

LESSON 20
“My Soul Is Pained No More”
Mosiah 25-28; Alma 36

OVERVIEW:

Limhi's and Alma's people join Mosiah's people in the land of Zarahemla. Many Church members are led into sin by unbelievers. Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah are visited by an angel. Alma and sons of Mosiah dedicate themselves to preaching the gospel.

SCRIPTURES:

THE BOOK OF MOSIAH
CHAPTER 25

The people (the Mulekites) of Zarahemla become Nephites—They learn of the people of Alma and of Zeniff—Alma baptizes Limhi and all his people—Mosiah authorizes Alma to organize the Church of God. [About 120 B.C.]

1 AND now king Mosiah caused that all the people should be gathered together.

2 Now there were not so many of the children of Nephi, or so many of those who were descendants of Nephi, as there were of the ^apeople of Zarahemla, who was a descendant of ^bMulek, and those who came with him into the wilderness. (The Lehiters broke into two groups, Nephites and Lamanites, so even though the number of people that left in Mulek's group could have been as large as the Lehite group that left Jerusalem at the same time, the Lehiters broke in half not many years after arriving in the Americas. Plus, there were wars between the Nephites and Lamanites that would have reduced the population of the Nephites, whereas the Mulekites may not have had wars to destroy their people.)

3 And there were not so many of the people of Nephi and of the people of Zarahemla as there were of the Lamanites; yea, they were not half so numerous.

4 And now all the people of Nephi were assembled together, and also all the people of Zarahemla, and they were gathered together in two bodies.

5 And it came to pass that Mosiah did read, and caused to be read (Since Mosiah could not speak to all of his people at once, he had others read the record of Zeniff to his people.), the records of Zeniff to his people; yea, he read the records of the people of Zeniff, from the time they ^aleft the land of Zarahemla until they ^breturned again.

6 And he also read the account of Alma and his brethren, and all their afflictions, from the time they left the land of Zarahemla until the time they returned again.

7 And now, when Mosiah had made an end of reading the records, his people who tarried in the land were struck with wonder and amazement.

8 For they knew not what to think; for when they beheld those that had been delivered ^aout of bondage they were filled with exceedingly great joy.

9 And again, when they thought of their brethren who had been ^aslain by the Lamanites they were filled with sorrow, and even shed many tears of sorrow.

10 And again, when they thought of the immediate goodness of God, and his power in delivering Alma and his brethren out of the hands of the Lamanites and of ^abondage, they did raise their voices and give thanks to God.

11 And again, when they thought upon the Lamanites, who were their brethren, of their sinful and ^apolluted state, they were filled with ^bpain and anguish for the ^cwelfare of their souls.

12 And it came to pass that those who ^awere the children of Amulon (These are most likely children born to Amulon while a priest of Noah, who later abandoned his family along with his fellow priests.) and his brethren, who had taken to wife the ^bdaughters of the Lamanites, were displeased with the

conduct of their fathers, and they would no longer be called by the names of their fathers, (Ezra Taft Benson said: “One of the greatest things a man can do for his children is to love his wife and let them know he loves her. A father has the responsibility to lead his family by desiring to have children, loving them, and by letting virtue garnish his thoughts unceasingly (see DC 121:45). This is one of the great needs today.” (*God, Family, Country*, p. 185 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 234)) therefore they took upon themselves the name of Nephi, that they might be called the children of Nephi and be numbered among those who were ^ccalled Nephites.

13 And now all the people of Zarahemla were ^anumbered with the Nephites, and this because the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi.

14 And now it came to pass that when Mosiah had made an end of speaking and reading to the people, he desired that Alma should also speak to the people.

15 And Alma did speak unto them, when they were assembled together in large bodies, and he went from one body to another, preaching unto the people repentance and faith on the Lord.

16 And he did exhort the people of Limhi and his brethren, all those that had been delivered out of bondage, that they should remember that it was the Lord that did deliver them.

17 And it came to pass that after Alma had taught the people many things, and had made an end of speaking to them, that king Limhi was desirous that he might be baptized; and all his people were desirous that they might be baptized also.

18 Therefore, Alma did go forth into the water and did ^abaptize them; yea, he did baptize them after the manner he did his brethren in the ^bwaters of Mormon (by immersion); yea, and as many as he did baptize did belong to the church of God (Baptism is necessary to enter the church and kingdom of God.); and this because of their belief on the words of Alma.

19 And it came to pass that king Mosiah granted unto Alma that he might establish ^achurches throughout all the land of Zarahemla; and gave him power to ^bordain ^cpriests and ^dteachers over every church. (Mosiah must have held priesthood keys to be able to grant Alma the power to ordain priests and teachers in Zarahemla.)

20 Now this was done because there were so many people that they could not all be governed by one teacher; neither could they all hear the word of God in one assembly;

21 Therefore they did ^aassemble themselves together in different bodies, (Even though there may be many branches or wards, there is still only one church.) being called churches; every church having their priests and their teachers, and every priest preaching the word according as it was delivered to him by the mouth of Alma.

22 And thus, notwithstanding there being many churches (It is not to be supposed that the Church did not previously exist in Zarahemla but rather that because of the great increase in its population it was now necessary to divide the Church into various congregations. In modern terms we would think in terms of making ward and stake divisions. DCBM, 2:290.) they were all one ^achurch, yea, even the church of God; for there was nothing preached in all the churches except it were repentance and faith in God.

23 And now there were seven churches (wards) in the land of Zarahemla. (The Zarahemla Stake) And it came to pass that whosoever were desirous to take upon them the ^aname of Christ, or of God, they did join the churches of God;

24 And they were called the ^apeople of God. And the Lord did pour out his ^bSpirit upon them, and they were blessed, and prospered in the land.

CHAPTER 26

Many members of the Church are led into sin by unbelievers—Alma is promised eternal life—Those who repent and are baptized gain forgiveness—Church members in sin who repent and confess to Alma and

to the Lord shall be forgiven; otherwise they shall be excommunicated. [Probably between 120 and 100 B.C.]

1 NOW it came to pass that there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the ^awords of king Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did ^bnot believe the tradition of their fathers. (How could the children not believe the words of King Benjamin? Because of agency, these children chose not to believe the gospel.)

2 They did not believe what had been said concerning the resurrection of the dead, neither did they believe concerning the coming of Christ. (“True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.” Boyd K. Packer, CR, Oct 1986, p. 20. “It is one thing to teach ethical principles, quite another to proclaim the great doctrinal verities which are the foundation of true Christianity and out of which eternal salvation comes. True it is that salvation is limited to those in whose souls the ethical principles abound, but true it is also that Christian ethics, in the full and saving sense, automatically become a part of the lives of those who first believe Christian doctrines. It is only when gospel ethics are tied to gospel doctrines that they rest on a sure and enduring foundation and gain full operation in the lives of the saints. Bruce R. McConkie, New Witness, p. 699-700. When a generation of young people grows to maturity without a proper doctrinal foundation – whether because of parental negligence or through rebellion on the part of the youth – then a foundation has indeed been laid, a foundation, unfortunately, for faithlessness and immorality. Such appears to have been the case in the days of Alma: the rising generation grew into adulthood without a tie to the theology of their parents, without that saving and settling witness of the Savior and his gospel which had been the focus of the teachings of King Benjamin. DCBM, 2:292.)

3 And now because of their ^aunbelief they could not ^bunderstand the word of God; and their hearts were hardened. (Those given up to a spirit of doubt and unbelief cannot know the things of God. The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are made known to those who have a believing disposition, those who are diligent and obedient in keeping the commandments. DCBM, 2:292)

4 And they would not be baptized; neither would they join the ^achurch. And they were a separate people as to their faith, (They did not associate with the people or things of God. DCBM, 2:292) and remained so ever after (Mormon’s editorial comment that those apostates would remain apostate ever after is to highlight that there will be some exceptions to this. Alma the younger and the sons of Mosiah will be those exceptions that he will highlight later.), even in their ^bcarnal and sinful state; for they would not call upon the Lord their God. (These apostate children were probably influenced by some other religion that would have been dominant in the area. This may be the same group that persuaded Sherem and other apostates in their day. For so many children to have been persuaded to not believe their parents’ religion, there had to have been some other strong influence upon them to counteract the influence and teachings of their own parents.)

