

**LESSON 16**  
**“Ye Shall Be Called the Children of Christ”**  
**Mosiah 4-6**

**OVERVIEW:**

King Benjamin’s people seek and receive a remission of their sins. King Benjamin teaches his people how to live Christlike lives. King Benjamin’s people experience a “mighty change” and covenant to do God’s will in all things.

**SCRIPTURES:**

THE BOOK OF MOSIAH  
CHAPTER 4

*King Benjamin continues his address—Salvation comes because of the atonement—Believe in God to be saved—Retain a remission of your sins through faithfulness—Impart of your substance to the poor—Do all things in wisdom and order. [About 124 B.C.] (This chapter teaches us how to stay out of the club – Sinners Anonymous)*

1 AND now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made an end of speaking the words which had been delivered unto him by the <sup>a</sup>angel of the Lord, that he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold they had <sup>b</sup>fallen to the earth, for the <sup>c</sup>fear (reverence or respect) of the Lord had come upon them. (On the theme of eternity, the closing sound of every royal *acclamatio*, King Benjamin ended his address, which so overpowered the people that they "had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them" (Mosiah 4:1). This was the kind of proskynesis at which Benjamin aimed! The proskynesis was the falling to the earth (literally, "kissing the ground") in the presence of the king by which all the human race on the day of the coronation demonstrated its submission to divine authority; it was an unailing part of the Old World New Year's rites as of any royal audience (Nibley, Hugh. *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*. Deseret News Press, 1957, p. 264).)

2 And they had <sup>a</sup>viewed themselves in their own <sup>b</sup>carnal state, even <sup>c</sup>less than the dust (Being less than dust means we are not as obedient to God as the dust is. Helaman 12:7-8: 7 O how great is the <sup>a</sup>nothingness of the children of men; yea, even they are <sup>b</sup>less than the dust of the earth. 8 For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God.) of the earth (All who have not taken upon themselves the name of Christ through sacred covenant, all who have not sought to obtain a remission of sins through his atoning blood, remain the children of the world; theirs is a carnal state. DCBM, 2:157). And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the <sup>d</sup>atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be <sup>e</sup>purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ (Or we have faith in Christ), the Son of God, who <sup>f</sup>created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men. (In the ancient world, ‘the *hazzan*, the *praecentor*, or the *stasiarch*, would be handed a piece of paper,... Then the emperor... or someone else would tell him what he wanted the people to chant.’ Referring to the account of Nathan the Babylonian, ‘the whole thing is directed by the man on the tower. The old man, the *praecentor*, comes down, they ask questions, the king interprets the law to them, and they all answer together... It isn’t as if they all spontaneously recited this whole thing in one voice. It says it was in one voice, but that’s the way it was done" (Nibley, Hugh, cited in "Complete Text of Benjamin’s Speech with Notes and Comments." In: *King Benjamin’s Speech*. FARMS 1998, p. 571).)

3 And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy (Our text suggests three ways by which one may know that his sins have been remitted: 1) He is filled with joy; 2) He is filled with peace; 3) The favors and blessings of the Holy Ghost – the gifts of the Spirit – are manifest in his life. DCBM, 2:158), having received a <sup>a</sup>remission of

their sins (Some of the people probably had already been baptized prior to this happening. There may have been some of those of the Mulekites that had not yet been baptized since they did not have the gospel hundreds of years after leaving Jerusalem.), and having peace of <sup>b</sup>conscience, (Spencer W. Kimball said: “The essence of the miracle of forgiveness is that it brings peace to the previously anxious, restless, frustrated, perhaps tormented soul. In a world of turmoil and contention this is indeed a priceless gift... Peace is the fruit of righteousness. It cannot be bought with money, and cannot be traded nor bartered. It must be earned. The wealthy often spend much of their gains in a bid for peace, only to find that it is not for sale. But the poorest as well as the richest may have it in abundance if the total price is paid. Those who abide the laws and live the Christ-like life may have peace and other kindred blessings, principal among which are exaltation and eternal life. They include also blessings for this life.” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 363-4) Harold B. Lee said: “If the time comes when you have done all that you can to repent of your sins...then you will want that confirming answer as to whether or not the Lord has accepted of you. In your soul-searching, if you seek for and you find that peace of conscience by that token you may know that the Lord has accepted of your repentance. Satan would have you think otherwise and sometimes persuade you that now having made one mistake, you might go on and on with no turning back. That is one of the great falsehoods. The miracle of forgiveness is available to all of those who turn from their evil doings and return no more, because the Lord has said in a revelation to us in our days: ‘...go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth [meaning again] shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.’ (DC 82:7) Have that in mind, all of you who may be troubled with a burden of sin.” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places*, pp. 184-5) Boyd K. Packer said: “Often the most difficult part of repentance is to forgive yourself. Discouragement is part of that test. Do not give up. That brilliant morning will come. Then ‘the peace of God which passeth...understanding’ comes into your life once again. Then you like Him, will remember your sins no more. How will you know? You will know!” (*Ensign*, p. 208 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 208)) because of the exceeding <sup>c</sup>faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the <sup>d</sup>words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them.

