamoni should retain his kingdom, behold, I will grant unto you that my son may retain his kingdom from this time and forever; and I will govern him no more—

27 And I will also grant unto thee that thy brethren may be cast out of prison, and thou and thy brethren

may come unto me, in my kingdom; for I shall greatly desire to see thee. For the king was greatly astonished at the words which he had spoken, and also at the words which had been spoken by his son Lamoni, therefore he was <sup>a</sup>desirous to learn them.

28 And it came to pass that Ammon and Lamoni proceeded on their journey towards the land of Middoni. And Lamoni found favor in the eyes of the king of the land; therefore the brethren of Ammon were brought forth out of prison. (Marion D. Hanks: “The promise is that in times of sorrow and affliction, if we endure and remain faithful and put our trust in him and are courageous, the Lord will visit us in our afflictions, strengthen us to carry our burdens, and support us in our trials. He’ll be with us to the end of our days, lift us at the last day to greater opportunities for service, and exalt us at last with him and reunited loved ones, and he will consecrate our afflictions to our gain” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 87; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 64).)

29 And when Ammon did meet them he was exceedingly sorrowful, for behold they were naked, and their skins were worn exceedingly because of being bound with strong cords. And they also had <sup>a</sup>suffered hunger, thirst, and all kinds of afflictions; nevertheless they were <sup>b</sup>patient (The reason that patience is such a virtue, is that so few people have it.) in all their sufferings.

30 And, as it happened, it was their lot to have fallen into the hands of a more hardened and a more <sup>a</sup>stiffnecked people; therefore they would not hearken unto their words, and they had cast them out, and had smitten them, and had driven them from house to house, and from place to place, even until they had arrived in the land of Middoni; and there they were taken and cast into prison, and bound with <sup>b</sup>strong cords, and kept in prison for many days, and were delivered by Lamoni and Ammon.

## Alma 21

*An account of the preaching of Aaron, and Muloki, and their brethren, to the Lamanites. (Written by Mormon) Comprising chapters 21 to 26 inclusive.*

*Aaron teaches the Amalekites about Christ and his atonement—Aaron and his brethren are imprisoned in Middoni—After their deliverance they teach in the synagogues and make many converts—Lamoni grants religious freedom to the people in the land of Ishmael. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]*

1 NOW when Ammon and his brethren <sup>a</sup>separated themselves in the borders of the land of the Lamanites, behold Aaron took his journey towards the land which was called by the Lamanites, <sup>b</sup>Jerusalem, calling it after the land of their fathers’ nativity; and it was away joining the borders of Mormon.

2 Now the Lamanites and the Amalekites and the people of <sup>a</sup>Amulon had built a great city, which was called Jerusalem. (“This was a Lamanite city, built within the borders of the land of Nephi. Nephite apostates—the Amulonites and Amalekites—aided in its construction. Its inhabitants always warred against those sent to it with the message of salvation. It is listed among those cities destroyed at the time of Christ’s death. ‘Waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof,’ the Lord said, ‘to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come up any more unto me against them’ (3 Nephi 9:7).” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 152))

3 Now the Lamanites of themselves were sufficiently hardened, but the Amalekites and the Amulonites were still harder (Those who leave the faith can never really leave the faith alone.); therefore they did cause the Lamanites that they should harden their hearts, that they should wax strong in wickedness and their abominations.

4 And it came to pass that Aaron came to the city of Jerusalem, and first began to preach to the Amalekites. And he began to preach to them in their <sup>a</sup>synagogues, for they had built synagogues after the <sup>b</sup>order of the Nehors; for many of the Amalekites and the Amulonites were after the order of the



