

**Come Follow Me Lesson 26**  
**Alma 23-29 Jun 29-Jul 5**

**Alma 23**

The remarkable thing about these Lamanite conversions is that they did not fall away. Often in the Church, various forms of the word *convert* – convert, conversion, converted– are used to refer to one’s joining the Church. Implied in this usage is the idea that the person has been taught the gospel, exercised faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, repented of his or her sins and then joined the Church through the ordinance of baptism. This use of the word implies an event that has occurred in the life of an individual. Though this is not an inappropriate use of the word, it is a *limited* use. As used in holy writ, the word has greater meaning. In the recently published booklet, *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the following is stated regarding conversion: “ ‘To be carnally minded is death,’ declared the Apostle Paul, ‘but to be spiritually minded is life and peace’ (Romans 8:6; see also 2 Nephi 9:39). In our fallen state, we often struggle with temptation, and we sometimes give in to “the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein” (2 Nephi 2:29). To be able to receive the blessing of eternal life, we need to be ‘spiritually minded’ and conquer our unrighteous desires. We need to change. More accurately, we need to *be changed*, or converted, through the power of the Savior’s Atonement and through the power of the Holy Ghost. This process is called conversion. Conversion includes a change in behavior, but it goes beyond behavior; it is a change in our very nature. It is such a significant change that the Lord and His prophets refer to it as a rebirth, a change of heart, and a baptism of fire.” Likewise, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles stated: “We qualify for eternal life through a process of *conversion*. As used here, this word of many meanings signifies not just a convincing but a profound change of nature.” “Conversion is a process, not an event. You become converted as a result of your righteous efforts to follow the Savior. These efforts include exercising *faith* in Jesus Christ, *repenting* of sin, being *baptized*, *receiving* the gift of the Holy Ghost, and *enduring to the end* in faith.” Receiving the Holy Ghost is the beginning of the conversion process. Elder Oaks has observed, “The needed conversion *by* the gospel begins with the introductory experience the scriptures call being “born again” (e.g., Mosiah 27:25; Alma 5:49; John 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:23). In the waters of baptism and by receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, we become the spiritual ‘sons and daughters’ of Jesus Christ, ‘new creatures’ who can ‘inherit the kingdom of God’ (Mosiah 27:25-26).” To continue the process, we must *become* like God. “In teaching the Nephites, the Savior referred to what they must become. He challenged them to repent and be baptized and be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, ‘that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day’ (3 Ne. 27:20). He concluded: ‘Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am’ (3 Ne. 27:27).” *Becoming* is the essence of the process of conversion. “Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts–what we have *done*. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts–what we have *become*. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become.” Therefore, certain qualities characterize those who are “converted unto the Lord.” These are outlined in *True to the Faith*. “*They desire to do good. They do not rebel against the Lord. They share the gospel. They are filled with love.* The power of conversion is one of the most remarkable miracles ever witnessed by mankind. Such a miracle is the greatest sought for by God’s children while in mortality. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles said: “Changing bodies or protecting temples are miracles, but an even greater miracle is a mighty change of heart by a son or daughter of God (see Mosiah 5:2). A change of heart, including new attitudes, priorities, and desires, is greater and more important than any miracle involving the body.” Bruce Satterfield, Meridian Magazine, Lesson 26.

*Religious freedom is proclaimed—The Lamanites in seven lands and cities are converted—They call themselves Anti-Nephi-Lehies and are freed from the curse—The Amalekites and the Amulonites reject the truth. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]*

1 BEHOLD, now it came to pass that the king of the Lamanites sent a <sup>a</sup>proclamation among all his people, that they should not lay their hands on Ammon, or Aaron, or Omner, or Himni, nor either of their brethren who should go forth preaching the word of God, in whatsoever place they should be, in any part of their land.

2 Yea, he sent a decree among them, that they should not lay their hands on them to bind them, or to cast them into prison; neither should they spit upon them, nor smite them, nor cast them out of their <sup>a</sup>synagogues, nor scourge them; neither should they cast stones at them, but that they should have free access to their houses, and also their temples, and their <sup>b</sup>sanctuaries. (The king is not demanding that his people join the church, but that they not molest those who preach the gospel.)

3 And thus they might go forth and preach the word according to their desires, for the king had been converted unto the Lord, and <sup>a</sup>all his <sup>b</sup>household; therefore he sent his proclamation throughout the land unto his people, that the word of God might have no obstruction, but that it might go forth throughout all the land, that his people might be convinced concerning the wicked <sup>c</sup>traditions of their fathers, and that they might be convinced that they were all brethren, and that they ought not to murder, nor to plunder, nor to steal, nor to commit adultery, nor to commit any manner of wickedness. (If we could convert rulers of nations, our missionary work would be easier in those countries.)

4 And now it came to pass that when the king had sent forth this proclamation, that Aaron and his brethren went forth from <sup>a</sup>city to city, and from one house of worship to another, establishing churches (The Church of Jesus Christ administers the gospel; it is the service agency by which the ordinances of salvation and the teachings and revelations of the Master are made available, in an organized and systematic manner, to the people of the covenant. DCBM, 3:163), and consecrating <sup>b</sup>priests and teachers throughout the land among the Lamanites, to preach and to teach the word of God among them; and thus they began to have great success.

5 And <sup>a</sup>thousands were brought to the knowledge of the Lord, yea, thousands were brought to believe in the <sup>b</sup>traditions of the Nephites; and they were taught the <sup>c</sup>records and prophecies which were handed down even to the present time.

6 And as sure as the Lord liveth, so sure as many as believed, or as many as were brought to the knowledge of the truth, through the preaching of Ammon and his brethren, according to the spirit of revelation and of prophecy, and the power of God working <sup>a</sup>miracles in them (To mend a broken limb, to rid a body of disease, to raise the dead – all these are miracles indeed, yet miracles of a lesser order than the miracles of cleansing a soul from sin, breathing the breath of spiritual life into the soul previously dead to the things of the Spirit, planting faith where there had been no faith, evoking righteousness where there had been none. Such are the great miracles that the gospel works upon people’s hearts and souls. DCBM, 3:165) —yea, I say unto you, as the Lord liveth, as many of the Lamanites as believed in their preaching, and were <sup>b</sup>converted unto the Lord, <sup>c</sup>never did fall away. (True conversion is not a guarantee of perfection so much as a longing for perfection. In his wonderful book, *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis tells of a group of sinners from hell who take a sight-seeing trip to heaven. All of them have their attachments to sin, and their self-imposed and self-sustaining weaknesses, and all of them, when they arrive at their heavenly destination, are invited to remain. All they must do to have this opportunity is to give away anything that is more important to them than staying in that celestial sphere. Heaven must be more important to them than any other thing. Among those who receive this invitation is a man with a small red lizard on his shoulder. “It was twitching its tail like a whip and whispering things in his ear.” (P. 98) The man from Hell (Lewis calls them Ghosts) was about to leave, embarrassed by the words of his reptilian companion, when a great, blazing man invited him to remain. “I told this little chap,” (here he indicated the lizard) “that he’d have to be quiet if

he came—which he insisted on doing. Of course his stuff won't do here. I realize that. But he won't stop. I shall just have to go home.” (P. 99) When the angel (Lewis' word again) offers to kill the lizard, the ghost proposes a multitude of excuses, divided by his longing to keep the creature and his longing to be free of its corrupting influences. The issue is the very one facing Lamoni's father and all of us. The lizard is a symbol for sins—our favorite sins, which we must be willing to give away. Again and again the angel asks for permission (as the Father and the Son ask us), to kill the lizard and free the man from the consequences of his sins, a thing that cannot be done without consent of the one making the sacrifice. Finally it happens . . . “Have I your permission?” said the Angel to the Ghost. “I know it will kill me.” “It won't, but supposing it did?” You're right. It would be better to be dead than to live with this creature.” “Then I may?” “Damn and blast you! Go on can't you? Get it over. Do what you like,” bellowed the Ghost . . . The transformation of the Ghost once he had given up the thing that kept him out of heaven was wonderful! For a moment I could make out nothing distinctly. Then I saw, between me and the nearest bush, unmistakably solid but growing every moment solidier, the upper arm and the shoulder of a man. Then, brighter still and stronger, the legs and the hands. The neck and golden head materialized while I watched . . . the actual completing of a man—an immense man . . . not much smaller than the Angel. (Pp. 101, 102) All of us are sinners, and to some degree that reality will probably continue with us until we are out of this mortal tabernacle. But we must be willing to abandon our sins. And when we make mistakes, we must be willing to repent immediately. I do not recollect that I have seen five minutes since I was baptized that I have not been ready to preach a funeral sermon, lay hands on the sick, or to pray in private or in public. I will tell you the secret of this. In all your business transactions, words, and communications, if you commit an overt act, repent of that immediately, and call upon God to deliver you from evil and give you the light of His Spirit. Never do a thing that your conscience, and the light within you, tell you is wrong. Never do a wrong, but do all the good you possibly can. Never do a thing to mar the peaceable influence of the Holy Spirit in you; then whatever you are engaged in whether in business, in the dance, or in the pulpit you are ready to officiate at any time in any of the ordinances of the House of God. If I commit an overt act, the Lord knows the integrity of my heart, and through sincere repentance, He forgives me (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, Vol.12, p.102 p.103) Ted Gibbons, LDS Living, Lesson 26. Two things are worthy of note here, namely the nature of the preaching done by the sons of Mosiah and the depth of the conversions. These two aspects of conversion are inextricably tied. These missionaries did not trifle with the Lamanites; they did not entertain them or seek by sophistry or by manipulation to bring people into the Church. They preached the gospel. They preached creation, fall, and atonement. They preached faith, repentance, and rebirth. They preached Christ. That is, their message was substantive and sacred, and it was presented by the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus the listeners were converted to Christ, not to the missionaries or the other members of the Church, as pleasant and sincere and dedicated as those might be. They were converted to Christ, and thus their testimonies and their lives were built upon the only sure foundation. DCBM, 3:165)

7 For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion (Maybe the weapons of our rebellion are those things that cause us to fight against God. Word of wisdom, evil speaking, profanity, etc. Anything with which we resist the enticings of the Spirit.), that they did not fight against God any more, neither against any of their brethren.