4 And king Benjamin again opened his mouth and began to speak unto them, saying: My friends and my brethren, my kindred and my people, I would again call your attention, (The people have fallen to the ground, and now Benjamin is getting their attention to hear his words again.) that ye may hear and understand the remainder of my words which I shall speak unto you.

5 For behold, if the knowledge of the goodness of God at this time has awakened you to a sense of your <sup>a</sup>nothingness, (This means that we are totally dependent upon God for all of our support.) and your worthless and fallen state— (Verse 5-8 form a logical set in that they progress naturally from one theme to another. However, verse 10 appears to return to the conceptual beginning of verse 5. Benjamin is a sufficiently talented speaker that this second iteration does not come across as a total repetition, nevertheless, the sequence reads as an aside that returns to an original topic. This is more of a characteristic of oral discourse than considered and deliberated written form. Where the first speech appeared to be very tightly crafted, and probably written (at least composed mentally) prior to delivery, this speech appears to be more spontaneous. The situation of the speech also suggests that this was not a composed speech, because the content depends upon the experience of the crowd with the spirit, something for which Benjamin would have hoped, but could not have accurately predicted beforehand. Once again, if Nibley’s suggestion is correct that this entire pageant was scripted, then Benjamin would be continuing to follow the script. The power of the impact of the spirit on the people could not have been scripted, however, and the incident continues to have the feel of a spontaneous interaction rather than a formulaic repetition of a script. The more unplanned nature of this second discourse suggests that the written texts of the discourse that Mormon describes beforehand (Mosiah 2:8) were actually records after-the-fact. Rather than scripts being handed out, they were reports on the words and covenants Benjamin had declared.)

6 I say unto you, if ye have come to a<sup>a</sup> knowledge of the goodness of God, and his matchless power, and his wisdom, and his patience, and his long-suffering towards the children of men; and also, the<sup>b</sup> atonement which has been prepared from the<sup>c</sup> foundation of the world, that thereby salvation might come to him that should put his<sup>d</sup> trust in the Lord, and should be diligent in keeping his commandments, and continue in the faith even unto the end of his life, I mean the life of the mortal body—

7 I say, that this is the man who receiveth salvation, through the atonement which was prepared from the foundation of the world for all mankind, which ever were since the<sup>a</sup> fall of Adam, or who are, or who ever shall be, even unto the end of the world.

8 **And this is the means whereby salvation cometh.** And there is<sup>a</sup> none other salvation save this which hath been spoken of; neither are there any conditions whereby man can be saved except the conditions which I have told you.

9 **Believe in<sup>a</sup> God;** (Joseph Smith said: “Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. First, the idea that he actually exists. Secondly, a *correct* idea of his character, perfections, and attributes. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (*Lectures on Faith*, p. 33)) believe that he is, and that he<sup>b</sup> created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all<sup>c</sup> wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not<sup>d</sup> comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

10 And again, **believe that ye must<sup>a</sup> repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God;** and ask in<sup>b</sup> sincerity of heart that he would<sup>c</sup> forgive you; and now, **if you<sup>d</sup> believe all these things see that ye<sup>e</sup> do them.**

11 And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have<sup>a</sup> tasted of his love, and have received a<sup>b</sup> remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own<sup>c</sup> nothingness, and his<sup>d</sup> goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of<sup>e</sup> humility, <sup>f</sup>calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing<sup>g</sup> steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel.

12 And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the<sup>a</sup> love of God, and always<sup>b</sup> retain a remission of your sins (Neal A. Maxwell said: “Much emphasis was given by King Benjamin to retaining a remission of our sins (see Mosiah 4:26). We do not ponder that concept very much in the church. We ought to think of it a lot more. Retention clearly depends on the regularity of our repentance. In the church we worry, and should, over the retention of new members but the retention of our remissions is cause for even deeper concern.” (John W. Welch, and Stephen D. Ricks, *King Benjamin’s Speech: Made Simple*, p. 16) We retain that remission of sins by faithful observance of covenants we have made with God and through Christlike service to those in need. DCBM, 2:162.); and ye shall grow in the<sup>c</sup> knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true. (5-8 – Love God)

13 And ye will not have a<sup>a</sup> mind to injure one another, but to live<sup>b</sup> peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due. (Love your neighbor)

14 And ye will not suffer your<sup>a</sup> children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye<sup>b</sup> suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and<sup>c</sup> quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the<sup>d</sup> evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers, he being an enemy to all righteousness. (Teach our children)

15 But ye will<sup>a</sup> teach them to<sup>b</sup> walk in the ways of truth and<sup>c</sup> soberness; ye will teach them to<sup>d</sup> love one another, and to serve one another.