Nehors. (“Both of these groups of people believed in the ‘order of the Nehors’, and they were so hardened in wickedness that only one Amalekite and no Amulonites were converted by the four sons of Mosiah and their companions (Alma 23:14).” (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p.208) The Amulonites were Nephites on their fathers’ side and Lamanites on their mothers’. Their education was that of the Nephites, and many of them became followers of Nehor. Scattered throughout the lands of Amulon, Helam and Jerusalem, they assumed a leading role as opponents of Ammon and his missionary brethren. None of their number repented and accepted the gospel. Rather, they became leaders in the persecutions carried on against the suffering people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi and, with the Amalekites, made martyrs of many of those saints. DCBM, 3:151. “When the Prophet [Joseph Smith] had ended telling how he had been treated [by apostates], Brother Behunnin remarked; ‘If I should leave this Church I would not do as those men have done: I would go to some remote place where Mormonism had never been heard of, settle down, and no one would ever learn that I knew anything about it.’ The great Seer immediately replied: ‘Brother Behunnin, you don’t know what you would do. No doubt these men once thought as you do. Before you joined this Church you stood on neutral ground. When the gospel was preached good and evil were set before you. You could choose either or neither. There were two opposite masters inviting you to serve them. When you joined this Church you enlisted to serve God. When you did that you left the neutral ground, and you never can get back on to it. Should you forsake the master you enlisted to serve, it will be by the instigation of the evil one, and you will follow his dictation and be his servant.’ He [further] emphasized the fact that a man or woman who had not taken sides either with Christ or Belial could maintain a neutral position, but when they enlisted under either the one or the other they left the neutral ground forever.” (*Juvenile Instructor*, Aug. 15, 1892, p. 492 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 228))

5 Therefore, as Aaron entered into one of their <sup>a</sup>synagogues to preach unto the people, and as he was speaking unto them, behold there arose an Amalekite and began to contend with him, saying: What is that thou hast testified? Hast thou seen an <sup>b</sup>angel? Why do not angels appear unto us? Behold <sup>c</sup>are not this people as good as thy people? (Those who will not hear the word of God as preached by one such as Aaron will not hear it if preached by one who has come back from the dead. The issue is the message, not the messenger. DCBM, 3:152)

6 Thou also sayest, except we repent we shall perish. How knowest thou the thought and intent of our hearts? How knowest thou that we have cause to repent? How knowest thou that we are not a <sup>a</sup>righteous people? Behold, we have built <sup>b</sup>sanctuaries, and we do assemble ourselves together to worship <sup>c</sup>God. We do believe that God will save all men.

7 Now Aaron said unto him: Believest thou that the Son of God shall come to redeem mankind from their sins? (The religion of the Nehors first removed the existence of God and the belief in Jesus Christ as the Mediator.)

8 And the man said unto him: We do not <sup>a</sup>believe that thou knowest any such thing. We do not believe in these foolish traditions. We do not believe that thou knowest of things to come, (They don’t believe in the principle of revelation.) neither do we believe that thy fathers and also that our fathers did know concerning the things which they spake, of that which is to come.

9 Now Aaron began to open the <sup>a</sup>scriptures unto them concerning the coming of Christ, and also concerning the resurrection of the dead, and that there could be <sup>b</sup>no redemption for mankind <sup>c</sup>save it were through the <sup>d</sup>death and sufferings of Christ, and the atonement of his blood.

10 And it came to pass as he began to expound these things unto them they were angry with him, and began to <sup>a</sup>mock him; and they would not hear the words which he spake.

11 Therefore, when he saw that they would not hear his words, he departed out of their synagogue, and came over to a village which was called Ani-Anti, and there he found Muloki preaching the word unto them; and also Ammah and his brethren. And they contended with many about the word.

12 And it came to pass that they saw that the people would harden their hearts, therefore they departed

and came over into the land of <sup>a</sup>Middoni. And they did preach the word unto many, and <sup>b</sup>few believed on the words which they taught.

13 Nevertheless, Aaron and a certain number of his brethren were taken and cast into <sup>a</sup>prison, and the remainder of them fled out of the land of Middoni unto the regions round about.

14 And those who were cast into prison <sup>a</sup>suffered many things, and they were delivered by the hand of Lamoni and Ammon, and they were fed and clothed.

15 And they went forth again to declare the word, and thus they were delivered for the first time out of prison; and thus they had suffered.

16 And they went forth whithersoever they were led by the <sup>a</sup>Spirit of the Lord, (Harold B. Lee: “Walk to the edge of the light, and perhaps a few steps into the darkness, and you will find that the light will appear and move ahead of you.” (Boyd K. Packer: *A Watchman on the Tower*, p. 138) Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man. D&C 84:85)) preaching the word of God in every synagogue of the Amalekites, or in every assembly of the Lamanites where they could be admitted.

