

Book of Mormon 27
All Things Denote There Is a God
(Alma 30-31)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Amazingly these two chapters deal with two great and timeworn apostasies: (1) There is no God; and (2) There is a God, but he loves and saves only one group, their group, of people).

I. First, Alma deals with Korihor who teaches the first apostasy: There is no God.

A. Korihor's arguments anticipated those so strongly proclaimed in our days: That we can only know what we see (30:15); that we believe in God only because of the traditions of our fathers (30:16); The truth is "every man prospers according to his genius, and every man conquers according to his strength" (30:17). And after death, there is no more.

B. **Alma testifies, in contrast, "all things denote there is a God" (Alma 30:43).**

1. What he testifies is true. For Jesus Christ's great mind made all things of the earth and heaven to bear witness that He and His Father exist. He himself told us of this central purpose. "...behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me..." (Moses 6:63.)

II. **Furthermore, Jesus Christ deliberately created all things as symbols**, that we might understand His truths. Thus His World is an **"Incredible Teaching Laboratory."**

A. Paul so testified, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made [or are visible]" (Romans 1:20).

B. This same thought is expressed in a writing attributed to the apostle Philip. "Truth did not come into the world naked, but it came [revealed through] types and images." (*Nag Hammadi Library*, James M. Robinson, General Ed., p. 140.)

C. Modern scholars marvel at finding similar symbols for religious concepts throughout the world, though religions differ widely. [A "Tree of Life" concept is universal]. They have wondered why.

1. The Bible shows some symbolism was taught from the beginning, then passed down through centuries. The "Tree of Life" concept began in the Garden of Eden.

2. Other symbols were comprehended by man through experiences with God's creations. The sun is a constant blessing to all. It initiates and sustains life. Men recognize it as the great light of existence. Throughout the world, "light" has become a symbol --- of spiritual truth as well as physical illumination.

Thus **the sun was not just created to give men physical light, but to teach all men of the greater light of the world --- Jesus the Christ.**

III. Jesus Christ's creations teach of salvation through Him. Here are **a few** of myriads of examples.

A. He created the lowly earth-crawling caterpillar and its "heavenly" form as butterfly --- to **bear witness of our earth-bound state and the eventual change to the wonders of a Resurrection.** The flight and beauty of the butterfly bear witness of the glories promised in the Resurrection.

B. He Himself singled out one witness of His Resurrection --- the simple yet glorious lily. We miss the mark if we see Him only as a great teacher using the lily as symbol in His mortality. **Rather He was its creator. He created its simple, powerful witness in His pre-mortal glory. He,**

its Creator, had bathed it in white purity; shaped it like a trumpet. Then He placed the season of its "trumpeting" to trumpet the very time of His Resurrection!

C. He also created things to teach of His suffering through the Atonement and Crucifixion, which would lead to the glories of His, and thus man's, Exaltation.

1. His witnesses of the atonement are powerful. From the beginning, he placed materials deep inside the earth. These materials, under terrible pressures and terrible heat, would in time become earth's greatest and most highly desired treasures: gold, diamonds, silver, marble. We should recognize **that their first and greatest purpose was to teach of all that the Savior would suffer to bring about the greatest treasure--- His glory and the glorification of mankind.**

2. Job came to know his own terrible sufferings would make him as "gold tried in the fire."

3. But His suffering only pointed to Christ's.

4. So Gold was the essence or the outer covering of all Israelite worship symbols placed in the Holy Temple.

a. Some of these symbols were partially made from wood of the Acacia Tree --- a tree growing out of barren land. **The combination of wood and gold witnessed of Christ's barren mortality and His great divinity as well as His suffering.**

b. These instruments were deliberately placed to point the path leading to that holiest of all places, the Holy of Holies, which represented God's Eternal Presence.

5. Thus everything in the tabernacle, made from God's creations, taught that Jesus Christ would suffer so deeply that He would become as "Gold Tried in the Fire" (Job 23:10). Through His suffering, He would prepare the way by which man might return back into God's presence.

6. Before these witnesses were established in the temple, they were planned and prepared for in the very creation.

IV. "The Planets denote there is a God" (Alma 30:44).

A. They denote there is a God through the order of their regular rotations.

B. But the planet Venus was specifically set to bear witness of Christ's Atonement, Death and Resurrection.

1. John Pratt, [Ph.D. in astronomy], shows that the planet Venus, **the first and last star** to be visible in the Heavens, was created and used by the Savior to teach of Himself. Jesus, like Venus, is "the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16). But both are also the last great light!

Dr. Pratt has shown that the Heavenly patterns of Venus' journey through the sky bore witness of Christ's death and resurrection. For it dips below the surface and remains there for three days in the Western continent, in a critical time in the spring, then to reappear again. The Mesoamericans gave Venus the name of Quetzalcoatl, the same name they gave Jesus. Pratt has shown **its descent and return correlated precisely with Christ's death and resurrection.**

Dr. Pratt feels these and many other **fascinating patterns in the stars verify that the Plan of Salvation was detailed before this earth's creation. Then the planets and stars were created to bear witness of that plan. This was done so men could see their witnesses from the earth with their naked eyes.** No great telescopes were needed to witness these most significant of God's truths!

This is undoubtedly why Abraham was so observant of the Heavens, as were the Moundbuilders in North America, and peoples throughout the world. While scientists see ancient calendars as merely keeping track of events for the purposes of planting and superstitious rituals, **the real truth is that the faithful were keeping track of time in waiting for and later honoring the significant events pertaining to Jesus Christ.**

V. Alma also had to deal with a second apostasy through the Zoramites: That there is a God, but He loves and saves only certain believers, and not because of the good lives they live.

A. While the Zoramites believed in God, they believed they alone would be saved by him, and there was no need for any special Savior.

1. The first part of this belief is the great fault of most religious faiths. **They believe in a God, but feel he will save only them.**

B. The Zoramites believed that God had chosen them to “be thy holy children” (Alma 31:16).

1. In consequence, they believed everyone else would be “cast by thy wrath down to hell” (Alma 31:17).

2. In the meantime the true hearts of the Zoramites were set upon gold and position, and they worshipped only on their Sabbath, not thinking of God in their actual lives (Alma 31:23-24).

VI. The Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Latter –days helps see the falsity of this great apostasy.

A. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints manifests that the Lord God loves all of His children, and has created the paths for all to be saved. Not only saved, but even exalted!

1. When understood, the Lord meant for His gospel to go to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles, then to the entire world through a re-gathered Israel in the Latter-days. **Therefore, the real concept of being “chosen” means “chosen to take the gospel to as many as will receive it.”**

2. The Restored Gospel shows that the Father not only sent His Son to the peoples of the Old World, but to those of the American Continents *after* His Resurrection, and even to those not of those folds, that they may also know of His Atonement and His Resurrection. This is verified by legends in several countries that they had such visitations: such as in England and Russia.

3. The Restored Gospel teaches that a loving God has prepared the way that all those who died without hearing the Gospel may still have the opportunity to be taught after this life, and that the ordinances needed for their salvation, such as baptism, can also be performed for all the deceased.

Thus we know and can testify that not only is there a God, but He is a God of Love, who cares deeply for all of His children. He will subsequently do all that He can possibly do, except to infringe upon their moral agency, to bring everyone into Eternal Life. All faiths who teach less than this are part of the apostasy. For to portray God as less than this, is a terrible offense to a great and loving God.