16 And also, ye yourselves will <sup>a</sup>succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the <sup>b</sup>beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish. (Joseph F. Smith said: “We have always managed to give something to the poor, and refuse no one who asks for food. I believe this is the general sentiment and character of the Latter-day Saints. I think all the Mormon people are kindly disposed, and are generous toward the poor and unfortunate, and that there is not a Latter-day Saint under the sound of my voice or anywhere that would not divide his portion with his fellow creature in case of need.... I have seen men go away from my door with good bread and butter in their hands (good enough for any king to eat, for my folks make good bread and good butter, as good as I ever ate on earth) and when out of the gate they have thrown it into the street. It was not food they wanted. They wanted money. For what? That they might go to some gambling [hall] or to some drinking saloon. Of course they are responsible for that. We can only judge by appearances and by the promptings of the good spirit within us; and it is better to give to a dozen that are unworthy than to turn away empty one worthy person.” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith*, Pr/RS Manual, p. 194) How should this verse be interpreted in a modern context? All of the social rules that governed Benjamin’s society have changed dramatically. Benjamin’s people were primarily agricultural and rural. His people had no monetary economy, but rather one built on exchange. Thus for Benjamin, one who had no food was one who had somehow become displaced from his land, and therefore his ability to grow his own food. Whether through war or illness, the removal of a person from his land created a condition of *need*, not *poverty* in the sense that we might understand it. In a modern society, need is now much more complex, and related to a monetary economy. The beggars who put their petition to us may or not be in need of food. What we *give* is money and not food, and the *money* offering may or may not be used for the need of the body. Thus in the modern world, the complexities of society have changed to the point where the nature of our charity must also change. As will be evident in the next verse, the real problem is the pride of the giver, and we may give freely to fast offerings. The ability to give freely and generously gives us the ability to learn generosity and humility, and the needy will be taken care of. Brant Gardner.)

17 Perhaps thou shalt <sup>a</sup>say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just— (Suppose that in this community there are ten beggars who beg from door to door for something to eat, and that nine of them are impostors who beg to escape work, and with an evil heart practice imposition upon the generous and sympathetic, and that only one of the ten who visit your doors is worthy of your bounty; which is best, to give food to the ten, to make sure of helping the truly needy one, or to repulse the ten because you do not know which is the worthy one? You will all say, Administer charitable gifts to the ten, rather than turn away the only truly worthy and truly needy person among them. If you do this, it will make no difference in your blessings, whether you administer to worthy or unworthy persons, inasmuch as you give alms with a single eye to assist the truly needy. (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol.8, p.12, March 5, 1860))

18 But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God.

19 For behold, are we not all <sup>a</sup>beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind? (As all are dependent on the nurturing help of others, so all are required to extend those same blessings to those in need. DCBM, 2:165)

20 And behold, even at this time, ye have been calling on his name, and begging for a <sup>a</sup>remission of your sins. And has he suffered that ye have begged in vain? Nay; he has poured out his <sup>b</sup>Spirit upon you, and has caused that your hearts should be filled with <sup>c</sup>joy, and has caused that your mouths should be stopped that ye could not find utterance, so exceedingly great was your joy.

21 And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right (Neal A. Maxwell said:



“Consider...how many sincerely believe that if they simply ask for something in prayer, God will grant it, especially if they ask with at least a modicum of faith. King Benjamin counseled us, however, that while we are to pray in faith, it should be for that [which] is right (Mosiah 4:21). The resurrected Jesus so confirmed, saying: And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you (3 Ne 18:20). The phrase *which is right* is correlated [among various prophetic utterances]. Not surprisingly, Paul also understood the need for inspired prayers, saying, Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom 8:26). I hope I am not the only one in this audience who has sometimes wondered what to pray for. Therefore, how much in the complexities of life’s situations, we need to have our very prayers inspired!” (John W. Welch, and Stephen D. Ricks, *King Benjamin’s Speech: Made Simple*, p. 9) As God grants only that which is right, so must we. We must give as freely as God gives, seeking to do in the wisdom that is his. Unwise giving can create addiction, indolence, and dependence; it can be destructive to the character and spirit of man. DCBM, 2:165.), in faith, believing that ye shall receive, O then, how ye ought to <sup>a</sup>impart of the substance that ye have one to another.

22 And if ye <sup>a</sup>judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance that he perish not, and condemn him, how much more just will be your <sup>b</sup>condemnation for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you but to God, to whom also your life <sup>c</sup>belongeth; and yet ye put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which thou hast done.