17 And it came to pass that the Lord began to bless them, insomuch that they brought many to the knowledge of the truth; yea, they did <sup>a</sup>convince many of their sins, and of the traditions of their fathers, which were not correct.

18 And it came to pass that Ammon and Lamoni returned from the land of Middoni to the land of <sup>a</sup>Ishmael, which was the land of their inheritance.

19 And king Lamoni would not suffer that Ammon should serve him, or be his <sup>a</sup>servant.

20 But he caused that there should be <sup>a</sup>synagogues built in the land of Ishmael; and he caused that his people, or the people who were under his reign, should assemble themselves together.

21 And he did rejoice over them, and he did teach them many things. And he did also declare unto them that they were a people who were under him, and that they were a <sup>a</sup>free people, that they were free from the oppressions of the king, his father; for that his father had granted unto him that he might reign over the people who were in the land of Ishmael, and in all the land round about.

22 And he also declared unto them that they might have the <sup>a</sup>liberty of worshiping the Lord their God according to their desires, in whatsoever place they were in, if it were in the land which was under the reign of king Lamoni.

23 And Ammon did preach unto the people of king Lamoni; and it came to pass that he did teach them all things concerning things pertaining to righteousness. And he did exhort them daily, with all diligence; and they gave heed unto his word, and they were <sup>a</sup>zealous for keeping the commandments of God.

## Alma 22

*Aaron teaches Lamoni's father about the creation, the fall of Adam, and the plan of redemption through Christ—The king and all his household are converted—How the land was divided between the Nephites and the Lamanites. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]*

1 NOW, as Ammon was thus teaching the people of Lamoni continually, we will return to the account of Aaron and his brethren; for after he departed from the land of Middoni he was <sup>a</sup>led by the Spirit to the land of Nephi, even to the house of the king which was <sup>b</sup>over all the land <sup>c</sup>save it were the land of Ishmael; and he was the father of Lamoni. (The Lord has a plan, a scheme, a system for the presentation of the gospel and the salvation of his sons and daughters. Those who seek to be in tune with the Infinite have the glorious privilege of participating in that plan, of being a vital part in the blessing of mankind. One day we shall see how very much the Lord was involved in the affairs of the people on this earth, how masterfully and marvelously he has orchestrated the doings, and feelings of his children in order to

bring about the greatest blessing to the greatest number. DCBM, 3:156)

2 And it came to pass that he went in unto him into the king's palace, with his brethren, and bowed himself before the king, and said unto him: Behold, O king, we are the brethren of Ammon, whom thou hast <sup>a</sup>delivered out of <sup>b</sup>prison.

3 And now, O king, if thou wilt spare our lives, we will be thy servants. And the king said unto them: Arise, for I will grant unto you your lives, and I will not suffer that ye shall be my servants; but I will insist that ye shall administer unto me; for I have been somewhat <sup>a</sup>troubled in mind because of the <sup>b</sup>generosity and the greatness of the words of thy brother Ammon; and I desire to know the cause why he has not come up out of Middoni with thee.

4 And Aaron said unto the king: Behold, the Spirit of the Lord has called him another way; he has gone <sup>a</sup>to the land of Ishmael, to teach the people of Lamoni.

5 Now the king said unto them: What is this that ye have said concerning the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, this is the thing which doth trouble me.

6 And also, what is this that Ammon said—<sup>a</sup>If ye will repent ye shall be saved, and if ye will not repent, ye shall be cast off at the last day?

7 And Aaron answered him and said unto him: Believest thou that there is a God? And the king said: I know that the Amalekites say that there is a God, and I have granted unto them that they should build sanctuaries, that they may assemble themselves together to worship him. And if now thou sayest there is a God, behold I will <sup>a</sup>believe.

8 And now when Aaron heard this, his heart began to rejoice, and he said: Behold, assuredly as thou livest, O king, there is a God.

9 And the king said: Is God that <sup>a</sup>Great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem?

10 And Aaron said unto him: Yea, he is that Great Spirit, and he <sup>a</sup>created all things both in heaven and in earth. Believest thou this?