5 And now in the reign of Mosiah they were not half so numerous as the people of God; but because of the ^adissensions among the brethren (There must have been a problem among the leaders of the church to cause others to fall away.) they became more numerous. (This new religion or lack of religion was becoming more and more attractive to the younger generation. It may be that they were becoming wealthy.)

6 For it came to pass that they did ^adeceive many with their ^bflattering words, who were in the church, and did cause them to commit many sins; therefore it became expedient that those who committed sin, that were in the church, should be ^cadmonished by the church. (Those in the church who sin must be properly dealt with in the church. This was more than just a difference of opinion on religious beliefs. They were sinning. It may be that they were performing sacrifices for the wrong reasons or in the wrong way.)

7 And it came to pass that they were brought before the priests, and delivered up unto the ^apriests by the

teachers; and the priests brought them before Alma, who was the ^bhigh priest. (Those called to serve as shepherds of the Lord's flock in all ages bear a weighty burden in regard to admonishing the church in paths of righteousness. The common judges, those set apart to sit in judgment upon transgressors are duty bound to confront sinners and invite them to repent and come unto Christ. When sins go unchecked the Spirit ceases to strive with the Church as it might. "The Spirit of God would undoubtedly be so grieved that it would forsake not only those who are guilty of these acts, but it would withdraw itself from those who would suffer them to be done in our midst unchecked and unrebuked; and from the President of the Church down, throughout the entire ranks of the Priesthood, there would be a loss of the Spirit of God, a withdrawal of His gifts and blessing and His power, because of their not taking the proper measures to check and to expose their iniquity." JD 26:139. President John Taylor delivered the following penetrating counsel: "I have heard of some Bishops who have been seeking to cover up iniquities of men: I tell them, in the name of God, they will have to bear them themselves, and meet that judgment; and I tell you that any man who tampers with iniquity, he will have to bear that iniquity, and if any of you want to partake of the sins of men, and uphold them, you will have to bear them. Do you hear it, you Bishops and you Presidents? God will require it at your hands. You are not placed in position to tamper with the principles of righteousness, nor to cover up the infamies and corruptions of men." CR, April 1880, p. 78. DCBM, 2:293-94)

8 Now king Mosiah had given Alma the ^aauthority over the ^bchurch. (Separation between church and state.)

9 And it came to pass that Alma did not know concerning them (Alma was fairly new to this society having been hidden for a time with the church members.); but there were many ^awitnesses against them; yea, the people stood and testified of their iniquity in abundance.

10 Now there had not any such thing happened before in the church; therefore Alma was troubled in his spirit, and he caused that they should be brought before the king. (The nature of their sins must have been that they were disrupting the normal social fabric of the community.)

11 And he said unto the king: Behold, here are many whom we have brought before thee, who are accused of their brethren; yea, and they have been taken in divers iniquities. And they do not repent of their iniquities; therefore we have brought them before thee, that thou mayest judge them according to their crimes.

12 But king Mosiah said unto Alma: Behold, I judge them not; therefore I ^adeliver them into thy hands to be judged. (Mosiah determines that this religious diversity does not affect the operation of the society, and tells Alma to deal with them in the church. In other words, to try them for their church membership, but not their social freedom.)

13 And now the spirit of Alma was again troubled; and he went and inquired of the Lord what he should do concerning this matter, for he feared that he should do wrong in the sight of God. (Since this was a problem that had not been dealt with before, Alma does what every good church leader does, and that is to ask God what to do.)

14 And it came to pass that after he had poured out his whole soul to God, the ^avoice of the Lord came to him, saying:

15 Blessed art thou, Alma (God doesn't answer Alma's question immediately, but here shows his support for Alma as the leader of the church.), and blessed are they who were baptized in the ^awaters of Mormon (This is showing the truth of the fact that Alma held priesthood authority to conduct the baptisms.). Thou art blessed because of thy exceeding ^bfaith in the words alone of my servant Abinadi.

16 And blessed are they because of their exceeding faith in the words alone which thou hast spoken unto them. (We are blessed for following our church leaders. Special blessings accrue to those who accept the word of the gospel without stubbornness of heart.)

17 And blessed art thou because thou hast established a ^achurch among this people; and they shall be established, and they shall be my people. (They have entered the covenant and are God's people.)

18 Yea, blessed is this people who are willing to bear my ^aname; for in my ^bname shall they be called;

and they are mine. (King Benjamin put the people under covenant to take upon them the name of Christ. Here the Lord is confirming that these people do belong to Him.)

19 And because thou hast inquired of me concerning the transgressor, thou art blessed.

20 Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have ^aeternal life; and thou shalt serve me and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep. (Alma's calling and election: Bruce R. McConkie said: "Those members of the Church who devote themselves wholly to righteousness, living by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, make their calling and election sure. That is, they receive the more sure word of prophecy, which means that the Lord seals their exaltation upon them while they are yet in this life. Peter summarized the course of righteousness which the saints must pursue to make their calling and election sure and then (referring to his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with James and John) said that those three had received this more sure word of prophecy. (2 Pet. 1.) Joseph Smith taught: 'After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shall be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter.' To receive the other Comforter is to have Christ appear to him and to see the visions of eternity. (*Teachings*, pp. 149-151.) Thus, as the prophet also said, 'The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy through the power of the Holy Priesthood.' (D. & C. 131:5.) Those so favored of the Lord are sealed up against all manner of sin and blasphemy except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and the shedding of innocent blood. That is, their exaltation is assured; their calling and election is made sure, because they have obeyed the fulness of God's laws and have overcome the world. Though such persons 'shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation.' (D. & C. 132:26.) The Lord says to them: 'Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; . . . and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths.' (D. & C. 132:19.) The prophet, for one, had this seal placed upon him. That is, he knew 'by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood,' that he would attain godhood in the world to come. To him Deity said: 'I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father with Abraham your father.' (D. & C. 132:49.)" (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 109-110))

21 And he that will hear my voice shall be my ^asheep; and him shall ye receive into the church, and him will I also receive. (Ye are called to bring to pass the gathering on mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts. D&C 29:7)

22 For behold, ^athis is my ^bchurch (Christ is the head of the Church.); whosoever is ^cbaptized shall be baptized unto repentance. And whomsoever ye receive shall ^dbelieve in my name; and him will I freely ^eforgive. (Those who enter into the covenant, will receive a remission of their sins.)

23 For it is I that taketh upon me the ^asins of the world; for it is I that hath ^bcreated them; and it is I that granteth unto him that believeth unto the end a place at my right hand. (The right hand has always had the connotation of the good hand or the covenant hand. The word left comes from the word sinistra which becomes the English sinister.)

24 For behold, in my name are they called; and if they ^aknow me they shall come forth, and shall have a place eternally at my right hand. (To know the Lord we must serve him, obey his commandments and ordinances.)

25 And it shall come to pass that when the ^asecond trump shall sound then shall they that never ^bknew me come forth and shall stand before me.

26 And then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, that I am their Redeemer; but they would not be redeemed.