8 Now, these are <sup>a</sup>they who were converted unto the Lord:

9 The people of the Lamanites who were in the land of Ishmael;

10 And also of the people of the Lamanites who were in the land of <sup>a</sup>Middoni;

11 And also of the people of the Lamanites who were in the city of Nephi;

12 And also of the people of the Lamanites who were in the land of <sup>a</sup>Shilom, and who were in the land of Shemlon, and in the city of Lemuel, and in the city of Shimnilom.

13 And these are the names of the cities of the Lamanites which were <sup>a</sup>converted unto the Lord; and these are they that laid down the weapons of their rebellion, yea, all their weapons of war; and they were

all Lamanites.

14 And the Amalekites were not <sup>a</sup>converted, save only one; neither were any of the <sup>b</sup>Amulonites; but they did harden their hearts, and also the hearts of the Lamanites in that part of the land wheresoever they dwelt, yea, and all their villages and all their cities.

15 Therefore, we have named all the cities of the Lamanites in which they did repent and come to the knowledge of the truth, and were converted.

16 And now it came to pass that the king and those who were converted were desirous that they might have a name, that thereby they might be distinguished from their brethren; therefore the king consulted with Aaron and many of their priests, concerning the name that they should take upon them, that they might be distinguished.

17 And it came to pass that they called their names <sup>a</sup>Anti-Nephi-Lehies; (It is not clear exactly why they called themselves Anti-Nephi-Lehies. Viewing the word *anti* as meaning “opposed to” or “against,” perhaps their action symbolizes a desire to dissolve barriers between Nephites and Lamanites and thus establish peace; their name could in this sense represent their opposition to a Nephite-Lamanite distinction. That is, they wanted neither Nephites nor Lamanites, nor “any manner of –ites.” Another possibility suggests itself. Webster’s Dictionary of 1828 indicates that the word *anti* means “like” or “mirror image of.” In that case anti-Christ would mean not just opposed to Christ but also deceptively similar to Christ, and perhaps the name Anti-Nephi-Lehies would symbolize their desire to be as Nephi and Lehi of old, that is, that they might remember the goodness and faithfulness of their first Nephite prophet leaders. DCBM, 3:165) and they were called by this name and were no more called <sup>b</sup>Lamanites. 18 And they began to be a very <sup>a</sup>industrious people; yea, and they were friendly with the Nephites; therefore, they did <sup>b</sup>open a correspondence with them, and the <sup>c</sup>curse of God did no more follow them.

#### Alma 24

*The Lamanites come against the people of God—The Anti-Nephi-Lehies rejoice in Christ and are visited by angels—They choose to suffer death rather than to defend themselves—More Lamanites are converted. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]*

1 AND it came to pass that the Amalekites and the Amulonites and the Lamanites who were in the land of <sup>a</sup>Amulon, and also in the land of <sup>b</sup>Helam, and who were in the land of <sup>c</sup>Jerusalem, and in fine, in all the land round about, who had not been converted and had not taken upon them the name of <sup>d</sup>Anti-Nephi-Lehi, were stirred up by the Amalekites and by the Amulonites to anger against their brethren.

2 And their hatred became exceedingly sore against them, even insomuch that they began to rebel against their king, insomuch that they would not that he should be their king; therefore, they took up arms against the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi.

3 Now the king conferred the kingdom upon his son, and he called his name Anti-Nephi-Lehi.

4 And the king died in that selfsame year that the Lamanites began to make preparations for war against the people of God.

5 Now when Ammon and his brethren and all those who had come up with him saw the preparations of the Lamanites to destroy their brethren, they came forth to the land of Midian, and there Ammon met all his brethren; and from thence they came to the land of Ishmael that they might hold a <sup>a</sup>council with Lamoni and also with his brother Anti-Nephi-Lehi, what they should do to defend themselves against the Lamanites.

6 Now there was not one soul among all the people who had been converted unto the Lord that would take up arms against their brethren; nay, they would not even make any preparations for war; yea, and also their king commanded them that they should not.

7 Now, these are the words which he said unto the people concerning the matter: I thank my God, my beloved people, that our great God has in goodness sent these our brethren, the Nephites, unto us to

preach unto us, and to convince us of the <sup>a</sup>traditions of our wicked fathers.

8 And behold, I thank my great God that he has given us a portion of his Spirit to soften our hearts, that we have <sup>a</sup>opened a correspondence with these brethren, the Nephites.

9 And behold, I also thank my God, that by opening this correspondence we have been convinced of our <sup>a</sup>sins, and of the many murders which we have committed. (We do know that there are murders committed by Gentiles for which they at least can repent, be baptized, and receive a remission of their sins. Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 231)

10 And I also thank my God, yea, my great God, that he hath granted unto us that we might repent of these things, and also that he hath <sup>a</sup>forgiven us of those our many sins and murders (Because of the false traditions of their fathers, before their conversion these Lamanites had taken life in unrighteous wars. Though such needless killing is a sin of the gravest magnitude, it is not the same as the willful and premeditated taking of life that, in the United States system of jurisprudence, is called first-degree murder; or that is spoken of in the scriptures as being “sin unto death”, meaning that its perpetrators cannot, even through repentance, obtain a glory greater than that of the teledstial kingdom in the worlds to come. DCBM, 3:167-68) which we have committed, and taken away the <sup>b</sup>guilt from our hearts, through the merits of his Son.

11 And now behold, my brethren, since it has been all that we could do, (as we were the most lost of all mankind) to repent of all our sins and the many murders which we have committed, and to get God to <sup>a</sup>take them away from our hearts, for it was all we could do to repent sufficiently before God that he would take away our stain—

12 Now, my best beloved brethren, since God hath taken away our stains, and our swords have become bright, then let us stain our swords no more with the blood of our brethren.

13 Behold, I say unto you, Nay, let us retain (In this context, “retain” is used in the sense of holding back. They are not “retaining” their swords in the sense of maintaining possession, but rather they were restraining them from use.) our swords that they be not stained with the blood of our brethren; for perhaps, if we should stain our swords <sup>a</sup>again they can no more be <sup>b</sup>washed bright through the blood of the Son of our great God, which shall be shed for the atonement of our sins.

14 And the great God has had mercy on us, and made these things known unto us that we might not perish; yea, and he has made these things known unto us beforehand, because he loveth our <sup>a</sup>souls as well as he loveth our children; therefore, in his mercy he doth visit us by his angels, that the <sup>b</sup>plan of salvation might be made known unto us as well as unto future generations.

15 Oh, how merciful is our God! And now behold, since it has been as much as we could do to get our stains taken away from us, and our swords are made bright, let us <sup>a</sup>hide them away that they may be kept bright, as a testimony to our God at the last day, or at the day that we shall be brought to stand before him to be judged, that we have not stained our swords in the blood of our brethren since he imparted his word unto us and has made us <sup>b</sup>clean thereby.

16 And now, my brethren, if our brethren seek to destroy us, behold, we will hide away our swords, yea, even we will bury them deep in the earth, that they may be kept bright, as a testimony that we have never used them, at the last day; and if our brethren destroy us, behold, we shall <sup>a</sup>go to our God and shall be saved.

17 And now it came to pass that when the king had made an end of these sayings, and all the people were assembled together, they took their swords, and all the weapons which were used for the shedding of man’s blood, and they did <sup>a</sup>bury them up deep in the earth. (“It is entirely possible that this interesting incident could have served as the source of the ‘bury-the-hatchet’ tradition of showing peace, which was a common practice among some of the tribes of American Indians when Columbus and other white men came to their lands.” (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 210) Spencer J. Condie: “Following Nephi’s counsel to ‘liken all scriptures unto us,’ we can use the conversion of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies as a metaphor for our own lives. When we become truly converted, the testimony of our conversion may well be borne in our burying deep in the earth our sharp tongues in

lieu of sharp swords. Our post-conversion sanitary landfill might also be used to discard our hot tempers, our evil speech patterns, our penchant for off-color jokes, our ethnic epithets, our greediness, unkindness, and lack of compassion.” (*Your Agency: Handle With Care*, p. 140))

18 And this they did, it being in their view a testimony to God, and also to men, that they <sup>a</sup>never would use weapons again for the shedding of man’s blood; and this they did, vouching and <sup>b</sup>covenanting with God, that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would <sup>c</sup>give up their own lives; and rather than take away from a brother they would give unto him; and rather than spend their days in idleness they would labor abundantly with their hands.