23 I say unto you, wo be unto that man, for his substance shall perish with him; and now, I say these things unto those who are <sup>a</sup>rich as pertaining to the things of this world.

24 And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I <sup>a</sup>give not because I <sup>b</sup>have not, but if I had I would <sup>c</sup>give.

25 And now, if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are <sup>a</sup>condemned; and your condemnation is just for ye covet that which ye have not received.

26 And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, (Even more important is that God gives you a remission of your sins from day to day. That is great if that happens. They stay with you; nevertheless, a remission of your sins means another chance. You will be given another chance. He knows you are going to sin some more, too, but he will still give you another chance just as long as you are in the flesh. Remember that marvelous verse where Nephi said: “And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh.” 2 Nephi 2:21. We live far longer than we need to, but that gives us a better chance to repent. He said that is the purpose of lengthening it beyond the age of procreation, etc. Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 1:477) that ye may <sup>a</sup>walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should <sup>b</sup>impart of your substance to the <sup>c</sup>poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as <sup>d</sup>feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants. (If we don’t teach people how to help themselves, we are hurting them. We should be careful not to be hurting a beggar spiritually because we are helping them physically in a wrong way.)

27 And see that all these things are done in wisdom and <sup>a</sup>order; for it is not requisite that a man should run <sup>b</sup>faster than he has strength. (Take care of self, family, extended family, then others as we are able, in the Lord’s way. Neal A. Maxwell said: “When we run faster than we are able, we get both inefficient and tired....I have on my office wall a wise and useful reminder by Anne Morrow Lindberg concerning one of the realities of life. She wrote, ‘My life cannot implement in action the demands of all the people to whom my heart responds.’ That’s good counsel for us all, not as an excuse to forgo duty, but as a sage point about pace and the need for quality in relationships.” (*Deposition of a Disciple*, pp. 57-8)) And again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order. (I am convinced that if Satan can’t influence us to sin outright, the next best thing

he can do is fill our lives with so much clutter that he becomes our silent partner, so silent that too often we are unaware of his influence in speeding up the pace of our lives and camouflaging our priorities. Jack R. Christianson and K. Douglas Bassett, *Life Lessons from the Book of Mormon*, 221)

28 And I would that ye should remember, that whosoever among you <sup>a</sup>borroweth of his neighbor should return the thing that he borroweth, according as he doth agree, or else thou shalt commit sin; and perhaps thou shalt cause thy neighbor to commit sin also. (Your neighbor may be angry for not returning the borrowed item.)

29 And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them. (“Sin is anything that offends the Spirit, and there are many ways and means to commit sin, so many they cannot be numbered. However, we have no need to feel overwhelmed; there is no subject the Spirit would rather discuss with us than our sins. If we want a near guarantee that a prayer will be answered, all we need to do is—with real intent—ask: ‘Father, tell me the ways and means my thoughts, my words, or my deeds have offended thee. I would like to change any and everything in my life that would keep me from having thy Spirit to be with me.’ That is a prayer we can be sure will be answered. If we then proceed to correct our sins, we place ourselves in a position to receive more blessings from heaven. The Prophet Joseph said: ‘Search your hearts, and see if you are like God. I have searched mine, and feel to repent of all my sins.’ (HC 4:588)” (Errol R. Fish, *Promptings of the Spirit*, p. 132) Spencer W. Kimball said: “The curse of the earth is sin. It covers every area. It takes on numerous forms and dresses itself in many kinds of apparel, depending on factors such as the stratum of society in which it is operating. But whether man calls it convention or business, or uses any other euphemism, if it offends God’s law it is sin.” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 39))

30 But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not <sup>a</sup>watch yourselves, and your <sup>b</sup>thoughts, and your <sup>c</sup>words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and <sup>d</sup>continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.

## CHAPTER 5

*The saints become the sons and daughters of Christ through faith—They are then called by the name of Christ—King Benjamin exhorts them to be steadfast and immovable in good works. [About 124 B.C.]* (Chapter 5 tells us how to get out of the club – Sinners Anonymous.)

1 AND now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had thus spoken to his people, he sent among them, desiring to know of his people if they <sup>a</sup>believed the words which he had spoken unto them. (Neal A. Maxwell said: “So concerned was Benjamin with his major sermon that he sent among the people to see if they really believed in his words (see Mosiah 5:1). Benjamin was much more concerned over connecting with his spiritual constituency than with his political constituency. He was continually concerned about communicating. For example, Benjamin did not want his people to forget the name by which they were called (see Mosiah 5:14). Illustratively, too, he was anxious to complete the covenant with them, yet he concluded it only when he was sure that their hearts had been touched and that they understood clearly what he had taught (see Mosiah 5:6-7). Such is the great teaching style of this remarkable man whose sermon we celebrate.” (John W. Welch, and Stephen D. Ricks, *King Benjamin’s Speech: Made Simple*, p. 3))