27 And then I will confess unto them that I never ^aknew them (because they were not his, because they never took upon themselves his name, in the covenantal waters of baptism); and they shall ^bdepart into ^ceverlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Sons of Perdition. Charles W. Penrose said: "There is one class which will be different from all the rest. They shall be brought forth, the Lord says, but they will go back into their own place. They would not receive that which they might have had; they would not obey that which they might have obeyed. They received the light and the truth and then would not use it in the way that God had appointed. They would not go on unto perfection by keeping every word that proceeded from the mouth of God, but prostituted the power God had given them, to rise to the highest heights but sunk down to the lowest depths; denying the truth revealed to them; shedding innocent blood; consenting to the death of Christ; thus sinning against the Holy Ghost and becoming so corrupt and abominable that they cannot be redeemed. But they shall be brought forth from the grave and become subject to the devil, and his angels in eternity. What is their end? We do not know; nobody knows, the Lord says. Some people are inquiring about the end of these sons of perdition. The Lord says no man knows it, that the end thereof and the height and the extent and the depth thereof no man knoweth and if the Lord does reveal it to some He shuts up the vision. What, then, is 'the second death?' Why, the Lord tells us what that is in His revelation in the twenty-ninth section of the D&C. It is eternal banishment from His presence. He is the source of light and truth and power and glory and happiness and joy and dominion and increase forever, of which they will all be deprived. Being shut right out from the light, these shall go away into outer darkness where no ray of light comes, spiritual or physical--no ray of light from sun or moon or twinkling star or even a comet; to be in outer darkness, and no wonder there is 'weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth,' to use the scripture expression." (*Conference Reports*, Oct. 1914, p. 42))

28 (Now the Lord answers Alma's question.) Therefore I say unto you, that he that will not ^ahear my voice (because they are not his sheep), the same shall ye not receive into my church, for him I will not receive at the last day.

29 Therefore I say unto you, Go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye ^ajudge ^baccording to the sins which he has committed; (Each sinner is dealt with differently depending on a variety of circumstances and facts.) and if he ^cconfess his sins before thee and me, and ^drepenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye ^eforgive, and I will forgive him also. (Spencer W. Kimball said: "By virtue of his call and ordination and setting apart, [the bishop] also becomes a 'judge in Israel' and has the responsibility of making many decisions which affect the progress and development of his people. He gives direction to their spiritual activities so that he can give them opportunities for growth, and judge their accomplishments. He decides as to their worthiness and eligibility for certain blessings and privileges. He holds the key to all temples in the world and it is he who must turn that key to open the doors thereof and that they may go through eternal marriage to life eternal. He has the keys to the storehouses and must decide if one is eligible through need and worthiness to be given welfare assistance. ... Numerous suggestions have come from many sources in the years past that the bishops should be trained in social work to be able to meet the demands of the people in their numerous needs. But the Brethren have never felt that would be the answer. In the Church of Jesus Christ, the leaders have no formal academic training for their positions but gain experience through their lifetime, and they depend much upon the Spirit for guidance. ... It would be unrealistic and untrue to state that all these young men are perfect men or perfect bishops. They are mortals subject to the whims and weaknesses common to their fellows. They are not all as wise as Solomon. They are not all as personable as President McKay. They are not all as kind as President George Albert Smith was, but as I have known thousands of them personally through a half century and more, I am astounded at the power and strength and dignity and goodness and ability of these young men." (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 475))

30 Yea, and ^aas often as my people ^brepent will I forgive them their trespasses against me. (“One of Satan's most cunning ways to lead men on in wrongdoing is craftily to make them believe in the uselessness of repentance. ‘I have gone too far to repent; there is no forgiveness for me.’ That is not true. ‘Yea,’ the Lord said to Alma, ‘And as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me.’ Of course there is forgiveness for everyone, if it were not so, God's great purposes would fail and this we do not believe. The poor sheep may be lost in the wood, hungry and helpless and cold, hunted by the wolf, falling over the precipice. ‘But the Good Shepherd is on His way and is looking for it, and will find it. And will take it into His arms and will carry it to the fold’ and will rejoice that the lost is found and the dead is again alive.” (Reynolds and Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, p. 268))

31 And ye shall also ^aforgive one another your trespasses; for verily I say unto you, he that forgiveth not his ^bneighbor's trespasses when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation. (Spencer W. Kimball said: “Remember that we must forgive even if our offender did not repent and ask forgiveness...Do we follow that commandment or do we sulk in our bitterness, waiting for our offender to learn of it and to kneel to us in remorse?...No bitterness of past frictions can be held in memory if we forgive with all our hearts.” (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1949, pp. 132-3 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 237))

32 Now I say unto you, Go; and whosoever will ^anot repent of his sins the same shall not be numbered among my people (they will still be a part of the community, but not of the church and covenant of God); and this shall be observed from this time forward. (This is done even in our day. This shows that God directs the work through his prophets.)

33 And it came to pass when Alma had heard these words he ^awrote them down (Alma's General Handbook of Instructions.) that he might have them, and that he might judge the people of that church according to the commandments of God.

34 And it came to pass that Alma went and judged those that had been taken in iniquity, according to the ^aword of the Lord. (Mormon makes it clear that Alma followed the Lord's directions.)

35 And whosoever repented of their sins and did ^aconfess them, them he did number among the people of the church;

36 And those that would not confess their sins and repent of their iniquity, the same were not numbered among the people of the church, and their names were ^ablotted out. (As the bishops and stake presidents decide what to do with transgressors, this principle is a key to wise judgment. From the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, the following paragraphs are applicable: “The purposes of Church discipline are (1) to save the souls of transgressors (2) to protect the innocent, and (3) to safeguard the purity, integrity, and good name of the Church. These purposes are accomplished through private counsel and caution, informal probation, formal probation, disfellowshipment, and excommunication.” (*Church Handbook of Instructions*, 1998, Book 1, p. 91) “Voluntary Confession - Voluntary and complete confession demonstrates a repentant attitude, which may favor leniency. An admission of guilt after a person has been accused of or interviewed about a transgression is less indicative of repentance. A person who admits guilt when interviewed by a bishop shows greater repentance than one who tries to deceive and admits guilt only when confronted with evidence.” (*Church Handbook of Instructions*, 1998, Book 1, p. 103) “Evidence of Repentance - Normally, evidence of repentance is the most important single factor in determining how to accomplish the first purpose of Church discipline: saving the soul of the transgressor. Genuine repentance is demonstrated more reliably by righteous actions over a period of time than by intense sorrow during a single interview. Judgments about the adequacy of repentance require spiritual discernment. Factors to consider include the nature of the confession, depth of sorrow for the sin, success in forsaking the sin, strength of faith in Jesus Christ, faithfulness in obeying other commandments, truthful communications to Church officers, restitution to injured persons, obedience to legal requirements, and willingness to follow the direction of Church authorities.” (*Church Handbook of Instructions*, 1998, Book 1, p. 104) Dallin H. Oaks said: “In contrast to the

punishment that is the intended result of the judgment of a criminal court, the primary purpose of church discipline is to facilitate repentance—to qualify a transgressor for the mercy of God and the salvation made possible through the atonement of Jesus Christ....Church discipline is not an instrument of punishment, but a catalyst for change....The major concern of the laws of God is to perfect the lives of his children.” (*Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 237) Spencer W. Kimball said: “The Lord is on your side and you must remember that numerous people are saved by excommunication. They are not *lost* by excommunication. They are *saved* through excommunication.” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 98 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 238))

37 And it came to pass that Alma did regulate all the affairs of the church; and they began again to have peace and to prosper exceedingly in the affairs of the church, walking circumspectly before God, receiving many, and baptizing many.

38 And now all these things did Alma and his ^afellow laborers do who were over the church, ^bwalking in all diligence, teaching the word of God in all things, suffering all manner of afflictions, being persecuted by all those who did not belong to the church of God. (This is telling of the difficulties in the church because of the unbelievers. Mormon will tell more about that later in the next chapter.)

39 And they did admonish their brethren; and they were also ^aadmonished, every one by the word of God, according to his sins, or to the sins which he had committed, being commanded of God to ^bpray without ceasing, and to give ^cthanks in all things. (Not only is there not a chapter break here in the original 1830 edition, but there is not even a paragraph break. Chapter 26:34 through 27:1 were part of the same paragraph in the original 1830 edition.)