11 And he said: Yea, I believe that the Great Spirit created all things, and I desire that ye should tell me concerning all these things, and I will <sup>a</sup>believe thy words.

12 And it came to pass that when Aaron saw that the king would believe his words, he began from the creation (Creation) of Adam, <sup>a</sup>reading the scriptures (Aaron – and, we would assume, the other Nephite missionaries – had copies of the scriptures which were used for the teaching of the gospel. DCBM, 3:157) unto the king—how God <sup>b</sup>created man after his own image, and that God gave him commandments, and that because of transgression, man had fallen. (Fall)

13 And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the <sup>a</sup>creation of Adam, laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state and also the <sup>b</sup>plan of <sup>c</sup>redemption, which was prepared <sup>d</sup>from the foundation of the world, (The gospel of God the Father, known also as the gospel of Jesus Christ, was the plan of salvation taught and declared by the Eternal Father in the premortal world. DCBM, 3:157) through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name. (Atonement)

14 And since man had <sup>a</sup>fallen he could not <sup>b</sup>merit anything of himself; (We cannot save ourselves. We need the Savior. Herein is one of the great messages in all eternity, but one that unfortunately is little understood even by many who are of the household of faith. We will not be saved in the highest heaven because we earn our way there. We will not be crowned with glory and eternal lives because we worked out our salvation by ourselves. It is as heretical to believe that we are exalted by works as it is to teach that we are saved by grace alone. As important as our works are in evidencing our acceptance of and commitment to Christ the Lord – works such as receiving the ordinances of salvation, performing deeds of kindness and acts of Christian charity, and enduring faithfully to the end – our works will not and cannot save us. It is impossible for any human being to do enough good deeds in this mortal sphere to qualify for life in the celestial kingdom. No, ultimately we are saved not by our works but by his works – the Lord's. Wherefore, Lehi said to his son Jacob, I know that thou are redeemed, because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer. That is to say, before the Father, the Lord Jesus intercedes for us on the basis of his works. "Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father," the Savior urges in a modern

revelation, “who is pleading your cause before him – saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified. What an unusual defense! What an unnatural scene! What a glorious message! The Mediator pleads our cause on the basis of his works – his atonement. What, then, is our role? “Wherefore, Father, he continues, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life. D&C 45:3-5. Truly there is a power in Christ, power not only to create the worlds and divide the seas but also to still the storms of the human heart, to heal the pain of scarred and beaten souls. We must learn to trust in him more, and on man-made solutions less. We must learn to surrender our burdens to him more. We must learn and work to our limits and then be willing to seek that grace or enabling power which will make up the difference, that sacred power which indeed makes all the difference! DCBM, 3:157-58) but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance, and so forth; and that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory; and Aaron did expound all these things unto the king.

15 And it came to pass that after Aaron had expounded these things unto him, the king said: <sup>a</sup>What shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? Yea, what shall I do that I may be <sup>b</sup>born of God, having this wicked spirit <sup>c</sup>rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day? Behold, said he, I will give up <sup>d</sup>all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy.

16 But Aaron said unto him: If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt <sup>a</sup>bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God (and repent), and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the <sup>b</sup>hope which thou desirest.

17 And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did <sup>a</sup>bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried <sup>b</sup>mightily, saying:

18 O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins (For his life to be spared in chapter 18, he offers one half of his kingdom to Ammon. Now he is offering to give away all of his sins to know God.) to know thee, (Ezra Taft Benson: “Each of us must surrender our sins if we are to really know Christ.