19 And thus we see that, (Whenever you read “And thus we see,” Mormon doesn’t want us to miss the point.) when these Lamanites were brought to <sup>a</sup>believe and to know the truth, they were <sup>b</sup>firm, and would suffer even unto death rather than commit sin (In the play, *A Man for All Seasons*, Sir Thomas Moore, who would soon have his head removed because of a refusal to compromise his principles, said, When a man takes an oath, he’s holding his own self in his own hands, like water, and if he opens his fingers then—he needn’t hope to find himself again (p. 81).); and thus we see that they buried their weapons of peace, or they buried the weapons of war, for peace. (Some have attempted to extrapolate from this instance that this is the course – a course of conscientious objection – that ought to be followed by those of the household of faith in all instances in which their lives and liberties are threatened by evil forces. But the larger context of this instance does not justify such an idea. As the story yet unfolds, it will be necessary for the Anti-Nephi-Lehies to abandon their lands and move in a body to that land of Jershon where they can be protected by the Nephites. It will also be necessary for their sons, who have not entered into the covenant that the Anti-Nephi-Lehies have made, to take up arms “to protect the Nephites and themselves from bondage.” Eventually, men and women must learn the lesson of the ages, a lesson stressed by Mormon just prior to his death, a message he could offer with over a thousand years of Nephite perspective before him: “Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and delight no more in the shedding of blood, and take them not again, save it be that God shall command you. Mormon 7:4. DCBM, 3:170)

20 And it came to pass that their brethren, the Lamanites, made preparations for war, and came up to the land of Nephi for the purpose of destroying the king, and to place <sup>a</sup>another in his stead, and also of destroying the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi out of the land.

21 Now when the people saw that they were coming against them they went out to meet them, and <sup>a</sup>prostrated themselves before them to the earth, and began to call on the name of the Lord; and thus they were in this attitude when the Lamanites began to fall upon them, and began to slay them with the sword.

22 And thus without meeting any resistance, they did slay a <sup>a</sup>thousand and five of them; and we know that they are blessed, for they have gone to dwell with their God.

23 Now when the Lamanites saw that their brethren would not flee from the sword, neither would they turn aside to the right hand or to the left, but that they would lie down and <sup>a</sup>perish, and <sup>b</sup>praised God even in the very act of perishing under the sword—

24 Now when the Lamanites saw this they did <sup>a</sup>forbear from slaying them; and there were many whose hearts had <sup>b</sup>swollen in them for those of their brethren who had fallen under the sword, for they repented of the things which they had done.

25 And it came to pass that they threw down their weapons of war, and they would not take them again, for they were stung for the murders which they had committed; and they came down even as their brethren, relying upon the mercies of those whose arms were lifted to slay them.

26 And it came to pass that the people of God were joined that day by more than the number who had been slain; and those who had been slain were righteous people, therefore we have no reason to doubt but what they were <sup>a</sup>saved. (When righteous people die, we have no reason to doubt but that they are saved. That is, they are heirs of the celestial kingdom. When the righteous (those true to their gospel covenants) pass from this life to the next, they “are received into a state of happiness, which is called

paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow. (Alma 40:12). Since they have kept their second estate, the eternal promise is that they “shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.” Abraham 3:26. Given, then, that there is no apostasy in paradise, all who obtain that station have the sure promise of celestial glory in the day of resurrection. DCBM, 3:171)

27 And there was not a wicked man slain among them; but there were more than a thousand brought to the knowledge of the truth; thus we see (Here’s another Mormon point.) that the Lord worketh in many <sup>a</sup>ways to the salvation of his people.

28 Now the greatest number of those of the Lamanites who slew so many of their brethren were Amalekites and Amulonites, the greatest number of whom were after the <sup>a</sup>order of the <sup>b</sup>Nehors.

29 Now, among those who joined the people of the Lord, there were <sup>a</sup>none who were Amalekites or Amulonites, or who were of the order of Nehor, but they were actual descendants of Laman and Lemuel.

30 And thus we can plainly discern, (Mormon’s point.) that after a people have been once <sup>a</sup>enlightened by the <sup>b</sup>Spirit of God, and have had great <sup>c</sup>knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness, and then have <sup>d</sup>fallen away into sin and transgression, they become more <sup>e</sup>hardened, and thus their state becomes <sup>f</sup>worse than though they had never known these things. (Joseph Smith: “Strange as it may appear at first thought, yet it is no less strange than true, that notwithstanding all the professed determination to live godly, apostates after turning from the faith of Christ, unless they have speedily repented, have sooner or later fallen into the snares of the wicked one, and have been left destitute of the Spirit of God, to manifest their wickedness in the eyes of multitudes. From apostates the faithful have received the severest persecutions. Judas was rebuked and immediately betrayed his Lord into the hands of his enemies, because Satan entered into him. There is a superior intelligence bestowed upon such as obey the Gospel with full purpose of heart, which, if sinned against, the apostate is left naked and destitute of the Spirit of God, and he is, in truth, nigh unto cursing, and his end is to be burned. When once that light which was in them is taken from them, they become as much darkened as they were previously enlightened, and then, no marvel, if all their power should be enlisted against the truth, and they, Judas like, seek the destruction of those who were their greatest benefactors.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 67.) “After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil—the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 358) Joseph Fielding Smith: “The testimony of the Spirit is so great, and the impressions and revelations of divine truth so forcefully revealed that there comes to the recipient a conviction of the truth that he cannot forget. Therefore, when a person once enlightened by the Spirit so that he receives knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh, then turns away and fights the Lord and his work, he does so against the light and testimony he has received by the power of God. Therefore, he has resigned himself to evil knowingly. Therefore Jesus said there is no forgiveness for such a person.” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 4, p. 92) Neal A. Maxwell: “Then there are the dissenters who leave the Church, either formally or informally, but who cannot leave it alone. Usually anxious to please worldly galleries, they are critical or at least condescending towards the Brethren. They not only seek to steady the ark but also on occasion give it a hard shove! Often having been taught the same true doctrines as the faithful, they have nevertheless moved in the direction of dissent (see Alma 47:36). They have minds hardened by pride (see Daniel 5:20).” (*Men and Women of Christ*, p. 4) “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))

## Alma 25

*Lamanite aggressions spread—The seed of the priests of Noah perish as Abinadi prophesied—Many Lamanites are converted and join the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi—They believe in Christ and keep the law of Moses. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]*

- 1 AND behold, now it came to pass that those Lamanites were more angry because they had slain their brethren; therefore they swore vengeance upon the Nephites; and they did <sup>a</sup>no more attempt to slay the people of <sup>b</sup>Anti-Nephi-Lehi at that time.
- 2 But they took their armies and went over into the borders of the land of Zarahemla, and fell upon the people who were in the land of Ammonihah and <sup>a</sup>destroyed them.
- 3 And after that, they had <sup>a</sup>many battles with the Nephites, in the which they were driven and slain.
- 4 And among the Lamanites who were slain were almost all the <sup>a</sup>seed of Amulon and his brethren, who were the priests of Noah, and they were slain by the hands of the Nephites;
- 5 And the remainder, having fled into the east wilderness, and having usurped the power and <sup>a</sup>authority over the Lamanites, caused that many of the Lamanites should <sup>b</sup>perish by fire because of their belief—
- 6 For many of <sup>a</sup>them, after having suffered much loss and so many afflictions, began to be stirred up in remembrance of the <sup>b</sup>words which Aaron and his brethren had preached to them in their land; therefore they began to disbelieve the <sup>c</sup>traditions of their fathers, and to believe in the Lord, and that he gave great power unto the Nephites; and thus there were many of them converted in the wilderness.
- 7 And it came to pass that those rulers who were the remnant of the children of <sup>a</sup>Amulon caused that they should be put to <sup>b</sup>death, yea, all those that believed in these things.
- 8 Now this martyrdom caused that many of their brethren should be stirred up to anger; and there began to be contention in the wilderness; and the Lamanites began to <sup>a</sup>hunt the seed of Amulon and his brethren and began to slay them; and they fled into the east wilderness.
- 9 And behold they are hunted at this day by the Lamanites. Thus the words of Abinadi were brought to pass, which he said concerning the seed of the priests who caused that he should suffer death by fire.
- 10 For he said unto them: What ye shall <sup>a</sup>do unto me shall be a type of things to come.
- 11 And now Abinadi was the first that suffered <sup>a</sup>death by fire because of his belief in God; now this is what he meant, that many should suffer death by fire, according as he had suffered.
- 12 And he said unto the priests of Noah that their seed should cause many to be put to death, in the like manner as he was, and that they should be scattered abroad and slain, even as a sheep having no shepherd is driven and slain by wild beasts; and now behold, these words were verified, for they were driven by the Lamanites, and they were hunted, and they were smitten.
- 13 And it came to pass that when the Lamanites saw that they could not overpower the Nephites they



returned again to their own land; and many of them came over to dwell in the land of <sup>a</sup>Ishmael and the land of Nephi, and did join themselves to the people of God, who were the people of <sup>b</sup>Anti-Nephi-Lehi. 14 And they did also <sup>a</sup>bury their weapons of war, according as their brethren had, and they began to be a righteous people; and they did walk in the ways of the Lord, and did observe to keep his commandments and his statutes.