CHAPTER 27

Mosiah forbids persecution and enjoins equality—Alma the younger and the four sons of Mosiah seek to destroy the Church—An angel appears and commands them to cease their evil course—Alma is struck dumb—All mankind must be born again to gain salvation—Alma and the sons of Mosiah declare glad tidings. [Probably between 100 and 92 B.C.]

1 AND now it came to pass that the persecutions which were inflicted on the church by the unbelievers became so great that the church began to murmur, and complain to their leaders concerning the matter; and they did complain to Alma. And Alma laid the case before their king, Mosiah. And Mosiah ^aconsulted with his priests.

2 And it came to pass that king Mosiah sent a proclamation throughout the land round about that there should not any unbeliever ^apersecute any of those who belonged to the church of God.

3 And there was a strict command throughout all the churches that there should be no ^apersecutions among them, that there should be an ^bequality among all men;

4 That they should let no pride nor haughtiness disturb their ^apeace; that every man should ^besteem his ^cneighbor as himself, ^dlaboring with their own hands for their support. (Mosiah is not speaking of equality in the law, but in the social structure.)

5 Yea, and all their priests and teachers ^ashould ^blabor with their own hands for their support (to make sure no elites arise to be supported by others), in all cases save it were in sickness, or in much want; and doing these things, they did abound in the ^cgrace of God.

6 And there began to be much peace again in the land; and the people began to be very numerous, and began to scatter abroad upon the face of the earth, yea, on the north and on the south, on the east and on the west, building large cities and villages in all quarters of the land.

7 And the Lord did ^avisit them and ^bprosper them, and they became a large and wealthy people.

8 Now the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the ^aunbelievers; and also one of the sons of Alma was numbered among them, he being called Alma, after his father; nevertheless, he became a very

wicked and an ^bidolatrous man. And he was a man of many words, and did speak much ^cflattery to the people; therefore he ^dled many of the people to do after the manner of his ^einiquities. (Alma is singled out because of the conversion story which is about to happen.)

9 And he became a great hinderment to the prosperity of the church of God; ^astealing away the hearts of the people; causing much dissension among the people; giving a chance for the enemy of God to exercise his ^bpower over them. (They enjoyed freedom of speech. The evidence points to the idea that Alma was not fresh from his teenage years or twenty-something but a mature man before the angel visited him. This idea comes from a couple of sources. After the angel visits Alma the Younger, it is a relatively short period of time before his father, Alma dies at the age of 82 (see Mosiah 29:45). Would it be likely at that age to have a child in his twenties? Or is it more likely that Alma the Younger was more mature-perhaps even in his forties when the angel visited? It is also noteworthy that he is described as "a very wicked and an idolatrous man. And he was a man of many words, and did speak much flattery to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities. And he became a great hinderment to the prosperity of the church of God; stealing away the hearts of the people; causing much dissension among the people; giving a chance for the enemy of God to exercise his power over them (Mosiah 27: 8, 9) This sounds like a well-practiced sinner, matured in his capacities for making trouble, not just a hot shot youth with a streak of rebellion. The reason this question of Alma's age is significant is because of the additional insight it gives us into the story. Alma the Younger's sins were not trivial, but heinous and destructive; his lies had shattered the lives and eternal hopes of many people. The persecutions and disruptions to the Church were so great that the believers were beginning to complain. Alma the Younger had been about major league sinning-and probably for years. These are not trivial sins easily washed away. What's more a more mature Alma the Younger gives us a greater sense of Alma and his prayers. The Church that Alma had established, his life's work, was being demolished by his own son. Alma the Younger's avowed aim, which he was relentlessly about, was "seeking to destroy the Church" (Mosiah 27:10). Yet, this righteous father did not give up on his son. He did not resent or hate him for trampling upon everything he held dear. No, he prayed for him with great intent. These prayers didn't last just a month or even a year. Alma didn't give up when he saw the utter destructiveness of his son. His prayers and faith must have gone on tirelessly for several years-maybe even decades. Maurine Proctor, Meridian Magazine, Lesson 20.)

10 And now it came to pass that while he was going about to ^adestroy the church of God, for he did go about secretly with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the church, and to lead astray the people of the Lord, contrary to the commandments of God, or even the king— (They are teaching the other religion of idolatry.)

11 And as I said unto you, as they were going about ^arebellious against God, behold, the ^bangel of the Lord ^cappeared unto them; (All of them saw the angel.) and he descended as it were in a ^dcloud; and he spake as it were with a voice of thunder, which caused the earth to shake upon which they stood; (See Alma 36 for a more detailed account of Alma's conversion. The witness of the Holy Ghost is more powerful than the visitation of an angel. Heber J. Grant taught, "Many men say: 'If I could only see an angel, if I could only hear an angel proclaim something, that would cause me to be faithful all the days of my life!' It had no effect upon these men that were not serving the Lord, and it would have no effect today." (*Conference Reports*, Apr. 1924, p. 159) An example of this is seen in the life of Lyman Johnson. "Lyman Johnson...reportedly apostatized after having seen an angel... 'I remember hearing President Snow say on more than one occasion,' recalled Mathias Cowley, 'how determined Lyman E. Johnson was to see an angel from the Lord. He plead [sic] with and teased the Lord to send an angel to him until he saw an angel; but President Snow said the trouble with him was that he saw an angel one day and saw the devil the next day, and finally the devil got away with him.'²⁶" (*FARMS*, vol. 2, no. 2-Fall 1993, p. 171) Hugh Nibley quoted Brigham Young who said, 'Pray that you never see an angel.' He was talking historically. Almost everybody who saw an angel left the Church. They came back, but they had these terrible problems. It gave them inflated egos, etc. They thought they were somebody special.

They were, but they couldn't take it. It would be very dangerous if we were exposed to the other world to any degree. Only people that are very humble can do that. Not us, we can't do that. We are not that humble.” (*The Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 41, p.193) Wilford Woodruff said “...the Lord never did nor never will send an angel to anybody merely to gratify the desire of the individual to see an angel. If the Lord sends an angel to anyone, He sends him to perform a work that cannot be performed only by the administration of an angel. I said to him that those were my views. The Lord had sent angels to men from the creation of the world, at different times, but always with a message or with something to perform that could not be performed without.” (*Collected Discourses 1886-1898*, ed. by Brian Stuy, vol. 5, Wilford Woodruff, Oct. 19, 1896))

12 And so great was their astonishment, that they fell to the earth, and understood not the words which he spake unto them.

13 Nevertheless he cried again, saying: Alma, arise and stand forth, for why persecutest thou the church of God? For the Lord hath said: ^aThis is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall ^boverthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people. (However, in this dispensation, the Church will not be overthrown. This must mean that there are enough righteous people on the earth that will help the church to continue rolling on.)