We do not know Him until we become like Him. There are some, like this king, who must pray until they, too, have ‘a wicked spirit rooted’ from them so they can find the same joy.” (*Come Unto Christ*, p. 51) Neal A. Maxwell: “[speaking of the process of coming to know God] We also come to have sufficient ‘faith unto repentance,’ thereby becoming willing ‘to give away all [our] sins to know [God]’ (Alma 34:15; 22:18). These may include activities and endeavors that distract and deflect us. Getting used to giving away such onerous things is a necessary first step to prepare us for the giving that constitutes eventual consecration. “...Among some Church members there is, sad to say, a lack of real faith in the living God and in His plan of salvation. This includes the universal need for repentance and remodeling; failure to pay a full tithing; failure to wear the holy temple garments; refusal to work meekly at making a marriage more successful or helping a family to become happier; inordinate resentment of personal trials; trying to serve the Lord without offending the devil or the world; being willing to serve the Lord but only in an advisory capacity; failing to sustain the Brethren; neglecting prayer; neglecting holy scriptures; neglecting parents; neglecting neighbors; neglecting sacrament meetings; neglecting temple attendance; and so on. Of such happiness-draining failures the common cause, at the testing point, is the failure to endure it well. When we stop short, we interrupt the precious process of personal development. “...Many of us are kept from eventual consecration because we mistakenly think that, somehow, by letting our will be swallowed up in the will of God we lose our individuality (see Mosiah 15:7). What we are really worried about, of course, is giving up not self but selfish things-like our roles, our time, our preeminence, and our possessions. No wonder we are instructed by the Savior to lose ourselves (see Luke 9:24). He is only asking us to lose the old self in order to find the new self. It is a question not of one’s losing identity but of finding one’s true identity.



“...The submission of one’s will is placing on God’s altar the only uniquely personal thing one has to place there. The many other things we ‘give’ are actually the things He has already given or loaned to us. However, when we finally submit ourselves by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God’s will, we will really be giving something to Him! It is the only possession which is truly ours to give. Consecration thus constitutes the only unconditional surrender which is also a total victory. (*If Thou Endure It Well*, pp. 44-55) The almost valiant resemble the valiant, except that they show considerably less consecration and measurably more murmuring. They are less settled spiritually and are more distracted by the world. They progress, but do so episodically rather than steadily and pause on plateaus.” (*Men & Women of Christ*, p. 3) Such is the perfect and fair price exacted of all who truly desire to know God. It is much more difficult an offering to make than one of silver and gold. It is an affirmation of the eternal verity that no unclean thing can enter his presence. It places the promise of eternal life in the reach of all. It excuses nothing and rewards all that has been right and good. DCBM, 3:160.) and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. And now when the king had said these words, he was struck <sup>a</sup>as if he were dead. (Similar experience as Lamoni) (Dallin H. Oaks: “Two companion qualities evident in the lives of our pioneers, early and modern, are *unselfishness* and *sacrifice*. Our Utah pioneers excelled at putting ‘the general welfare and community goals over individual gain and personal ambition’ [Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail* (1997), 6]. That same quality is evident in the conversion stories of modern pioneers. Upon receiving a testimony of the truth of the restored gospel, they have unhesitatingly sacrificed all that was required to assure that its blessings will be available to their children and to generations unborn. Some have sold all their property to travel to a temple. Some have lost employment. Many have lost friends. Some have even lost parents and extended family, as new converts have been disowned for their faith. This must be the greatest sacrifice of all” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 100; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 72).)

19 And it came to pass that his servants ran and told the queen all that had happened unto the king. And she came in unto the king; and when she saw him lay as if he were dead, and also Aaron and his brethren standing as though they had been the cause of his fall, she was angry with them, and commanded that her servants, or the servants of the king, should take them and slay them.

20 Now the servants had seen the cause of the king’s fall, therefore they durst not lay their hands on Aaron and his brethren; and they pled with the queen saying: Why commandest thou that we should slay these men, when behold one of them is <sup>a</sup>mightier than us all? Therefore we shall fall before them.

21 Now when the queen saw the fear of the servants she also began to fear exceedingly, lest there should some evil come upon her. And she commanded her servants that they should go and call the people, that they might slay Aaron and his brethren.

22 Now when Aaron saw the determination of the queen, he, also knowing the hardness of the hearts of the people, feared lest that a multitude should assemble themselves together, and there should be a great contention and a disturbance among them; therefore he put forth his <sup>a</sup>hand and raised the king from the earth, and said unto him: Stand. And he stood upon his feet, receiving his strength.

23 Now this was done in the presence of the queen and many of the servants. And when they saw it they greatly marveled, and began to fear. And the king stood forth, and began to <sup>a</sup>minister unto them. And he did minister unto them, insomuch that his <sup>b</sup>whole household were <sup>c</sup>converted unto the Lord.

24 Now there was a multitude gathered together because of the commandment of the queen, and there began to be great murmurings among them because of Aaron and his brethren.