15 Yea, and they did keep the law of Moses; for it was expedient that they should keep the law of Moses as yet, for it was not all fulfilled. But notwithstanding the <sup>a</sup>law of Moses, they did look forward to the coming of Christ, considering that the law of Moses was a <sup>b</sup>type of his coming, and believing that they must keep those <sup>c</sup>outward <sup>d</sup>performances until the time that he should be revealed unto them.

16 Now they did not suppose that <sup>a</sup>salvation came by the <sup>b</sup>law of Moses; but the law of Moses did serve to strengthen their faith in Christ; and thus they did retain a <sup>c</sup>hope through faith, unto eternal salvation, relying upon the spirit of prophecy, which spake of those things to come. (John Taylor: “So firm a foundation having been laid for the faith of the Nephite people, we find that in every period of their history they retained their reverence for the law of Moses, though disputations sometimes arose, by reason of iniquity, with regard to its symbolism or its saving quality. The apostates, who separated themselves from the Church, occasionally fell into the grievous error of exalting the law above the Gospel, and, whilst maintaining its divine origin, they ignored its typical value and denied that it was a preparatory system leading to a higher, holier and more perfect law; they refused to recognize it as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ.” (*Mediation and Atonement*, chapter 14))

17 And now behold, Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and Himni, and their brethren did rejoice exceedingly, for the success which they had had among the Lamanites, seeing that the Lord had granted unto them according to their <sup>a</sup>prayers, (The content of their prayers is described in Alma 17: ‘...they fasted much and 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 instrument in the hands of God to bring, if it were possible, their brethren, the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth, to the knowledge of the baseness of the traditions of their fathers, which were not correct.’ (Alma 17:9)) and that he had also verified his word unto them in every particular.

## Alma 26

*Ammon glories in the Lord—The faithful are strengthened by the Lord and are given knowledge—By faith men may bring thousands of souls unto repentance—God has all power and comprehendeth all things. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]*

1 AND now, these are the words (Missionary report) of Ammon to his brethren, which say thus: My brothers and my brethren, behold I say unto you, how great reason have we to rejoice; for could we have supposed when we <sup>a</sup>started from the land of Zarahemla that God would have granted unto us such great blessings? (The Lord is able to bless us with things which exceed our comprehension. We might imagine the greatest of blessings, but he is still capable of exceeding our most excellent expectations. These blessings may be realized in mortality or in the hereafter, but Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Cor 2:9). Stephen L. Richards: “I think that is a solemn thought for all of us, and I trust that as we ponder it we shall all decide, as I have reason to believe we will, that we will aspire to the highest ideals, to the loftiest stations attainable with this holy power that God has given to us. If we aspire to attain that exaltation, work for it consciously, serve faithfully, keeping the commandments, our rewards will exceed even our fondest expectations. Of that I am convinced.” (Conference Report, Apr. 1959, p. 86))

2 And now, I ask, what great blessings has he bestowed upon us? Can ye tell?

3 Behold, I answer for you; for our brethren, the Lamanites, were in darkness, yea, even in the darkest abyss, but behold, how <sup>a</sup>many of them are brought to behold the marvelous light of God! And this is the

blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made <sup>b</sup>instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work.

4 Behold, <sup>a</sup>thousands of them do rejoice, and have been brought into the fold of God.

5 Behold, the <sup>a</sup>field was ripe, and blessed are ye, for ye did thrust in the <sup>b</sup>sickle, and did reap with your might, yea, all the day long did ye labor; and behold the number of your <sup>c</sup>sheaves! And they shall be gathered into the garners, that they are not wasted.

6 Yea, they shall not be beaten down by the storm at the last day; yea, neither shall they be harrowed up by the whirlwinds; but when the <sup>a</sup>storm cometh they shall be gathered together in their place, that the storm cannot penetrate to them; yea, neither shall they be driven with fierce winds whithersoever the enemy listeth to carry them.

7 But behold, they are in the hands of the Lord of the <sup>a</sup>harvest, and they are his; and he will <sup>b</sup>raise them up at the last day. (Resurrection)

8 <sup>a</sup>Blessed be the name of our God; let us <sup>b</sup>sing to his praise, yea, let us give <sup>c</sup>thanks to his holy name, for he doth work righteousness forever.

9 For if we had not come up out of the land of Zarahemla, these our dearly beloved brethren, who have so dearly beloved us, would still have been racked with <sup>a</sup>hatred against us, yea, and they would also have been <sup>b</sup>strangers to God.

10 And it came to pass that when Ammon had said these words, his brother Aaron rebuked him, saying: Ammon, I fear that thy joy doth carry thee away unto boasting.

11 But Ammon said unto him: I do not <sup>a</sup>boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, my <sup>b</sup>joy is full (Neal A. Maxwell: “When we reach a point of consecration, our afflictions will be swallowed up in the joy of Christ. It does not mean we won’t have afflictions, but they will be put in a perspective that permits us to deal with them. With our steady pursuit of joy and with each increasing measure of righteousness, we will experience one more drop of delight—one drop after another—until, in the words of a prophet, ‘our hearts are brim with joy.’ At last, the soul’s cup finally runs over! (Brim with Joy, p. 13.)), yea, my heart is brim with <sup>c</sup>joy, and I will rejoice in my God. (Bruce R. McConkie: “Boasting is of two kinds: either righteous, or unrighteous; either in the arm of flesh, or in the Lord and his gracious goodness and power. ‘He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,’ Paul said in summing up a sermon on boasting, ‘For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.’ (2 Cor. 10:7-18; Ps. 44:8.) Ammon spoke similarly: ‘I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God. Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things. Therefore, let us glory, yea, we will glory in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice for our joy is full; yea, we will praise our God forever. Behold, who can glory too much in the Lord?’ (Alma 26:8-16, 35.) Boasting in the arm of flesh, one of the commonest of all sins among worldly people, is a gross evil; it is a sin born of pride, a sin that creates a frame of mind which keeps men from turning to the Lord and accepting his saving grace. When a man engages in self exultation because of his riches, his political power, his worldly learning, his physical prowess, his business acumen, or even his works of righteousness, he is not in tune with the Spirit of the Lord. Salvation itself comes by the grace of God, ‘Not of works,’ that is not of the performances and outward display of the law, ‘lest any man should boast.’ (Eph. 2:4-22; Rom. 3:27.) As King Benjamin asked, after explaining the goodness of God and the comparative nothingness of men, ‘Of what have ye to boast?’ (Mosiah 2: 17-26.) Even when the righteous glory in the Lord, certain very definite restrictions attend their godly boasting. The elders are to proclaim against evil spirits, but ‘Not with railing accusation, that ye be not overcome, neither with boasting nor rejoicing, lest you be seized therewith.’ (D. & C. 50:32-33.) Spiritual gifts are poured out abundantly upon the true saints. ‘But a commandment I give unto them,’ the Lord says, ‘that they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation.’ (D. & C. 84:73.) ‘Talk not of judgments, neither boast of faith nor of mighty works.’ (D. &

C. 105:24.)” (Mormon Doctrine, p. 93))

**PREACH MY GOSPEL: HUMILITY: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMBLE?** 2 Nephi 9:28-29; Mosiah 4:11-12; Alma 5:26-29; Alma 26:12; Matthew 26:39; Topical Guide: “Humility, Humble”. **WHAT BLESSINGS DO YOU RECEIVE WHEN YOU HUMBLE YOURSELF?** Alma 32:1-16; Ether 12:27; D&C 12:8; D&C 67:10; D&C 112:10; D&C 136:32-33; Matthew 23:12; **HOW CAN YOU RECOGNIZE PRIDE IN YOURSELF?** 1 Nephi 15:7-11; 1 Nephi 16:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-4; Proverbs 13:10; Proverbs 15:10; Proverbs 28:25. 12 Yea, I know that I am <sup>a</sup>nothing;

(Wilford Woodruff: “We have no chance to be lifted up in the pride of our hearts with regard to the position we occupy. If the President of the Church or either of his Counselors or of the Apostles, or any other man, feels in his heart that God cannot do without him, and that he is especially important in order to carry on the work of the Lord, he stands upon slippery ground. I heard Joseph Smith say that Oliver Cowdery, who was the second Apostle in this Church, said to him, ‘If I leave this Church it will fall.’ Said he, ‘Oliver, you try it.’ Oliver tried it. He fell; but the Kingdom of God did not. I have been acquainted with other Apostles in my day and time who felt that the Lord could not do without them; but the Lord got along with His work without them. I say to all men--Jew and Gentile, great and small, rich and poor--that the Lord Almighty has power within Himself, and is not dependent upon any man, to carry on His work; but when He does call men to do His work they have to trust in Him.” (G. Homer Durham, *Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, pp. 123-4)) **as to my strength I am weak;** (D&C 35: 13 Wherefore, I call upon the <sup>a</sup>weak things of the world, those who are <sup>b</sup>unlearned and despised, to thrash the <sup>c</sup>nations by the power of my <sup>d</sup>Spirit; 14 And their arm shall be my arm, and I will be their <sup>a</sup>shield and their buckler; and I will gird up their loins, and they shall fight manfully for me; and their <sup>b</sup>enemies shall be under their feet; and I will let <sup>c</sup>fall the <sup>d</sup>sword in their behalf, and by the <sup>e</sup>fire of mine indignation will I preserve them.) **therefore I will <sup>b</sup>not boast of myself, but I will <sup>c</sup>boast of my God, for in his <sup>d</sup>strength I can do all <sup>e</sup>things; yea, behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land, for which we will praise his name forever. (Doctrine of grace.)**

13 Behold, how many thousands of our brethren has he loosed from the pains of <sup>a</sup>hell; and they are brought to <sup>b</sup>sing redeeming love (opposite of pains of hell), and this because of the power of his word which is in us, therefore have we not great reason to rejoice?