14 And again, the angel said: Behold, the Lord hath ^aheard the prayers of his people, and also the ^bprayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has ^cprayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the ^dknowledge of the truth; therefore, for this purpose have I come to ^econvince thee of the power and authority of God, that the ^fprayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith. (Elder LeGrand Richards said, “You remember what Alma did when his son, Alma, didn’t walk in the ways of the Lord and went about trying to destroy the church. He just did not give the Lord any rest about it; he took it to the Lord in mighty prayer until an angel of heaven appeared to his son...” (Conference Report, Oct. 1947, p. 75 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 239) “...Parents today often pray with great faith for their rebellious sons and daughters, yet they do not always receive the same results. Alma the Elder’s gospel is the same gospel that we have today; why then are there not more angels and more thunderous and transforming experiences? Mortal parents who make their own best effort to reach their children can invoke divine assistance through prayer, for all scriptures unite in testifying that God answers prayers. Perhaps the Lord does send angels, but angels of a different sort. Inspired teachers, friends, bishops, home teachers, Scout leaders, and others can serve the same function as angels from above. These embodied angels, inspired by the Holy Ghost, are sent by the Lord to assist and to love. “Evidently there were factors in Alma the Younger’s circumstance that necessitated his peculiar experience.” (Dennis L. Largey, *Church News*, Apr. 2, 1992) Joseph B. Wirthlin said: “Alma the Younger’s conversion was brought about by his father’s persevering faith. Despite the profound depths of worldly wickedness into which his son had sunk, Alma did not give up on the son he loved. Here is a case where a righteous man surely loathed the sin, but dearly loved the sinner. He diligently, hopefully, fervently prayed for his son. The angel messenger who visited Alma the Younger told him that he had “come to convince [him] of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith.” (*Heroes From the Book of Mormon*, p. 93) Boyd K. Packer said: “We emphasize that the greatest work you will do will be within the walls of your home....It is not uncommon for responsible parents to lose one of their children, for a time, to influences over which they have no control. They agonize over rebellious sons or daughters. They are puzzled over why they are so helpless when they have tried so hard to do what they should. It is my conviction that those wicked influences one day will be overruled. ‘The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught a more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold.

Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.'" (Orson F. Whitney, *Conference Report*, April 1929, p. 110 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 189) "The Lord has promised that if we ask in faith for that which is right, we shall receive. (3 Nephi 18:20.) However, he has not promised the manner or the time in which the prayer will be answered. When the angel appeared to Alma the younger and the four sons of Mosiah, the angel made it clear that he had not appeared to them because of their own worthiness. Rather, he said, "for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith." (Mosiah 27:14. Italics added.) Also the angel pled with them to repent of their sins and "seek to destroy the church no more" that the prayers of the righteous members of the church might be answered. (Mosiah 27:16. Italics added.) Evidently it was primarily because of the faithful prayers of Alma the elder and the other members of the church that the angel appeared to Alma the younger and the four sons of Mosiah." (Ludlow, Daniel H. *A Companion to your Study of the Book of Mormon*. Deseret Book. 1976, p.192.)

15 And now behold, can ye dispute the power of God? For behold, doth not my voice shake the earth? And can ye not also ^abehold me before you? And I am sent from God.

16 Now I say unto thee: Go, and remember the captivity of thy fathers in the land of ^aHelam, (Alma was probably taught these stories in his youth and so the angel is telling him to recall them.) and in the land of Nephi; and remember how great things he has done for them; for they were in ^bbondage, and he has ^cdelivered them. And now I say unto thee, Alma, go thy way, and seek to destroy the church no more, that their prayers may be answered, and this even if thou wilt of ^dthyself be ^ecast off.

17 And now it came to pass that these were the last words which the angel spake unto Alma, and he departed. (Why did they see an angel when so many others who have left the Church and warred against it do not appear to have been granted a like privilege. Consider the following: (1) It ought to be observed that if all rebellious souls were accorded a personal visit from an angel assuring the reality of the world to come with its rewards and punishments, there would be little need for faith on anyone's part. (2) Such appearances of angels would create the temptation to obtain a testimony by negative behavior rather than through righteousness. Given that few among the faithful are privileged to enjoy the ministering of angels, it would seem a strange system of theology that freely granted such a privilege to the wicked. (3) It could be that some appreciable number of people have had such an experience and have rejected the divine counsel and chosen not to repent, and thus we have no record of the experience; like Laman and Lemuel. (4) The Savior explained that those who reject the testimony of scripture and living prophets would also reject the testimony of angels were they to appear to them. (5) We have the testimony of scripture that some have entertained angels unawares, and we might suppose that in many instances angels have sought to entice transgressors from their course in unobserved or less dramatic ways than this appearance to Alma and the sons of Mosiah. (6) The prayers of the righteous cannot go unheard. Alma the Elder and Mosiah were both men of great faith who no doubt implored the heavens night and day with a plea of help to save their wayward sons. Nor did they pray alone, for their pleadings were joined by those of all the faithful of the Church in and around Zarahemla. (7) It need be remembered that the Lord, who can manifest his powers in a great variety of ways, is hardly limited to angelic ministrations or open visions. Many have had conversion experiences of spiritual impact and consequence equal to Alma's experiences which are the result of a coalescence of circumstances divinely contrived: life changing experiences involving such things as a confrontation with death, an inspired sermon, a caring parent or relative, or a sensitive priesthood leader. DCBM, 2:304-5.)

18 And now Alma and those that were with him fell again to the earth, for great was their astonishment; for with their own eyes they had beheld an ^aangel of the Lord; and his voice was as thunder, which

^bshook the earth; and they knew that there was nothing save the power of God that could shake the earth and cause it to tremble as though it would part asunder.

19 And now the astonishment of Alma was so great that he became ^adumb, that he could not open his mouth; yea, and he became weak, even that he could not move his hands; therefore he was taken by those that were with him, and carried helpless, even until he was laid before his father.

20 And they rehearsed unto his father all that had happened unto them; and his father rejoiced, for he knew that it was the power of God.

21 And he caused that a multitude should be gathered together that they might witness what the Lord had done for his son, and also for those that were with him.

22 And he caused that the priests should assemble themselves together; and they began to fast, and to pray to the Lord their God that he would open the mouth of Alma, that he might speak, and also that his limbs might receive their strength—that the eyes of the people might be opened to see and know of the goodness and glory of God.

23 And it came to pass after they had fasted and prayed for the space of ^atwo days and two nights, (Since Alma had been preaching against the Messiah, here he has an experience that symbolizes the death and resurrection of the Messiah. In Alma 36:10, he indicates that his incapacity lasted three days and three nights, the same amount of time Christ was in the tomb prior to his resurrection. The priests fasted for two days, which was different than the number of days Alma was unconscious. This means that the priests started their fast the day after Alma's experience.) the limbs of Alma received their strength, and he stood up and began to speak unto them, bidding them to be of good comfort:

24 For, said he, I have repented of my sins, (The difference between Alma seeing an angel and Laman and Lemuel seeing an angel, is that Alma repented, where Laman and Lemuel did not.) and have been ^aredeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit. (Alma is born again through the atonement of Christ, as is the case with all of us. Alma has now made the covenant that he before rejected.)

25 And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be ^aborn again; yea, ^bborn of God, ^cchanged from their carnal and ^dfallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his ^esons and daughters;

26 And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in ^anowise inherit the kingdom of God. (On the evening of 10 May 1921, as they sailed toward what is now Western Samor, Elder McKay had the following experience: Toward evening, the reflection of the afterglow of a beautiful sunset was most splendid!... Pondering still upon this beautiful scene, I lay in my [bed] at ten o'clock that night... I then fell asleep, and beheld in vision something infinitely sublime. In the distance I beheld a beautiful white city. Though it was far away, yet I seemed to realize that trees with luscious fruit, shrubbery with gorgeously tinted leaves, and flowers in perfect bloom abounded everywhere. The clear sky above seemed to reflect these beautiful shades of color. I then saw a great concourse of people approaching the city. Each one wore a white flowing robe and a white headdress. Instantly my attention seemed centered upon their leader, and though I could see only the profile of his features and his body, I recognized him at once as my Savior! The tint and radiance of his countenance were glorious to behold. There was a peace about him which seemed sublime – it was divine! The city, I understood, was his. It was the City Eternal; and the people following him were to abide there in peace and eternal happiness. But who were they? As if the Savior read my thoughts, he answered by pointing to a semicircle that then appeared above them, and on which were written in gold the words: These Are They Who Have Overcome the World – Who Have Truly Been Born Again! Teachings of Presidents of the Church – David O. McKay, 1-2)

27 I say unto you, unless this be the case, they must be cast off; and this I know, because I was like to be cast off.

28 Nevertheless, after ^awading through much ^btribulation, repenting nigh unto death, the Lord in mercy hath seen fit to snatch me out of an ^ceverlasting burning, and I am born of God.