25 But the king stood forth among them and administered unto them. And they were <sup>a</sup>pacified towards Aaron and those who were with him.

26 And it came to pass that when the king saw that the people were pacified, he caused that Aaron and his brethren should stand forth in the midst of the multitude, and that they should preach the word unto them.

27 And it came to pass that the king sent a <sup>a</sup>proclamation throughout all the land, amongst all his people

who were in all his land, who were in all the regions round about, which was bordering even to the sea, on the east and on the <sup>b</sup>west, and which was divided from the land of <sup>c</sup>Zarahemla by a narrow strip of wilderness, which ran from the sea east even to the sea west, and round about on the borders of the seashore, and the borders of the wilderness which was on the north by the land of Zarahemla, through the borders of <sup>d</sup>Manti, by the head of the <sup>e</sup>river Sidon, running from the east towards the west—and thus were the Lamanites and the Nephites divided.

28 Now, the more <sup>a</sup>idle part of the Lamanites lived in the wilderness, and dwelt in tents; and they were spread through the wilderness on the west, in the land of Nephi; yea, and also on the west of the land of Zarahemla, in the borders by the seashore, and on the west in the land of Nephi, in the place of their fathers' first inheritance, and thus bordering along by the seashore.

29 And also there were many Lamanites on the east by the seashore, whither the Nephites had driven them. And thus the Nephites were nearly surrounded by the Lamanites; nevertheless the Nephites had taken possession of all the northern parts of the land bordering on the wilderness, at the head of the river Sidon, from the east to the west, round about on the wilderness side; on the north, even until they came to the land which they called <sup>a</sup>Bountiful.

30 And it bordered upon the land which they called <sup>a</sup>Desolation, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose <sup>b</sup>bones we have spoken, which was discovered by the <sup>c</sup>people of Zarahemla, it being the place of their <sup>d</sup>first landing.

31 And they came from there <sup>a</sup>up into the south wilderness. Thus the <sup>b</sup>land on the northward was called <sup>c</sup>Desolation, and the land on the southward was called Bountiful, it being the wilderness which is filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which had come from the land northward for food.

32 And now, it was only the <sup>a</sup>distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water, there being a small <sup>b</sup>neck of land between the land northward and the land southward. (Sounds like Central America.)

33 And it came to pass that the Nephites had inhabited the land Bountiful, even from the east unto the west sea, and thus the Nephites in their wisdom, with their guards and their armies, had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south, that thereby they should have no more possession on the north, that they might not overrun the land northward.

34 Therefore the Lamanites could have no more possessions only in the land of Nephi, and the wilderness round about. Now this was wisdom in the Nephites—as the Lamanites were an enemy to them, they would not suffer their afflictions on every hand, and also that they might have a country whither they might flee, according to their desires. (President Anthony V. Ivins: “There is a great deal of talk about the geography of the Book of Mormon. Where was the land of Zarahemla? Where was the City of Zarahemla? and other geographic matters. It does not make any difference to us. There has never been anything yet set forth that definitely settles that question. So the Church says we are just waiting until we discover the truth. All kinds of theories have been advanced. I have talked with at least half a dozen men that have found the very place where the City of Zarahemla stood, and notwithstanding the fact that they profess to be Book of Mormon students, they vary a thousand miles apart in the places they have located. We do not offer any definite solution. As you study the Book of Mormon keep these things in mind and do not make definite statements concerning things that have not been proven in advance to be true.” (*Conference Reports*, Apr. 1929, p. 16) Harold B. Lee: “Don't be concerned over Book of Mormon geography. Some say the Hill Cumorah was in southern Mexico (and someone pushed it down still farther) and not in western New York. Well, if the Lord wanted us to know where it was or where Zarahemla was, He'd have given us latitude and longitude, don't you think? And why bother our heads trying to discover with archaeological certainty the geographical locations of the cities of the Book of Mormon like Zarahemla? The witness of the Book of Mormon is not found in the ruins of Central and South America. They may be outward evidences of a people long since disappeared. The

real witness is that which is found in the Book of Mormon itself.” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 156)

35 And now I, after having said this, return again to the account of Ammon and Aaron, Omner and Himni, and their brethren.