14 Yea, we have reason to praise him forever, for he is the Most High God, and has loosed our brethren from the <sup>a</sup>chains of hell.

15 Yea, they were encircled about with everlasting <sup>a</sup>darkness and destruction; but behold, he has brought them into his everlasting <sup>b</sup>light, (opposite of darkness) yea, into everlasting salvation (opposite of destruction); and they are encircled about with the matchless bounty of his love; yea, and we have been instruments in his hands of doing this great and marvelous work.

16 **Therefore, let us <sup>a</sup>glory, yea, we will <sup>b</sup>glory in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice, for our joy is full; yea, we will praise our God forever. Behold, who can glory too much in the Lord? Yea, who can say too much of his great power, and of his <sup>c</sup>mercy, and of his long-suffering towards the children of men? Behold, I say unto you, I cannot say the smallest part which I feel. (Neal A. Maxwell: “We know more than we can tell . . . we know a person's face, and can recognize it among a thousand, indeed among a million. Yet we usually cannot tell how we recognize a face we know. . . . this knowledge cannot be put into words.’ (Michael Polyani, *The Tacit Dimension*, Doubleday Anchor, 1967, pp. 4, 6.) We do ‘know more than we can tell,’ but a disciple has an obligation to increase his communication skills in a way that is consistent with the majesty of the message. Since so much of our time is spent communicating—writing, speaking, listening—we naturally assume it is done well. But our performance level is usually poor, and this can reflect a lack of caring about the quality of our communication skills. Paul urges disciples to be ‘willing to communicate’ as an extra responsibility clearly incumbent on those who are committed.”(A Time To Choose, pp. 73-74) **About some sacred matters, we are forbidden to speak.)****

17 Who could have supposed that our God would have been so merciful as to have snatched us from our awful, sinful, and <sup>a</sup>polluted state?

18 Behold, we went forth even in wrath, with mighty threatenings to <sup>a</sup>destroy his church.

19 Oh then, why did he not consign us to an awful destruction, yea, why did he not let the sword of his justice fall upon us, and doom us to eternal <sup>a</sup>despair?

20 Oh, my soul, almost as it were, fleeth at the thought. Behold, he did not exercise his justice upon us (even when we deserved it), but in his great mercy hath brought us over that everlasting <sup>a</sup>gulf of death and misery, even to the salvation of our souls. (Grace)

21 And now behold, my brethren, what <sup>a</sup>natural man is there that knoweth these things? (Joseph Smith: “There are but a very few beings in the world who understand rightly the character of God. The great majority of mankind do not comprehend anything, either that which is past, or that which is to come, as it respects their relationship to God. They do not know, neither do they understand the nature of that relationship; and consequently they know but little above the brute beast, or more than to eat, drink and sleep. This is all man knows about God or his existence, unless it is given by the inspiration of the Almighty. If a man learns nothing more than to eat, drink and sleep, and does not comprehend any of the designs of God, the beast comprehends the same things. It eats, drinks, sleeps, and knows nothing more about God; yet it knows as much as we, unless we are able to comprehend by the inspiration of Almighty God. If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 343)) I say unto you, there is <sup>b</sup>none that <sup>c</sup>knoweth these things, save it be the penitent.

22 Yea, he that <sup>a</sup>repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good <sup>b</sup>works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the <sup>c</sup>mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be <sup>d</sup>given to <sup>e</sup>reveal things which never have been revealed; yea, and it shall be given unto such to bring thousands of souls to repentance, even as it has been given unto us to bring these our brethren to repentance.

23 Now do ye remember, my brethren, that we said unto our brethren in the land of Zarahemla, we go up to the land of Nephi, to preach unto our brethren, the Lamanites, and they <sup>a</sup>laughed us to scorn?

24 For they said unto us: Do ye suppose that ye can bring the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth? Do ye suppose that ye can convince the Lamanites of the <sup>a</sup>incorrectness of the <sup>b</sup>traditions of their fathers, as <sup>c</sup>stiffnecked a people as they are; whose hearts delight in the <sup>d</sup>shedding of blood; whose days have been spent in the grossest iniquity; whose ways have been the ways of a transgressor from the beginning? Now my brethren, ye remember that this was their language.

25 And moreover they did say: Let us take up arms against them, that we destroy them and their iniquity out of the land, lest they overrun us and destroy us.

26 But behold, my beloved brethren, we came into the wilderness not with the intent to destroy our brethren, but with the intent that perhaps we might save some few of their souls.

27 Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to <sup>a</sup>turn back, behold, the Lord <sup>b</sup>comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with <sup>c</sup>patience thine <sup>d</sup>afflictions, and I will give unto you success. (Ezra Taft Benson: “There are times when you simply have to righteously hang on and outlast the devil until his depressive spirit leaves you. As the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith: ‘thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; And then, if you endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high’ (DC 121:7-8). To press on in noble endeavors, even while surrounded by a cloud of depression, will eventually bring you out on top into the sunshine.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1974 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 290))

28 And now behold, we have come, and been forth amongst them; and we have been patient in our sufferings, and we have suffered every privation; yea, we have traveled from house to house, relying upon the mercies of the world—not upon the mercies of the world alone but upon the mercies of God.

29 And we have entered into their houses and taught them, and we have taught them in their streets; yea, and we have taught them upon their hills; and we have also entered into their temples and their <sup>a</sup>synagogues and taught them; and we have been cast out, and mocked, and spit upon, and smote upon our cheeks; and we have been <sup>b</sup>stoned, and taken and bound with <sup>c</sup>strong cords, and cast into prison; and through the power and wisdom of God we have been delivered again.

30 And we have suffered all manner of afflictions, and all this, that perhaps we might be the means of saving some soul; and we supposed that our <sup>a</sup>joy would be full if perhaps we could be the means of saving some.

31 Now behold, we can look forth and see the <sup>a</sup>fruits of our labors; and are they few? I say unto you, Nay, they are <sup>b</sup>many; yea, and we can witness of their sincerity, because of their love towards their brethren and also towards us.

32 For behold, they had rather <sup>a</sup>sacrifice their lives than even to take the life of their enemy; and they have <sup>b</sup>buried their weapons of war deep in the earth, because of their love towards their brethren.

33 And now behold I say unto you, has there been so great love in all the land? Behold, I say unto you, Nay, there has not, even among the Nephites.

34 For behold, they would take up arms against their brethren; they would not suffer themselves to be slain. But behold how <sup>a</sup>many of these have laid down their lives; and we know that they have gone to their God, because of their love and of their hatred to sin.

35 Now have we not reason to rejoice? Yea, I say unto you, there never were men that had so great reason to rejoice as we, since the world began; yea, and my joy is carried away, even unto boasting in my God; for he has all <sup>a</sup>power, <sup>b</sup>all wisdom, and all understanding (Unless God has power over all things, and was able by his power to control all things, and thereby deliver his creatures who put their trust in him from the power of all beings that might seek their destruction, whether in heaven, on earth, or in hell, men could not be saved. Joseph Smith, Lectures on Faith, 4:12); he comprehendeth all things, and he is a <sup>c</sup>merciful Being (Mercy is not showered promiscuously upon mankind except in the general sense that it is manifest in the creation and peopling of the earth and in the granting of immortality to all men as a free gift. Bruce R. McConkie, MD p. 484. Rather mercy is granted because of the grace, love and condescension of God, as it is with all blessings, to those who comply with the law upon which its receipt is predicated. That law is the law of righteousness; those who sow righteousness reap mercy. There is no promise of mercy to the wicked; rather, as stated in the Ten Commandments, the Lord promises to show mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments. DCBM, 3:184), even unto salvation, to those who will repent and believe on his name.