2 And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty <sup>a</sup>change (This is our goal, to make this mighty change, turning to God and not turning back.) in us, (Bruce R. McConkie said: “Mere compliance with the formality of the ordinance of baptism does not mean that a person has been born again. No one can be born again without baptism, but the immersion in water and the laying on of hands to confer the Holy Ghost do not of themselves

guarantee that a person has been or will be born again. The new birth takes place only for those who actually enjoy the gift or companionship of the Holy Ghost, only for those who are fully converted, who have given themselves without restraint to the Lord. Thus Alma addressed himself to his ‘brethren of the church,’ and pointedly asked them if they had ‘spiritually been born of God,’ received the Lord's image in their countenances, and had the ‘mighty change’ in their hearts which always attends the birth of the Spirit. (Alma 5:14-31.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 101) “When the Holy Ghost falls upon a worthy recipient, it has the effect of pouring out pure intelligence upon him; all is calm and serene; the still small voice speaks peace to the spirit within man; and the sanctifying, cleansing power of the Spirit begins to manifest itself. (Teachings, pp. 149-150.)” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 142) Joseph F. Smith said: “What a glorious condition was this! a condition in which the Lord God Omnipotent, by the power of His Spirit, had wrought a mighty change in the hearts of that people, that they no longer had any desire to do evil, but were filled only with a fervent desire to do that which was good. This was indeed a great change, and yet it is precisely that change that comes today to every son and daughter of God who repents of his or her sins, who humble themselves before the Lord, and who seek forgiveness and remission of sin by baptism by immersion, by one having authority to administer this sacred ordinance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For it is this new birth that was spoken of by Christ to Nicodemus as absolutely essential that men might see the Kingdom of God, and without which no man could enter into the Kingdom. Each of us can remember, perhaps, the change that came into our hearts when we were baptized for the remission of our sins...The feeling that came upon me was that of pure peace, or love and of light. I felt in my soul that if I had sinned-and surely I was not without sin-that it had been forgiven me; that I was indeed cleansed from sin; my heart was touched and I felt that I would not injure the smallest insect beneath my feet. I felt as though I wanted to do good everywhere to everybody and to everything. I felt a newness of life, a newness of desire to do that which was right. There was not one particle of desire for evil left in my soul. I was but a little boy, it is true, when I was baptized; but this was the influence that came upon me, and I know that it was from God, and was and ever has been a living witness to me of my acceptance of the Lord.” (*Conference Reports*, Apr. 1898, p. 65) or in our hearts (Not just intellectual change, but a change in our soul.), that we have no more disposition to do<sup>b</sup>evil, but to do good continually. (Being good is not enough without the ordinances. “The ‘mighty change’ associated with the new birth results in an educated conscience, educated desires, educated and bridled passions. Alma spoke of the ancient Saints who had received the priesthood of Melchizedek, and who, through their faith and obedience, ‘were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, *could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence*; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God.’ (Alma 13:11-12; italics added) Likewise, after Ammon had preached to King Lamoni and his subjects, ‘they did all declare unto the people the selfsame thing - that *their hearts had been changed; that they had no more desire to do evil*. And behold, many did declare unto the people that they had seen angels and had conversed with them; and thus they had told them things of God, and of his righteousness.’ (Alma 19:33-34; italics added.) The Saints of God in all ages lift up their voices unto the heavens as did Nephi: ‘O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?’ (2 Nephi 4:31.)” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, p. 175. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: Sins are remitted not in the waters of baptism, as we say in speaking figuratively, but when we receive the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Spirit of God that erases carnality and brings us into a state of righteousness. We become clean when we actually receive the fellowship and companionship of the Holy Ghost. *New Witness*, p. 290. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a divine institution. The Church, however, is only a means to an end, the vehicle for men and women to receive the everlasting gospel, participate in the ordinances of salvation, live worthy of the powers of godliness, put off the natural man, and grow in righteousness so that they might enjoy a mature spiritual