29 My soul hath been ^aredeemed from the gall of bitterness and ^bbonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest

abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was ^cracked with eternal torment (The torment lasted three days, so the “eternal” torment had reference to the quality of the torment, not its duration.); but I am ^dsnatched, and my soul is ^epained no more.

30 I rejected my Redeemer, and denied that which had been spoken of by our fathers; but now that they may foresee that he will come, and that he remembereth every creature of his creating, he will make himself manifest unto ^aall.

31 Yea, ^aevery knee shall bow, and every tongue confess before him. (Neal A. Maxwell said: “In that context, at the judgment bar of God we will ‘praise and adore at the mercy seat.’ We will not ‘stand all amazed’-instead we will kneel all amazed! Knowing the grandness and scope of God's work, we shall participate in that moment when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ (Philippians 2:10; D&C 76:110). Among those kneeling will be vilest of sinners, for whose sins Jesus also suffered (Mosiah 28:4). Among all the knees bending and the tongues confessing will be those of the leaders of all earthly religious movements, however diverse, good, or commendable those movements have been. What we will feel on that occasion will be God's and Jesus' perfect love for us-not a scolding sternness but a profound kindness and immense tenderness. As these virtues flow from them toward us, many will feel the scalding shame of not having returned that love. As we feel their perfect love, we will confess that the justice and mercy of God are likewise perfect. To stand approved of God at that great and last day-such is the challenge, such is the crucial nature of spiritual submissiveness while living in a tutoring world, ‘for in this world [our] joy is not full’ (D&C 101:36). Body and spirit are not yet inseparably connected, death will come to us, yet we have been given profound promises.” (*Not My Will, But Thine Be Done*, p. 141)) Yea, even at the last day, when all men shall stand to be ^bjudged of him, then shall they confess that he is ^cGod; then shall they confess, who live ^dwithout God in the world, that the judgment of an everlasting punishment is just upon them; and they shall quake, and tremble, and shrink beneath the glance of his ^eall-searching eye. (Alma has had this experience, and he tells us that we will also bow the knee and confess that Jesus is the Christ.)

32 And now it came to pass that Alma began from this time forward to teach the people, and those who were with Alma at the time the angel appeared unto them, traveling round about through all the land, publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen, and preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being greatly persecuted by those who were unbelievers, being smitten by many of them. (Restitution)

33 But notwithstanding all this, they did impart much consolation to the church, confirming their faith, and exhorting them with long-suffering and much travail to keep the commandments of God.

34 And four of them were the ^asons of Mosiah; and their names were Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and Himni; these were the names of the sons of Mosiah. (“The order of the birth of the four sons of Mosiah is never made clear in the Book of Mormon. The listing in Mosiah 27:34 would indicate that Ammon was the first born followed by Aaron, then Omner, and Himni. Also, the fact that Ammon was the leader on their missionary journey to the Lamanites would seem to indicate that Ammon was the eldest. (See Alma, chapters 17-26.) However, when King Mosiah asked his people to select his successor, they first desired that Aaron should be their king and their ruler. (Mosiah 29:1-2.) In this single instance it appears as though Aaron may have been the eldest son.” (Ludlow, Daniel H. *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*. Deseret Book, 1976, p. 192).)

35 And they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla, and among all the ^apeople who were under the reign of king Mosiah, ^bzealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, ^cconfessing all their sins, and publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them. (Brigham Young said: “...if you have sinned against your God, or against yourselves, confess to God, and keep the matter to yourselves, for I do not want to know anything about it.” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 158.) Spencer J. Condie said: “There are some people who, caught up with a feeling of humility and contrition, disclose their own weaknesses before the public, such as in a testimony meeting, rather than confessing their sins in the

privacy of a bishop's office. The scriptures tell us that only when sins are widely known should there be public confession (see D&C 42:80–93). Otherwise, our sins should be confessed to our bishop or to our Heavenly Father in prayer.” (*In Perfect Balance*, p. 217) Orson Pratt said: “After a man has repented, will his faith and repentance bring the forgiveness of sins through the atonement? Are these all the conditions required? No. You may confess your sins; but if you never make restitution to the persons you have wronged, your confession will be of no service.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, p. 263) Spencer W. Kimball said: “To every forgiveness there is a condition. The plaster must be as wide as the sore. The fasting, the prayers, the humility must be equal to or greater than the sin. There must be a broken heart and a contrite spirit. There must be ‘sackcloth and ashes.’ There must be tears and genuine change of heart. There must be conviction of the sin, abandonment of the evil, confession of the error to properly constituted authorities of the Lord. There must be restitution and a confirmed, determined change of pace, direction and destination. Conditions must be controlled and companionship corrected or changed. There must be a washing of robes to get them white and there must be a new consecration and devotion to the living of all of the laws of God. In short, there must be an overcoming of self, of sin, and of the world.” (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 353))

36 And thus they were instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer.

37 And how blessed are they! For they did ^apublish ^bpeace; they did publish good tidings of good; and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth.

CHAPTER 28

The sons of Mosiah shall have eternal life—They go to preach to the Lamanites—Mosiah translates the Jaredite plates with the two seer stones. [About 92 B.C.]

1 NOW it came to pass that after the ^asons of Mosiah had done all these things, *they took a small number with them and returned to their father, the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them that they might, with these whom they had ^bselected, go up to the land of ^cNephi that they might preach the things which they had heard, and that they might impart the word of God to their brethren, the Lamanites— (The desire to serve and the call to serve are not the same. They seek their call from Mosiah who inquires of the Lord and grants their call to serve. One reason they may have wanted to preach to the Lamanites may be because the religion that Alma and the sons of Mosiah had adopted came from the Lamanites. Knowing the religion of the Lamanites, they may have wanted to show them that even though they once believed as the Lamanites, now they were converted to the truth.)

2 ^aThat perhaps they might bring them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and convince them of the iniquity of their fathers; and that perhaps they might cure them of their ^bhatred towards the Nephites, that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God, that they might become friendly to one another, and that there should be no more contentions in all the land which the Lord their God had given them.

3 Now they were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not ^abear that any human ^bsoul should ^cperish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure ^dendless torment did cause them to quake and ^etremble.

4 And thus did the Spirit of the Lord work upon them, for they were the very ^avilest of sinners. And the Lord saw fit in his infinite ^bmercy to spare them; nevertheless they suffered much anguish of soul because of their iniquities, suffering much and fearing that they should be cast off forever.

5 And it came to pass that they did plead with their father many days that they might go up to the land of Nephi. (It was important to get the king's permission since the actions of these boys may have serious implications in the relations between the people of Zarahemla and the surrounding Lamanite cities. The Lamanites might think they were spies and attack the Nephites.)

6 And king Mosiah went and ^ainquired of the Lord if he should let his sons go up among the Lamanites to preach the word.

7 And the Lord said unto Mosiah: Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words, and they shall have eternal life; and I will ^adeliver thy sons out of the hands of the Lamanites.

8 And it came to pass that Mosiah granted that they might go and do according to their request.


9 And they ^atook their journey into the wilderness to go up to preach the word among the Lamanites; and I shall give an ^baccount of their proceedings hereafter.

10 Now king Mosiah had no one to confer the kingdom upon, for there was not any of his sons who ^awould accept of the kingdom. (So important was their conversion that they refused the inheritance that they had been trained to accept. Mosiah may have tried other lines of succession, but Mormon did not mention that.)

11 Therefore he took the records which were engraven on the plates of ^abrass, and also the plates of ^bNephi, and all the things which he had kept and preserved according to the commandments of God, after having translated and caused to be written the records which were on the ^cplates of gold which had been found by the people of Limhi, which were delivered to him by the hand of Limhi;

12 And this he did because of the great anxiety of his people; for they were desirous beyond measure to know concerning those people ^awho had been destroyed.