36 Now if this is <sup>a</sup>boasting, even so will I boast; for this is my life and my light, my joy and my salvation, and my redemption from everlasting wo. Yea, blessed is the name of my God, who has been mindful of this people, who are a <sup>b</sup>branch of the tree of Israel (It appears that Ammon was familiar with the writing of Jacob or Zenos and the allegory of the olive tree.), and has been <sup>c</sup>lost from its body in a strange land (Reference is to the Lamanites, who lost the knowledge of their rightful inheritance through wickedness and rebellion. This is the same sense in which the tribes of Israel are lost in our day – not in the sense that they are hidden in some unknown place trying to find their way back, but rather that they have become temporarily lost as to their identify and thus as to their place in the Master’s fold. They await the shepherds he sends to search them out from among the nations of the earth. DCBM, 3:185); yea, I say, blessed be the name of my God, who has been mindful of us, <sup>d</sup>wanderers in a strange land. (Hugh Nibley: “The Nephites never ceased to think of themselves in those melancholy terms. Five hundred years after Jacob, Alma could write that his people were both blessed and sorrowful in their wandering state. Because of their isolation, he says, God gives them special revelation, and glad tidings ‘are made known to us in plain terms, that we may understand, that we cannot err; and this because of our being wanderers in a strange land; therefore, we are thus highly favored’ (Alma 13:23). God, he says, has been mindful of this people, who are a branch of the tree of Israel, and has been lost from its body in a strange land; yea, I say, blessed be the name of my God, who has been mindful of us, wanderers in a strange land (Alma 26:36).” (An Approach to the Book of Mormon, p. 142))

37 Now my brethren, we see that God is <sup>a</sup>mindful of every <sup>b</sup>people, (There are none to whom the gospel will not go, whether it be in this life or in the next. There are none who cannot obtain the assurance of salvation through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. There are none for whom the atonement of Christ does not bring an everlasting restoration of body and spirit, none who through

worthiness cannot obtain all that the Father has. A theology that promised less would be unworthy of our allegiance, unworthy of our God. DCBM, 3:185) **whatsoever land they may be in** (Hugh Nibley: “It is convenient to imagine all the righteous in one camp and the wicked in another, and this has been the usual and comfortable interpretation of the Book of Mormon—it is the good guys versus the bad guys. But this is exactly what the Book of Mormon tells us to avoid. God plays no favorites. Nephi rebukes his brothers for believing that because they are Jews they are righteous; God does not judge by party, he tells them; a good man is good and a bad one is bad, according to his own behavior: ‘Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of God’ (1 Nephi 17:35). Family and race and nationality account for nothing; ‘God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people’ (Alma 26:37). He numbers them as his own, not as being on one side or the other of a boundary; ‘the Lord doth grant unto all nations . . . to teach his word . . . all that he seeth fit that they should have’ (Alma 29:8)” (*The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, p. 506)); **yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth. Now this is my joy, and my great thanksgiving; yea, and I will give thanks unto my God forever.** Amen.

### Alma 27

*The Lord commands Ammon to lead the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi to safety—Upon meeting Alma, Ammon’s joy exhausts his strength—The Nephites give them the land of Jerushon—They are called the people of Ammon. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]*

1 NOW it came to pass that when those Lamanites who had gone to war against the Nephites had found, after their <sup>a</sup>many struggles to destroy them, that it was in vain to seek their destruction (As long as the Nephite nation was worthy of the protection of the Lord, it was vain for any people or nation to seek its destruction. This is inherent in the concept of a covenant people being granted a promised land. The land is the symbol of the covenant they have made. As long as they honor their covenants, they retain the promise of protection. In the violation of their covenants they forfeit the right to divine protection and no longer have claim upon the land. DCBM, 3:186), they returned again to the land of Nephi.

2 And it came to pass that the Amalekites, because of their loss, were exceedingly angry. And when they saw that they could not seek revenge from the Nephites, they began to <sup>a</sup>stir up the people in anger against their <sup>b</sup>brethren, the people of <sup>c</sup>Anti-Nephi-Lehi; therefore they began again to destroy them.

3 Now this people <sup>a</sup>again refused to take their arms, and they suffered themselves to be slain according to the desires of their enemies.

4 Now when Ammon and his brethren saw this work of destruction among those whom they so dearly beloved, and among those who had so dearly beloved them—for they were treated as though they were angels sent from God to save them from everlasting destruction—therefore, when Ammon and his brethren saw this great work of destruction, they were moved with compassion, and they <sup>a</sup>said unto the king:

5 Let us gather together this people of the Lord, and let us go down to the land of Zarahemla to our brethren the Nephites, and flee out of the hands of our enemies, that we be not destroyed.

6 But the king said unto them: Behold, the Nephites will destroy us, because of the many murders and sins we have committed against them.

7 And Ammon said: I will go and inquire of the Lord, and if he say unto us, go down unto our brethren, will ye go?

8 And the king said unto him: Yea, if the Lord saith unto us go, we will go down unto our brethren, and we will be their slaves until we repair unto them the many murders and sins which we have committed against them.

9 But Ammon said unto him: It is against the law of our brethren, which was established by my father, that there should be any <sup>a</sup>slaves among them; therefore let us go down and rely upon the mercies of our

brethren.

10 But the king said unto him: Inquire of the Lord, and if he saith unto us go, we will go; otherwise we will perish in the land.

11 And it came to pass that Ammon went and inquired of the Lord, and the Lord said unto him:

12 Get this people <sup>a</sup>out of this land, that they perish not; for Satan has great hold on the hearts of the Amalekites, who do stir up the Lamanites to anger against their brethren to slay them; therefore get thee out of this land; and blessed are this people in this generation, for I will <sup>b</sup>preserve them.

13 And now it came to pass that Ammon went and told the king all the words which the Lord had said unto him.

14 And they gathered together all their people, yea, all the people of the Lord, and did gather together all their flocks and herds, and departed out of the land, and came into the wilderness which divided the land of Nephi from the land of Zarahemla, and came over (may have crossed a higher elevation) near the borders of the land. (Ammon, as the prophet-leader of this people, having in a spiritual sense led them to God, now leads them to a temporal salvation, a land of safety. In so doing he becomes a rather remarkable type for the Messiah, who will also first offer the doctrines of the kingdom and eventually lead all who have embraced those doctrines to a place of safety. Similarly, as we are about to read, these people will be given Ammon's name even as all the faithful must be given the name of our Lord and Master. DCBM, 3:187)

15 And it came to pass that Ammon said unto them: Behold, I and my brethren will go forth into the land of Zarahemla, and ye shall remain here until we return; and we will <sup>a</sup>try the hearts of our brethren, whether they will that ye shall come into their land.

16 And it came to pass that as Ammon was going forth into the land, that he and his brethren met Alma, over in the <sup>a</sup>place of which has been spoken; and behold, this was a joyful meeting.

17 Now the <sup>a</sup>joy of Ammon was so great even that he was full; yea, he was swallowed up in the joy of his God, even to the <sup>b</sup>exhausting of his strength; and he fell <sup>c</sup>again to the earth. (A fullness of joy is found only among resurrected, exalted beings... In mortality men experience joy only in righteousness – that is, in obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel – the gospel being the “glad tidings of great joy.” Joy is characteristic of the presence of the Holy Ghost, from whom it comes. It is experienced only when the Spirit is present, and that most acutely in the manifestation that our sins have been remitted, in the knowledge that our path is pleasing to and approved of God, and in our helping others find the way to light and salvation. DCBM, 3:188-89)

18 Now was not this <sup>a</sup>exceeding joy? Behold, this is joy which none receiveth save it be the truly penitent and humble seeker of <sup>b</sup>happiness.

19 Now the joy of Alma in meeting his <sup>a</sup>brethren was truly great, and also the joy of Aaron, of Omner, and Himni; but behold their joy was not that to exceed their strength.

20 And now it came to pass that Alma conducted his brethren back to the land of Zarahemla; even to his <sup>a</sup>own house. And they went and told the <sup>b</sup>chief judge all the things that had happened unto them in the land of Nephi, among their brethren, the Lamanites.

21 And it came to pass that the chief judge sent a proclamation throughout all the land, desiring the voice of the people concerning the admitting their brethren, who were the people of <sup>a</sup>Anti-Nephi-Lehi.

22 And it came to pass that the voice of the people came, saying: Behold, we will give up the <sup>a</sup>land of <sup>b</sup>Jershon, which is on the east by the sea, which joins the land Bountiful, which is on the south of the land Bountiful; and this land Jershon is the land which we will give unto our brethren for an inheritance.

23 And behold, we will set our armies between the land Jershon and the land Nephi, that we may <sup>a</sup>protect our brethren in the land Jershon; and this we do for our brethren, on account of their fear to take up arms against their brethren lest they should commit sin; and this their great fear came because of their sore repentance which they had, on account of their many murders and their awful wickedness.

24 And now behold, this will we do unto our brethren, that they may inherit the land Jershon; and we will guard them from their enemies with our armies, on condition that they will give us a <sup>a</sup>portion of

their substance to assist us that we may maintain our armies. (The Nephites are gracious to these Lamanites who had slain some of their friends and family members. They forgive them because of their true repentance.)

25 Now, it came to pass that when Ammon had heard this, he returned to the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, and also Alma with him, into the wilderness, where they had pitched their tents, and made known unto them all these things. And Alma also related unto them his <sup>a</sup>conversion, with Ammon and Aaron, and his brethren.

26 And it came to pass that it did cause great joy among them. And they went down into the land of Jershon, and took possession of the land of Jershon; and they were called by the Nephites the <sup>a</sup>people of Ammon; therefore they were distinguished by that name ever after.

27 And they were among the people of Nephi, and also numbered among the people who were of the church of God. And they were also distinguished for their <sup>a</sup>zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly <sup>b</sup>honest and upright in all things (Brigham Young: “We need to learn, practice, study, know and understand how angels live with each other. When this community comes to the point to be perfectly honest and upright, you will never find a poor person; none will lack, all will have sufficient. Every man, woman, and child will have all they need just as soon as they all become honest. When the majority of the community are dishonest, it maketh the honest portion poor, for the dishonest serve and enrich themselves at their expense.” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. by John A. Widstoe, p. 232)); and they were <sup>c</sup>firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end.