union with that Lord whose they are. Regarding the new birth: Both the baptism of the water and the baptism of the Spirit symbolize birth. Entering into the kingdom of God through repentance and baptism is properly referred to as a rebirth, for thereby we become as children in the household of faith. The godly anguish and suffering of the repentant soul could be likened to the pain experienced by the mother in labor. The elements common to the process of birth are water, blood, and spirit. The amniotic fluid which surrounds the child prior to birth is a watery substance which aids in the development of the infant. The water of the baptismal font serves as a medium through which spiritual development begins. Blood is the medium through which saving nutrients and life-giving substances are passed to the child. Likewise, it is through the blood of Christ that the benefits of the Atonement are extended to man and the saving principles of the gospel are made a part of his life. Just as the individual spirit gives life to the infant body, even so the reception of the Holy Ghost begins a “quickening in the inner man.” One must be born again to both “see” and “enter” the kingdom of God. The new birth brings a change of attitude and character. Elder Orson Pratt explained concerning the powers of the Holy Ghost: “Water baptism is only a preparatory cleansing of the believing penitent...whereas, the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost cleanses more thoroughly, by renewing the inner man, and by purifying the affections, desires, and thoughts which have long been habituated in the impure ways of sin. Without the aid of the Holy Ghost, a person would have but very little power to change his mind, at once, from its habituated course, and to walk in newness of life...So great is the force of habit, that he would, without being renewed by the Holy Ghost, be easily overcome, and contaminated again with sin. Hence, it is infinitely important that the affections and desires should be, in a measure, changed and renewed, so as to cause him to hate that which he before loved, and to love that which he before hated. To thus renew the mind of man is the work of the Holy Ghost.” *The Holy Spirit*, p. 56-57. The new birth brings new knowledge, new insights, and new directions to life. Those who are born again are received into a new family; they become the sons and daughters of Jesus Christ. Birth is but a beginning – the journey of faith lies ahead. Though the new birth is a result of a definite time of decision – a desire for the things of righteousness – it is usually a quiet but powerful process. Elder McConkie said: A person may get converted in a moment, miraculously. That is what happened to Alma the younger. He had been baptized in his youth, he had been promised the Holy Ghost, but he had never received it. He was too worldly-wise; he went off with the sons of Mosiah to destroy the church. Alma was in this state, and then this occasion occurred when a new light came into his soul, when he was changed from his fallen and carnal state to a state of righteousness. In his instance the conversion was miraculous, in the snap of a finger, almost. But that is not the way it happens with most people. With most people conversion is a process; and it goes step by step, degree by degree, level by level, from a lower state to a higher state, from grace to grace, until the time that the individual is wholly turned to the cause of righteousness. Now this means that an individual overcomes one sin today and another sin tomorrow. He perfects his life in one field now, and in another field later on. And the conversion process goes on, until it is completed, until we become, literally, as the Book of Mormon says, saints of God instead of natural men. *Address at BYU First Stake Conference, 11 February 1968.*)

3 And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite <sup>a</sup>goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come (Revelations to those with the Spirit); and were it expedient, we could prophesy of all things. (As a manifestation of the Spirit, the people were given the spirit of prophecy, which is no more than the testimony of Jesus (Rev 19:10). A similar manifestation of the Spirit attended the baptisms of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, “No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation.” (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 42)

4 And it is the faith which we have had on the things which our king has spoken unto us that has brought



us to this great knowledge, whereby we do rejoice with such exceedingly great joy.

5 And we are willing to enter into a <sup>a</sup>covenant with our God to do his will (To take upon us the name of Christ, in the baptismal covenant. The people of King Benjamin were already members of the Church; they had been baptized at the time of their initial conversion or as they arrived at the years of accountability; they had previously taken upon themselves the name of Christ; and they now renewed those commitments to keep the commandments of God the remainder of their days. *DCBM*, 2:176), and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days, that we may not bring upon ourselves a <sup>b</sup>never-ending torment, as has been spoken by the <sup>c</sup>angel, that we may not drink out of the cup of the wrath of God.

6 And now, these are the words which king Benjamin desired of them; and therefore he said unto them: Ye have spoken the words that I desired; and the covenant which ye have made is a righteous covenant.

7 And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the <sup>a</sup>children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are <sup>b</sup>changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are <sup>c</sup>born of him and have become his <sup>d</sup>sons and his daughters. (Joseph Fielding Smith said: “The Son of God has a perfect right to call us his children, spiritually begotten, and we have a perfect right to look on him as our father who spiritually begot us. Now if these critics would read carefully the Book of Mormon, they would find that when the Savior came and visited the Nephites, he told them that he had been sent by his Father. He knelt before them, and he prayed to his Father. He taught them to pray to his Father, but that did not lessen in the least our duty and responsibility of looking upon the Son of God as a father to us because he spiritually begot us.” (*Conference Reports*, Oct. 1962, p. 21) We never lose our relationship with Elohim, the Eternal Father... Because Jehovah became the chief advocate and proponent of the plan of the Father, because he offered himself as a ransom for the souls of his spirit brothers and sisters, and because he makes the terms and conditions of the Father’s plan operative and thus available to mankind, he becomes the Father of their spiritual rebirth, the Father of their resurrection, the Father of their salvation. Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant, and men and women become sons and daughters of Jesus Christ by covenant. Entrance (adoption) into his family kingdom is accomplished through a solemn agreement to take the family name, live in harmony with the standards of that covenant family, and thus adhere to family obligations. Those who do so make permanent their place in the family; they are sealed to that God who loves them and thereby inherit and possess, as heirs, a fullness of the glory of their Lord. *DCBM*, 2:176.)