13 And now he translated them by the means of those two ^astones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow. (Here, we get a rare description of the Urim and Thummim (literally “lights and perfections”). This must have been the Urim and Thummim given to the brother of Jared (Ether 3:23-4). The Urim and Thummim consisted of a breastplate to which were attached some sort of metal pieces, called silver bows, which positioned the stones before the face of the interpreter. The stones spoken of became like translucent lenses through which the interpreter looked in order to read and translate other languages. The best physical description of an Urim and Thummim is as follows: "two transparent stones set in the rim of a [silver] bow fastened to a breast plate" (HC 4:537; JS-H 1:35). Joseph Fielding Smith said: “The Lord gave to the brother of Jared the Urim and Thummim which he brought with him to this continent. These were separate and distinct from the Urim and Thummim had by Abraham and in Israel in the days of Aaron. . . . King Mosiah possessed ‘. . . two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow’ called by the Nephites ‘Interpreters,’ with which he translated the Jaredite record, and these were handed down from generation to generation for the purpose of interpreting languages. How Mosiah came into possession of these ‘two stones’ or Urim and Thummim, the record does not tell us, more than to say that it was a ‘gift from God.’ Mosiah had this ‘gift’ or Urim and Thummim before the people of Limhi discovered the record of Ether. They may have been received when the ‘large stone’ was brought to Mosiah with engravings upon it, which he interpreted by the ‘gift and power of God. (Omni 1:20)’ They may have been given to him, or to some other prophet before his day, just as the brother of Jared received them--from the Lord. That the Urim and Thummim, or two stones, given to the brother of Jared were those in the possession of Mosiah appears evident. . . .” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol 1, pp. 159-161) The account of Mosiah 28:13 speaks of two rims of a bow with two stones, the Urim and Thummim, used to know the mind of the Lord. The Emeritus General Authority, Patriarch, Eldredge G. Smith once spoke of Joseph Smith describing the Urim and Thummim as two triangular stones connected by silver bows. The use of these special revelatory stones has been repeated throughout time. It is a characteristic of the House of Israel. Daniel Rona, Book of Mormon Supplement Study Material, 83. It is noted that when the two triangles are put on top of each other, they form the star

of David. 

14 Now these things were prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages;

15 And they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he should discover to every creature who should possess the land the iniquities and abominations of his people;

16 And whosoever has these things is called ^aseer, after the manner of old times.

17 Now after Mosiah had finished ^atranslating these ^brecords, behold, it gave an account of the people who were ^cdestroyed, from the time that they were destroyed back to the building of the ^dgreat tower, at the time the Lord ^econfounded the language of the people and they were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth, yea, and even from that time back until the creation of Adam. (Joseph Fielding Smith said: “In translating this record Mosiah kept from going forth to the people that particular part forbidden of the Lord to be revealed until after he was lifted up upon the cross. These sacred revelations given to the brother of Jared were kept from the Nephite people, as well as many other things, until after the resurrection of Christ. After the appearing of the Savior to the Nephites, the vision of the brother of Jared was revealed to the Nephites. When Moroni made his abridgment of the record of Ether, he copied on his record the vision of the brother of Jared. At the command of the Lord, however, Moroni also sealed up the greater things in this vision and the ‘interpreters’--which were the same ‘two stones’ had by the brother of Jared, so that this vision should not be made known even in our day among the Gentiles, in the day of their wickedness; ‘ . . . until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.’ (Ether 4:7) So we today do not have the fulness of the account written and sealed up by the brother of Jared and again sealed by Moroni. This part of the record the Prophet Joseph Smith was forbidden to translate. We have, then, received but the ‘lesser part.’” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol 1, p. 162))

18 Now this account did cause the people of Mosiah to mourn exceedingly, yea, they were filled with sorrow; nevertheless it gave them much knowledge, in the which they did rejoice.

19 And this account shall be ^awritten hereafter (*Book of Ether*); for behold, it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account.

20 (Verse 20 is actually the beginning of a new chapter in the 1830 edition.) And now, as I said unto you, that after king Mosiah had done these things, he took the plates of ^abrass, and all the things which he had kept, and ^bconferred them upon Alma (The records were probably given to Alma to make sure that if there was a rebellion by the people in deciding who would be their next king, that the records would be kept safe.), who was the son of Alma; yea, all the records, and also the ^cinterpreters, and conferred them upon him, and commanded him that he should keep and ^dpreserve them, and also keep a record of the people, handing them down from one generation to another, even as they had been handed down from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem. (Notice that he did not confer the Liahona or the Sword of Laban, which were traditionally tied to the ruler of the government. Prior to King Benjamin, there had been a separation between the keeper of the records and the keeper of the Sword of Laban. Now it appears that it reverts back to that policy.)

* Verse 1 [About 92 B.C.].

THE BOOK OF ALMA THE SON OF ALMA

The commandments of Alma to his son Helaman. (The first sentence was part of the original text.)
Comprising chapters 36 and 37.

CHAPTER 36

Alma testifies to Helaman of his conversion by an angel—He suffered the pains of a damned soul; he called upon the name of Jesus, and was then born of God—Sweet joy filled his soul—He saw concourses of angels praising God—His converts have tasted and seen as he did. [About 73 B.C.] (The entire chapter is a chiasm.)

1 MY ^ason, give ear to my words; for I swear unto you, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land.

2 I would that ye should do as I have done, in remembering the captivity of our fathers; for they were in ^abondage, (We are all in bondage to sin, no matter how small the sin.) and none could ^bdeliver them except it was the ^cGod of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he surely did deliver them in their afflictions.

3 And now, O my son Helaman, behold, thou art in thy youth, and therefore, I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me; for I do know that whosoever shall put their ^atrust in God shall be supported in their ^btrials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be ^clifted up at the last day. (John Taylor said: “There are many things that seem to us trials and difficulties, that perplex, annoy, and harass our spirits; yet these very things, as one justly observed, are blessings in disguise, so many helps to us to develop our weaknesses and infirmities, and lead us to put our trust in God, and rely upon Him to give us a knowledge of ourselves, of our neighbors, and of the work of God; they have a tendency to develop principles of worth to our minds, and thus they serve as schoolmasters, helps, and instructors, and are to us as many blessings in disguise. In fact all things that we have to do with in the world, whether they are adversity or prosperity, whether they relate to ourselves or to others, if rightly appreciated and understood, may teach us a lesson that will be to our joy, probably not only in time, but in all eternity.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 366) We note that the prophet did not make promises in case we have trials, but rather when we do. We need not wonder why the Lord doesn’t prevent our troubles from occurring, or whether He actually causes our trials and tribulations. While we bring many afflictions upon ourselves by committing sin, most afflictions are simply hazards of mortality and cannot be avoided. Saints who wonder why the Lord doesn’t protect His people from suffering must realize that the Lord’s purpose is to prepare people for problems instead of preventing those problems. In other words, we would have the Lord remove our burdens; instead He increases our capacity to bear them. Leau G. Otten, C. Max Caldwell, *Unlocking the Book of Mormon*, 298)

4 And I would not that ye think that I ^aknow of myself—not of the temporal but of the spiritual, not of the ^bcarnal mind but of God. (To restate this phrase, the more modern meaning might be “I would not that ye think that I know by study – not of the temporal learning, but rather of the spiritual learning, not from the learning of man, but the mind/teaching of God.” Brant Gardner.)

5 Now, behold, I say unto you, if I had not been ^aborn of God I should ^bnot have known these things; but God has, by the mouth of his holy ^cangel, made these things known unto me, not of any ^dworthiness of myself; (Alma knew that he was not worthy of such a ministration.)

6 For I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to ^adestroy the church of God (We confess our sins at the level they were committed. If we sin openly and it is known to a wide group, then we are to confess openly. If our sins are known to no one, then we confess to the Lord and to the person injured.); but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop us by the way.