28 And they did look upon shedding the blood of their brethren with the greatest abhorrence; and they never could be prevailed upon to take up arms against their brethren; and they never did look upon death with any degree of terror, for their hope and views of Christ and the resurrection; therefore, death was swallowed up to them by the victory of Christ over it. (Russell M. Nelson: The only way to take sorrow out of death is to take love out of life... As seedlings of God, we barely blossom on earth; we fully flower in heaven... Think of the alternative [to death]. If all sixty-nine billion people who have ever lived on earth were still here, imaging the traffic jam!... Scriptures teach that death is essential to happiness: Our limited perspective would be enlarged if we could witness the reunion on the other side of the veil, when doors of death open to those returning home... We need not look upon death as an enemy... I know by experiences too sacred to relate that those who have gone before are not strangers to leaders of this Church. To us and to you, our loved ones may be just as close as the next room – separated only by the doors of death. *Ensign*, May 1992, 72-74)

29 Therefore, they would suffer <sup>a</sup>death in the most aggravating and distressing manner which could be inflicted by their brethren, before they would take the sword or cimenter to smite them.

30 And thus they were a zealous and beloved people, a highly favored people of the Lord.

## Alma 28

*The Lamanites are defeated in a tremendous battle—Tens of thousands are slain—The wicked are consigned to a state of endless woe; the righteous attain a never-ending happiness. [About 76 B.C.]*

1 AND now it came to pass that after the people of Ammon were established in the land of <sup>a</sup>Jershon, and a church also established (The Lord’s house being a house of order, whatever organization is necessary to teach and administer the ordinances of the gospel has, from the days of Adam, always been established among the Lord’s people. Among all peoples and in all dispensations the Saints have met together to edify and instruct one another. DCBM, 3:192) in the land of Jershon, and the armies of the Nephites were set round about the land of Jershon, yea, in all the borders round about the land of Zarahemla; behold the armies of the Lamanites had followed their brethren into the wilderness.

2 And thus there was a tremendous battle; yea, even such an one as never had been known among all the people in the land from the time Lehi left Jerusalem; yea, and tens of thousands of the Lamanites were



slain and scattered abroad.

3 Yea, and also there was a tremendous slaughter among the people of Nephi; nevertheless, the Lamanites were <sup>a</sup>driven and scattered, and the people of Nephi returned again to their land. (This was not a standing army, so following the war, they returned to their own lands again.)

4 And now this was a time that there was a great <sup>a</sup>mourning and lamentation heard throughout all the land, among all the people of Nephi—

5 Yea, the cry of <sup>a</sup>widows mourning for their husbands, and also of fathers mourning for their sons, and the daughter for the brother, yea, the brother for the father; and thus the cry of mourning was heard among all of them, mourning for their kindred who had been slain. (Since only men are being mourned for, the battles did not occur within the city, but outside the city.)

6 And now surely this was a sorrowful day; yea, a time of solemnity, and a time of much <sup>a</sup>fasting and prayer.

7 And thus endeth the fifteenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi;

8 And <sup>a</sup>this is the account of Ammon and his brethren, their journeyings in the land of Nephi, their sufferings in the land, their sorrows, and their afflictions, and their <sup>b</sup>incomprehensible joy, and the reception and safety of the brethren in the land of Jershon. And now may the Lord, the Redeemer of all men, bless their souls forever.

9 And this is the account of the wars and contentions among the Nephites, and also the wars between the Nephites and the Lamanites; \*and the fifteenth year of the reign of the judges is ended.

10 And from the <sup>a</sup>first year to the fifteenth has brought to pass the destruction of many thousand lives; yea, it has brought to pass an awful scene of bloodshed.

11 And the bodies of many thousands are laid low in the earth, while the bodies of many thousands are <sup>a</sup>moldering in heaps upon the face of the earth; yea, and many thousands are <sup>b</sup>mourning for the loss of their kindred, because they have reason to fear, according to the promises of the Lord, that they are consigned to a state of endless wo. (Endless wo does not mean that intended punishment is of endless duration, but rather that it is God's punishment, and God is endless; therefore he has chosen to call that punishment that comes from him by his name, or endless. This is done to make the warning more express, "that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men" in the hope that it will dissuade them from sin. DCBM, 3:193)

12 While many thousands of others truly <sup>a</sup>mourn for the loss of their kindred, yet they rejoice and exult in the hope, and even know, according to the <sup>b</sup>promises of the Lord, that they are raised to dwell at the right hand of God, in a state of never-ending <sup>c</sup>happiness. (F. Burton Howard: "I once attended a funeral service with Elder M. Russell Ballard. A statement he made there has remained with me to this day. He said, 'life isn't over for a Latter-day Saint until he or she is safely dead, with their testimony still burning brightly.' 'Safely dead'—what a challenging concept. Brothers and sisters, we will not be safe until we have given our hearts to the Lord—until we have learned to do what we have promised." (Ensign, May 1996, p. 28 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 292) D&C 42: 45 Thou shalt <sup>a</sup>live together in <sup>b</sup>love, insomuch that thou shalt <sup>c</sup>weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not <sup>d</sup>hope of a glorious resurrection. 46 And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not <sup>a</sup>taste of <sup>b</sup>death, for it shall be <sup>c</sup>sweet unto them; 47 And they that die not in me, wo unto them, for their death is bitter.)

13 And **thus we see** how great the <sup>a</sup>inequality of man is because of sin and <sup>b</sup>transgression, and the power of the devil, which comes by the cunning <sup>c</sup>plans which he hath devised to ensnare the hearts of men.

14 And **thus we see** the great call of <sup>a</sup>diligence (to serve with all our heart, might, mind and strength.) of men to labor in the vineyards of the Lord; and **thus we see** the great reason of sorrow, and also of rejoicing—sorrow because of death and destruction among men, and joy because of the <sup>b</sup>light of Christ unto life.

\* Verse 9 [76 B.C.].

## Alma 29

*Alma desires to cry repentance with angelic zeal—The Lord grants teachers for all nations—Alma glories in the Lord's work and in the success of Ammon and his brethren. [About 76 B.C.]*

**PREACH MY GOSPEL: WHAT DO THESE SCRIPTURES TEACH ABOUT DECLARING REPENTANCE? Alma 29:1-4; Alma 62:45; D&C 15:6; 16:6; Alma 42:31; D&C 14:8** I O THAT I were an angel, (He is probably wishing he could be like the angel who visited him and brought him the message of salvation. With the Book of Mormon going to every nation of the earth, Alma is in effect speaking as an angel to all peoples. Remember, that in a few chapters Alma disappears and the idea is that he is translated. Maybe he got his wish.) and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the <sup>a</sup>trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people! (Heber J. Grant: "I believe that every Latter-day Saint who has received a testimony of the divinity of the work in which we are engaged has this same feeling that Alma had--a desire that all the world might hear the testimony of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When men and women receive a testimony of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, they are anxious that all the world should have that same knowledge and faith. They are anxious that the gospel should go to every honest soul. And there is no other labor in all the world that brings to a human heart, judging from my own personal experience, more joy, peace and serenity than proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1926, p. 4))

2 Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, (just like the angel that visited him) repentance and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and <sup>a</sup>come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth.

3 But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me. (We need to magnify the callings we've been given.

4 I ought not to harrow up in my desires, the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their <sup>a</sup>desire, (Boyd K. Packer: "There is something important about our deciding that we want to be a good teacher-a good parent. There is something equally important about making that desire known to the Lord. Many of us have the desire, but we keep it to ourselves. An important key is turned when we go through the formality of stating our desires to Him who can grant them." (*Teach Ye Diligently*, p. 14) Neal A. Maxwell: "*Desire* denotes a real longing or craving. Hence righteous desires are much more than passive preferences or fleeting feelings. Of course our genes, circumstances, and environments matter very much, and they shape us significantly. Yet there remains an inner zone in which we are sovereign, unless we abdicate. In this zone lies the essence of our individuality and our personal accountability...Mostly, brothers and sisters, we become the victims of our own wrong desires...Like it or not, therefore, reality requires that we acknowledge our responsibility for our desires...Righteous desires need to be relentless, therefore, because, said President Brigham Young, 'the men and women who desire to obtain seats in the celestial kingdom will find that they must battle every day' (*Journal of Discourses* 11:14). Therefore, true Christian soldiers are more than weekend warriors...Some of our present desires, therefore, need to be diminished and then finally dissolved." (*Ensign*, Nov. 1996, pp. 21-22 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 228)) whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he allotteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, according to their <sup>b</sup>wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction. (Neal A. Maxwell: "...All of this brings us now to the need to examine a doctrine within a doctrine within a doctrine. Within the plan of salvation is the doctrine of premortal existence; we then encounter the delicate but important doctrine of foreordination. The doctrine of foreordination is one of the doctrinal roads 'least traveled by.' Yet it clearly underlines how very long and how perfectly God has loved each of us and known each of us, with our individual needs and capacities. It is so powerful a doctrine, however, that isolated from other doctrines, or mishandled, it