8 And under this head ye are made <sup>a</sup>free, (“I am the way, the truth, and the life,” Jesus taught his disciples; ‘no man cometh unto the Father, but by me’ (John 14:6). ‘If ye continue in my word,’ he said on another occasion, ‘then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’ (John 8:31-32). In a modern revelation that same Lord said: ‘I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed’ (D&C 98:8). In and through Jesus Christ people are made free-free from sin, from ignorance, and ultimately from the effects of a fallen state and all the limitations of the flesh. Christ comes, Lehi testified, to ‘redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon.’ (2 Nephi 2:26.) Through the blessings of the Atonement, the obedient are free to enter the divine presence and partake fully of all that the Father has.” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, p. 177) and there is <sup>b</sup>no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other <sup>c</sup>name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, (Charles W. Penrose said: “Do not be afraid to use reverently the name of Christ. He uses it continually. We can read about it in the Book of Mormon. The Church was the Church of Christ, and in the last days the Church is to be called by that name. You may think perhaps that is a matter of little importance. Perhaps it is so to you; but I have found in my experience, from the beginning of my membership in this Church, that there is power in that name. ‘In my name they that believe shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues,’ and so on. There is power in the name of Jesus Christ. Demons tremble at that name. They recognize it. But when we, in a

slipshod way, use the name of Jesus, and say nothing about Christ, I don't know that it has so much power and influence.” (*Conference Reports*, Apr. 1920, p. 29)) all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. (We see that we take upon us the name of Christ when we are baptized in his name, when we belong to his Church and profess our belief in him, and when we do the work of his kingdom... There are other meanings as well, deeper meanings that the more mature members of the Church should understand and ponder as he or she partakes of the sacrament. It is significant that when we partake of the sacrament we do not witness that we take upon us the name of Jesus Christ. We witness that we are willing to do so. The fact that we only witness to our willingness suggests that something else must happen before we actually take that sacred name upon us in the most important sense. What future event or events could this covenant contemplate? The scriptures suggest two sacred possibilities, one concerning the authority of God, especially as exercised in the temples, and the other – closely related – concerning exaltation in the celestial kingdom... Willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ can therefore be understood as willingness to take upon us the authority of Jesus Christ. According to this meaning, by partaking of the sacrament we witness our willingness to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple and to receive the highest blessings available through the name and by the authority of the Savior when he chooses to confer them upon us... Our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ affirms our commitment to do all that we can to be counted among those whom he will choose to stand at his right hand and be called by his name at the last day. In this sacred sense, our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ constitutes our declaration of candidacy for exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Exaltation is eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God. Dallin H. Oaks, *CR*, April 1985, p. 102-3)

9 And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand (the covenant making hand) of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ.

10 And now it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not take upon him the name of Christ must be called by some <sup>a</sup>other name; therefore, he findeth himself on the <sup>b</sup>left hand of God. (those worthy of punishment and rejection.)

11 And I would that ye should remember also, that this is the <sup>a</sup>name that I said I should give unto you that never should be blotted out, except it be through transgression; therefore, take heed that ye do not transgress, that the name be not blotted out of your hearts.

12 I say unto you, I would that ye should remember to <sup>a</sup>retain the name written always in your hearts, that ye are not found on the left hand of God, but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be called (Our knowledge of persons and things before we came here combined with the divinity awakened within our souls through obedience to the gospel, powerfully affects, in my opinion, all our likes, and dislikes, and guides our preferences in the course of this life, provided we give careful heed to the admonitions of the Spirit. All those salient truths which come home so forcibly to the head and heart seem but the awakening of the memories of the spirit. Can we know anything here that we did not know before we came here?... If Christ knew beforehand, so did we. But in coming here, we forgot all, that our agency might be free indeed, to choose good or evil, that we might merit the reward of our own choice and conduct. By the power of the Spirit, in the redemption of Christ, through obedience, we often catch a spark from the awakened memories of the immortal soul, which lights up our whole being as with the glory of our former home. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 12-13.), and also, the name by which he shall call you. (Brigham Young said: “How are we to know the voice of the Good Shepherd from the voice of a stranger? Can any person answer this question? I can. It is very easy. To every philosopher upon the earth, I say, your eye can be deceived, so can mine; your ear can be deceived, so can mine; the touch of your hand can be deceived, so can mine; but the Spirit of God filling the creature with revelation and the light of eternity, cannot be mistaken—the revelation which comes from God is never mistaken. When an individual, filled with the Spirit of God, declares the truth of heaven, the sheep hear that, the Spirit of the Lord pierces their inmost souls and sinks deep into their hearts; by the testimony of