7 And behold, he spake unto us, as it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did ^atremble beneath our feet; and we all fell to the earth, for the ^bfear of the Lord came upon us.

8 But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel.

9 And he said unto me: If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God.

10 And it came to pass that I fell to the earth; and it was for the space of ^athree days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs.

11 And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did ^anot hear them; for when I heard the words—If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God—I was struck with such great fear and amazement lest perhaps I should be destroyed, that I fell to the earth and I did hear no more. (Marvin J. Ashton: Generally our Heavenly Father will not interfere with the agency of another person unless he has a greater purpose for that individual. Two examples come to mind: Saul, who became the Apostle Paul, and Alma the Younger. Both these men were deterred from their unrighteous objective of persecuting and trying to destroy the Church of God.

Both became great missionaries for the Church. But even as the Lord intervened, they were given choices. Alma, for example, was told: "If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God" (BYU Speeches of the Year, 10 Nov 1992, 5)

12 But I was racked with ^aeternal ^btorment, for my soul was ^charrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

13 Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities (In the day of judgment, the wicked will have a perfect knowledge of all their sins.), for which I was ^atormented with the ^bpains of hell; yea, I saw that I had ^crebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

14 Yea, and I had ^amurdered (Alma was so concerned that he may have caused people to forever be removed from the grace of God, that he considered it to be murder, or better stated, spiritual murder, killing them spiritually.) many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction; yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, that the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror.

15 Oh, thought I, that I ^acould be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my ^bdeeds.

16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the ^apains of a ^bdamned soul. (Alma tasted only a portion of that pain spoken of. The scriptures are clear that no one fully understands unless they have experienced it. Thus, those who have seen this torment in vision still don't know the height, the depth, and the misery thereof. The early missionaries in England were shown what it would be like for the damned souls of hell when they witnessed a brief vision of the evil spirits which had joined forces to destroy the work. Heber C. Kimball gives a brief but vivid description of what he saw: "We could distinctly see the evil spirits, who foamed and gnashed their teeth at us. We gazed upon them about an hour and a half (by Willard [Richards's] watch)... We saw the devils coming in legions, with their leaders, who came within a few feet of us. They came towards us like armies rushing to battle. They appeared to be men of full stature, possessing every form and feature of men in the flesh, who were angry and desperate; and I shall never forget the vindictive malignity depicted on their countenances as they looked me in the eye; and any attempt to paint the scene which then presented itself, or portray their malice and enmity, would be vain. I perspired exceedingly, my clothes becoming as wet as if I had been taken out of the river. I felt excessive pain, and was in the greatest distress for some time. I cannot even look back on the scene without feelings of horror; yet by it I learned the power of the adversary, his enmity against the servants of God and got some understanding of the invisible world. We distinctly heard those spirits talk and express their wrath and hellish designs against us. However, the Lord delivered us from them, and blessed us exceedingly that day." (*Heroes of the Restoration*, p. 64-5) Spencer W. Kimball: When we come to recognize our sin sincerely and without reservations, we are ready to follow such processes as will rid us of sin's effects. Young Alma was so deep in his sin that it was most difficult for him to humble himself toward repentance, but when his experiences broke down his resistance, softened his rebellion and overcame his stubbornness, he began to see himself in his true light and appraise his situation as it really was. His hard heart was softened. His repentance was being born. *Miracle of Forgiveness*, 157-59)

17 And it came to pass that as I was thus ^aracked with torment, while I was ^bharrowed up by the ^cmemory of my many sins, behold, I ^dremembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world. (It is only through Christ's atonement that we can be saved. Boyd K. Packer: The prophets teach how painful guilt can be. As I read what they have said, be prepared for *very* strong words. Even so, I will not read the strongest things they have said. The prophet Alma, describing his feelings of guilt, said, "I was *racked* with eternal torment, for my soul was *harrowed up* to the greatest degree and *racked* with all my sins." The prophets chose very graphic words. *Racked* means "tortured." Anciently a rack was a framework on which the victim was laid with each ankle and wrist tied to a spindle which could then be turned to cause unbearable pain. A harrow is a frame with spikes through it. When pulled across the

ground, it rips and tears into the soil. The scriptures frequently speak of souls and minds being "harrowed up" with guilt. *Torment* means "to twist," a means of torture so painful that even the innocent would confess. Ensign, May 2001, 22-23)

18 Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, ^ahave mercy on me, who am ^bin the ^cgall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting ^dchains of ^edeath. (Hugh Nibley said: "There could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains... On the other hand there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy." Perfect parallelism. And incidentally, when he says, 'O Jesus,' (v. 18) any Moslem or Jew would say, 'Well, why not call on God directly? Why call on Jesus?' Well, that's the point of the whole thing. It was God he had offended. The last person in the world he wants to meet is God. He has offended God. What he wants is a kind person who will feel with him and know what he is going through. And, of course, that's the Lord, that's Christ. He descended below all things. He suffered all these things, so he knows. Alma appeals to the one he can appeal to. He's scared; he doesn't want to go to God. I'd sooner be extinct than have to face him [he feels]. But there is Jesus; he will get me out. He is the Savior-he knows. So he appeals to him, and then his work is really beginning." (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, lecture 56, p. 458))

19 And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my ^apains ^bno more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more. (He is forgiven, but that is only the beginning of the salvation process.)

20 And oh, what ^ajoy, (Joy is the fruit of the presence of the Holy Ghost.) and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain! (This is the center of the chiasm.)

21 Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy.

22 Yea, me thought I saw, even as our father ^aLehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and ^bpraising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there. (Alma must have read the plates of Nephi where this story was written because he quotes from it.)

23 But behold, my limbs did receive their ^astrength again, and I stood upon my feet, and did manifest unto the people that I had been ^bborn of God. ("Alma's story is preserved in the scriptures because it is unusual and powerful. For virtually everyone in Alma's day and ours, the process of being born again is quiet and unobtrusive, yet all conversion experiences ought to contain certain elements in common. 'We must be cautious,' President Ezra Taft Benson has warned, 'as we discuss these remarkable examples. Though they are real and powerful, they are the exception more than the rule. For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds and thousands of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life.' ("A Mighty Change of Heart," Ensign, October 1989, p. 5.)" (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 268))

24 Yea, and from that time even until now, I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto ^arepentance; that I might bring them to ^btaste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste; that they might also be ^cborn of God, and be ^dfilled with the Holy Ghost.

25 Yea, and now behold, O my son, the Lord doth ^agive me exceedingly great joy in the fruit of my ^blabors;

26 For because of the ^aword which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have ^btasted as I have tasted ("This is good doctrine. It tastes good. You say honey is sweet and so do I. I can also taste the spirit and principles of eternal life, and so can you. I know it is good and that when I tell you of these words of eternal life that are given to me by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the revelations of Jesus Christ, you are bound to receive them as sweet. You taste them and I know you believe them. I rejoice more and more." 'The King Follett Discourse: a Newly Amalgamated Text by

Stan Larson, *BYU Studies*, vol. 18 (1977-1978), Number 2 - Winter 1978 204.)), and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God.

27 And I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind, yea, and in all manner of afflictions; yea, God has ^adelivered me from prison, and from bonds, and from death; yea, and I do put my trust in him, and he will still ^bdeliver me.

28 And I know that he will ^araise me up at the last day (calling and election made sure), to dwell with him in ^bglory; yea, and I will ^cpraise him forever, for he has ^dbrought our fathers out of Egypt, and he has swallowed up the ^eEgyptians in the Red Sea; and he led them by his power into the promised land; yea, and he has delivered them out of bondage and captivity from time to time.

29 Yea, and he has also brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem; and he has also, by his everlasting power, delivered them out of ^abondage and captivity, from time to time even down to the present day; and I have always retained in remembrance their captivity; yea, and ye also ought to retain in remembrance, as I have done, their captivity.

30 But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that ^ainasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall ^bprosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence. Now this is according to his word.