can induce false pride, stoke the fires of fatalism, impact adversely upon agency, cause us to focus on status rather than service, and carry us over into the false doctrine of predestination. ... The truth about foreordination also helps us to taste of the other deep wisdom of Alma: he said we ought to be 'content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto' each of us (Alma 29:3). If, indeed, the things allotted to each of us have been divinely customized, then 'why should I desire more than to perform the work to which I have been called?' (Alma 29:6) So should we regard the dispensation of the fulness of times—even when we face stern challenges and circumstances. 'These are great days!' Our hearts need not fail us. We can be equal to our challenges." (*But For a Small Moment*, pp. 95-101) Henry D. Moyle: "I am sure today in our lives many of us wish that we were something other than we are, thinking likely that their lot is preferable to our own. But Alma said further: Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth. But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish, for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me. (Alma 29:2-3) I believe that we, as fellow workers in the priesthood, might well take to heart the admonition of Alma and be content with that which God hath allotted us. We might well be assured that we had something to do with our 'allotment' in our pre-existent state. This would be an additional reason for us to accept our present condition and make the best of it. It is what we agreed to do. ... we had our own free agency in our pre-mortal existence and whatever we are today is likely the result of that which we willed to be heretofore. We unquestionably knew before we elected to come to this earth the conditions under which we would here exist, and live, and work. So little wonder it is that Alma of old said that we sin in the thought, or in the desire or in the wish that we were someone other than ourselves... "I have a conviction deep down in my heart that we are exactly what we should be, each one of us, except as we may have altered that pattern by deviating from the laws of God here in mortality. I have convinced myself that we all have those peculiar attributes, characteristics, and abilities which are essential for us to possess in order that we may fulfill the full purpose of our creation here upon this earth. Once again, that allotment which has come to us from God is a sacred allotment. It is something of which we should be proud, each one of us in our own right, and not wish that we had somebody else's allotment. Our greatest success comes from being ourselves. I think that we can console ourselves best by believing that whatever is our allotment in life, whatever is our call in the priesthood, the Lord has been wise and just, and I might add, merciful, in giving to us that which we need to accomplish the particular purpose of our call." (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1952, p. 71))

5 Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is <sup>a</sup>blameless; (Those that are not accountable are not held guilty, but are redeemed through the Atonement of Christ.) but he that <sup>b</sup>knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of <sup>c</sup>conscience. (Given the necessary time, both the righteous and the unrighteous desires of our hearts will find a way to express themselves. This is a simple manifestation of the verity that desires govern our choices and choices take us where we really want to go. It is also inherent in the plan of salvation that judgment involves a perfect blend of works and desires. Thus, if we really wanted to do something – be it good or evil – but were unable to do it because of circumstances beyond our control, short of our repenting, a just God will reward or punish us as if we had actually done it. "The laws of God can reward a righteous desire or attitude because an omniscient God can determine it. If a person does not perform a particular commandment because he is genuinely unable to do so, but truly would if he could, our Heavenly Father will know this and will reward that person accordingly. Upon the same principle, evil thoughts or desires are sinful under the laws of God even though not translated into the actions that would make them punishable under the laws of man. Similarly, if a person performs a seemingly righteous act but does so for the wrong reasons, such as to achieve a selfish purpose, his hands may be clean but his heart is not pure. His act will not be counted for righteousness." Dallin H. Oaks, *Pure in Heart*, p. 12-13. DCBM, 3:196)

6 Now, seeing that I know these things, why should I desire more than to <sup>a</sup>perform the work to which I

have been called?

7 Why should I desire that I were an angel, that I could speak unto all the ends of the earth?

8 For behold, the Lord doth <sup>a</sup>grant unto <sup>b</sup>all nations, of their own nation and <sup>c</sup>tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he <sup>d</sup>seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true. (Orson F. Whitney: “Many beautiful lessons might be drawn from this passage (Alma 29:1-9) of scripture, but I have only time to dwell upon one. It tells me that Providence is over all, and that he holds the nations in the hollow of his hand; that he is using not only his covenant people, but other peoples as well, to consummate a work, stupendous, magnificent, and altogether too arduous for this little handful of Saints to accomplish by and of themselves. Alma seems to have thought, for the moment, that man was doing God’s work for him, instead of which it is God, who is doing his own work, and using men as his instruments. Nor is he limited in the choice of instruments to his own people. He sways the scepter over all nations, and they are all playing into his hands, knowingly or unknowingly. Alma knew this, but had momentarily lost sight of it. All down the ages men bearing the authority of the Holy Priesthood -- patriarchs, prophets, apostles and others, have officiated in the name of the Lord, doing the things that he required of them; and outside the pale of their activities other good and great men, not bearing the Priesthood, but possessing profundity of thought, great wisdom, and a desire to uplift their fellows, have been sent by the Almighty into many nations, to give them, not the fulness of the Gospel, but that portion of truth that they were able to receive and wisely use. Such men as Confucius, the Chinese philosopher; Zoroaster, the Persian sage; Gautama or Buddha, of the Hindus; Socrates and Plato, of the Greeks; these all had some of the light that is universally diffused, and concerning which we have this day heard. They were servants of the Lord in a lesser sense, and were sent to those pagan or heathen nations to give them the measure of truth that a wise Providence had allotted to them.” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1921, pp. 32-33) Heber J. Grant: “Perhaps there is no other passage, no single chapter, in all the Book of Mormon, that I have preached from as often as I have from that twenty-ninth chapter of Alma...I commend to all Latter-day Saints when the conference pamphlet is published, to read what Elder Orson F. Whitney said about the inspiration of God being given to men in all parts of the world. We endorse his remarks.” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1921, p. 202-3) Joseph Fielding Smith: “In this present glorious dispensation, in which all things are to be gathered in one, and the work of the Lord, eventually, to be consummated so far as the salvation of men is concerned, the Lord has placed within our power the means by which the voice may be carried forth to all parts of the earth; not in a manner to shake the earth, but in a manner that the message of salvation may be proclaimed to the thousands, perhaps millions, scattered on all the face of the earth. In the days of Alma such powers were not available to the preachers of the plan of eternal life, and they were to be content with the things which the Lord allotted unto them, but in this day these means have, by the grace of God, been placed at our disposal.” (*The Restoration of All Things*, p. 6) Elder Charles A. Callis: “The Prophet Joseph Smith was only 25 years of age when the translation of this book was completed. How did he know that the gospel was to be preached unto every nation, in their own tongue? How did he know, except by the spirit of revelation, that you Latter-day Saints would raise up sons unto the Lord who would be instructed in foreign languages and, leaving their mountain home, would go forth and preach the gospel in Germany, Russia, Scandinavia, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and on the isles of the sea preaching in the tongue of the people to whom they are sent? This prophecy is being fulfilled...O how our hearts should rejoice to know that the divine mission of Joseph Smith is being proclaimed every day of our lives, and in almost every country on the earth.” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1909, p. 18))

9 I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it. I do <sup>a</sup>not <sup>b</sup>glory of myself, but I glory in that which the Lord hath commanded me; yea, and this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy. (Heber J. Grant: “I know of no joy on earth that can compare with that which comes to the heart of the man who is an instrument in the hands of God of saving some soul and turning it from that broad way that leadeth to

destruction, into that straight and narrow path that leadeth to life eternal.” (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1922, p. 188))

10 And behold, when I see many of my brethren truly penitent, and coming to the Lord their God, then is my soul filled with joy; then do I remember <sup>a</sup>what the Lord has done for me, yea, even that he hath heard my prayer; yea, then do I remember his merciful arm which he extended towards me.

11 Yea, and I also remember the captivity of my fathers; for I surely do know that the <sup>a</sup>Lord did deliver them out of bondage, and by this did establish his church; yea, the Lord God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, did deliver them out of bondage.

12 Yea, I have always remembered the captivity of my fathers (When the angel visited with Alma, he was told to always remember the captivity of his fathers. Here he attests that he has done that.); and that same God who <sup>a</sup>delivered them out of the hands of the Egyptians did deliver them out of <sup>b</sup>bondage.

13 Yea, and that same God did establish his church among them; yea, and that same God hath called me by a <sup>a</sup>holy calling, to <sup>b</sup>preach the word unto this people, and hath given me much success, in the which my joy is full.

14 But I do not joy in my own <sup>a</sup>success alone, but my joy is more full because of the success of my brethren, who have been up to the land of Nephi.

15 Behold, they have labored exceedingly, and have brought forth much fruit; and how great shall be their reward!

16 Now, when I think of the success of these my brethren my soul is carried away, even to the separation of it from the body, as it were, so great is my <sup>a</sup>joy. (President Gordon B. Hinckley: “[The Lord] expects us to be good neighbors, Christians in every sense of the word. Those who follow the golden rule—‘whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.’ (Matt. 7:12; 3 Ne. 14:12.) My brothers and sisters, we must be good neighbors. We must be a friendly people. We must recognize the good in all people. We don’t go about tearing down other churches. We preach and teach in a positive and affirmative way. We say to those of other faiths, ‘you bring with you all the good that you have and let us see if we can add to it.’ That is . . . the essence of our great missionary program and it yields results” (“Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley,” *Church News*, 7 Nov. 1998, 2).)

17 And now may God grant unto these, my brethren, that they may sit down in the kingdom of God (For the faithful, the day of probation ends at the time of death.); yea, and also all those who are the fruit of their labors that they may go no more out, but that they may praise him forever. And may God grant that it may be done according to my words, even as I have spoken. Amen.