the Holy Ghost light springs up within them, and they see and understand for themselves. This is the way the Gospel should be preached by every Elder in Israel, and by this power every hearer should hear; and if we would know the voice of the Good Shepherd, we must live so that the Spirit of the Lord can find its way to our hearts.” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. by John A. Widstoe, p. 431) “...we can receive the Spirit of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, by which we may know the voice of the Good Shepherd, whenever and wherever we hear it. And as we know the voice of the Good Shepherd, so shall we learn to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger--the voice of the evil one. We can then clearly understand the things that are of God, and the things that are not of Him, and be able to see and judge all things as they are, for, ‘He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.’ (1 Cor 2:15)” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, p. 302) M. Russell Ballard said: “When my ministry is over, it won’t be any talk that I’ve given in the Tabernacle that will make much difference or will be very important in the sight of the Lord. What will be important, I think, is that I hear the voice and respond to the prompting, that the Spirit might direct me that I might be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to do His will and His bidding.” (*Church News*, Jan. 16, 1988))

13 For how <sup>a</sup>knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart? (We serve God by serving man.)

14 And again, doth a man take an ass which belongeth to his neighbor, and keep him? I say unto you, Nay; he will not even suffer that he shall feed among his flocks, but will drive him away, and cast him out. I say unto you, that even so shall it be among you if ye know not the name by which ye are called.

15 Therefore, I would that ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in <sup>a</sup>good works, that Christ, the <sup>b</sup>Lord God Omnipotent, may <sup>c</sup>seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him who <sup>d</sup>created all things, in heaven and in earth, who is God above all. Amen. (Being born again is not enough, you must continue to endure to the end.)

## CHAPTER 6

*King Benjamin records the names of the people and appoints priests to teach them—Mosiah reigns as a righteous king. [About 124—121 B.C.]* (This great assembly is held at the beginning of a new year. This is the time when the constitution is confirmed.)

1 AND now, king Benjamin thought it was expedient, after having finished speaking to the people, that he should <sup>a</sup>take the names of all those who had entered into a covenant with God to keep his commandments. (At the beginning of the speech it indicated that there were too many people to count them all, but here they take the names of everyone.)

2 And it came to pass that there was not one soul, except it were little children, but who had entered into the covenant and had taken upon them the name of Christ. (This was a voluntary covenant. Contracts were always made at the beginning of a new year. This was also a registry which allowed the people to vote. The coronation occurs after the people are registered so they can properly approve the new king.)

3 And again, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made an end of all these things, and had consecrated his son <sup>a</sup>Mosiah to be a ruler and a king over his people, and had given him all the charges concerning the kingdom, and also had <sup>b</sup>appointed <sup>c</sup>priests to <sup>d</sup>teach the people, that thereby they might hear and know the commandments of God, and to stir them up in remembrance of the <sup>e</sup>oath which they had made (The priests and teachers had the people periodically renew their covenant. We make covenants once, but we also renew them from time to time, like partaking of the sacrament.), he dismissed the multitude, and they returned, every one, according to their <sup>f</sup>families, to their own houses.

4 And Mosiah began to reign in his father’s stead. \*And he began to reign in the thirtieth year of his age, making in the whole, about four hundred and seventy-six years from the <sup>a</sup>time that Lehi left Jerusalem.

5 And king Benjamin lived three \*years and he died. (Neal A. Maxwell said: “We can be sure that King

Benjamin endured well and meekly in the remaining three years of his life after his great sermon (as he taught us to do; see Mosiah 4:30). One wonders if he still worked in his garden, at least a little bit. If so, did passersby stop to greet him? Did they perhaps notice, near the end, that he was not in his garden anymore? Revered as Benjamin was, what an engaging experience it must have been to hear him preach personally—especially while sitting in one’s family circle in a tent facing the temple. But we can hear him now. If we read him reverently, the intervening centuries soon melt away. His earnestness emerges, and his personableness almost caresses us, giving King Benjamin such immediacy and high relevancy as his example combines with such powerful words about discipleship. I wonder if, like meek President Spencer W. Kimball, meek Benjamin also did not realize how unique he was in the eyes of the Lord. How blessed we are to have such models.” (John W. Welch, and Stephen D. Ricks, *King Benjamin’s Speech: Made Simple*, pp. 19-20))

6 And it came to pass that king Mosiah did <sup>a</sup>walk in the ways of the Lord, and did observe his judgments and his statutes, and did keep his commandments in all things whatsoever he commanded him.

7 And king Mosiah did cause his people that they should till the earth. And he also, himself, did till the earth, that thereby he might <sup>a</sup>not become burdensome to his people, that he might do according to that which his father had done in all things. And there was no contention among all his people for the space of three years.

\* Verse 4 [About 124 B.C.]; Verse 5 [About 121 B.C.].